

B O O K R E V I E W

True Colours: Lauren Huxley and her family: from tragedy to triumph

by Lisa Davies

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True Colours is the moving true story of the survival of Lauren Huxley, a beautiful, friendly 18-year-old who suffered a violent random attack in her family's Sydney home. Viciously assaulted with metal fibro cutters by a stranger, Robert Black Farmer, Lauren was doused in petrol and left to die in the home's detached garage.

Smoke first alerted neighbours to the fire at the Huxley house. The neighbours in turn alerted the Huxleys – father Pat, and sister Simone, and they also tried to get a message to Lauren's mother Christine. However, no one could get hold of Lauren. The Huxleys arrived home to a fairly chaotic scene where their worst fears were realised.

Lauren's face was beaten almost beyond recognition. In addition to the myriad facial cuts and bruises, she had fractures to her skull and nasal bones, and bleeding on the brain. She faced a very long road to recovery, and indeed, in the early stages, it wasn't even certain she would survive her injuries.

Author Lisa Davies, a journalist at Sydney's *The Daily Telegraph*, has written a very emotional and moving account of the tragedy. Readers are taken through the family's very anxious weeks and months as Lauren begins her healing process. Davies also details the police search for the person responsible, and succeeds in relating Robert Black Farmer's history and mindset so the reader gains as much insight as possible into how and why he acted as he did. Finally they are taken through Black Farmer's trial and sentencing to the triumph of Lauren's return home.

True Colours is a testament to the positive attitude both Lauren and her family displayed through the whole tragedy. It's almost impossible not to cry as you read what Lauren went through. However, her recovery and return to everyday life is nothing short of inspirational.

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