

Description for vol 1 of Episodes

Growing up in Hamilton, Ontario before and during World War II, David Beasley tells of his pioneer ancestry, family difficulties and early schooling with refreshing candor. His early friendships, for instance with John Munro, later a prominent Canadian politician, his near fatal accident which led to his love for literature, his work as caddy and bellhop at Jasper Lodge in the Canadian Rockies, a brief naval career, his leaving for Europe after graduating from McMaster University and his years in England, France, Spain (Ibiza), Italy and Austria make for fascinating reading as he develops his knowledge and writing skill.

His life story is actually the story of his environment and associations which have an immediacy through his letters to his mother and friends as well as his notes from notebooks and journals. His friendships with artists, writers, bohemians, businessmen and actors affect him and his thinking as well as his reading and the cultural activities of London, Paris and Vienna. In Vienna he meets his true love, Viola, an Anglo-Burmese lady, and eventually, after finishing his teaching year and an adventure by donkey in Turkey by the Black Sea, he joins her in Manhattan. Their exchange of letters during their separation reveals the strength of their love.

Viola's struggles in the bureaucracy of the United Nations echo the disappointments and frustrations that David meets in searching for publishers for his writing against the backdrop of a harsh city landscape with a frenetic pulse and intellectual vigor. David's introduction of his Burmese wife to a staid Canadian society is made successful by his welcoming mother and family. His teaching at a private school helps acclimatize him to American society while his close friendship with the artist Clay Spohn introduces him to the modern art world of which New York City has become the centre.

Overcoming tragedy, Viola seeks consolation in work and finally in religion. Viola's letters tell the story of their lives at this point and her attempt to bring harmony to her Burmese family in south London, alienated in a foreign culture. Faced with the possibility of never finding a publisher and never making a living from writing, David wrenches himself away from his creativity to study for a profession.

Volume Two follows David in his profession and his work as a union leader to his success as an author and Viola who excels in university study, as few have, to become a Professor of English Literature.

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Description of vol 2 of Episodes

Volume Two of David Richard Beasley's Autobiography begins with his studies in librarianship, and continues with his work at the New York Public Research Libraries, his friendships with writers and artists, his union organizing and involvement in social causes. Much of the volume is told through Viola Beasley's letters recording their actions and thoughts and her worries about her Burmese parents in England as well as maintaining close connections with the Beasley family in Hamilton, Canada. Viola's unexpected transfer from international politics to university scholarship and David's determination to find publishers for his works give the reader emotional and educational pictures of a very human struggle. Their travels in Europe and North America recounted

from their notebooks add color and adventure. David's affairs of the heart move like a sub-text through the story.

Their successes are hard-won and lead to their move to Southern Ontario where tragedy strikes again—to be overcome with perseverance. The inspirations and sources for David's many books are brought to light in this engaging narrative which other struggling writers may find instructive.

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