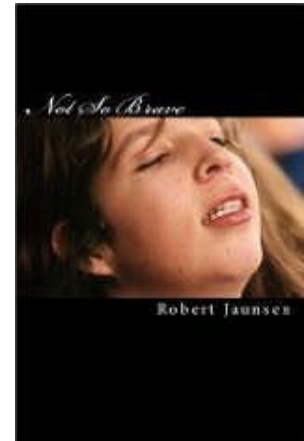


A Review of
Not So Brave (a novel)
Author: Robert Jaunsen



With a backlog of reading to do, it was not my intention to get into this book until much later, but once opened out of curiosity, I couldn't put it back down until coming to the story's end just a few hours later. Supported by insights of medical detail along with the very realistic and insightful young child and later teen emotions, the story carries the reader deep into the life of the author's own daughter's real-life adventures, with characters and enough details changed to make this a work of fiction. This is a well written and captivating book that touches the heart of the reader in ways that few books do. While its narrative is told in the voice of that child patient, thus creating great appeal for the young adult audience, for the adult reader (parent or medical professional) it is also a fascinating read, providing insights into the "hidden" workings of the youthful patient's mind as she faces one medical challenge after another until you have to wonder what keeps her going when so many others would have understandably given up, especially when there seems to be no end in sight to the physical and emotional pain she endures, day in and day out.

The lead in this story is Sara Jones, born into a life filled from birth with one medical problem after another, living a life that offers typical family challenges beyond her own medical ones including surviving to her teen years and falling in love with a fellow patient who dies from lung disease (i.e., CF). Reflecting on their short time together waiting for live saving transplants, Sara describes their romance in these wise words: ***"We lived one day at a time and we fought to survive one day at a time. Each new day was a blessing and a reminder to never give up. Fate and the future belonged only in the realm of our spiritual destinies."***

Sara's survival comes through a heart/liver transplant that allows her to defy the odds and live on, overcoming the depression that such an environment often breeds. Her inspiring courage of human spirit really becomes the book's message, helping others see beyond the daily frustrations of a medical maze along with encouraging the world to say yes to organ donation that others may live the life young Sara now enjoys. The story has some unusual (but still based on her true life experience to a degree) twists in a secret sponsor that adds a sense of mystery to the fast paced reading built mostly on short chapters that beg the reader to continue into the next.

As Sara (and I have to believe this comes from the real-life basis of the "novel") shares in a live interview: ***"Words can never express the gratitude I feel for receiving the gift of life. Two gifts of life, actually, a heart and a liver,"*** followed by her advice for us all, ***"Never give up, think positively and keep the faith!"***

Thank you Robert, for sharing the gift of your family and especially your daughter in this wonderful "novel" which I recommend with all my own transplanted heart to readers everywhere. Your writing has the power to make readers reflect on their decision to become an organ donor, and in so doing, make a difference in the lives of others like Sara and Mark in this beautiful story.

Note: **Not So Brave** is available in paperback on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.