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Michael Dorris

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Michael Dorris : The Broken Cord: A Family's Ongoing Struggle With Fetal Alcohol Syndrome before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Broken Cord: A Family's Ongoing Struggle With Fetal Alcohol Syndrome:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Broken Cord, A MUST READBy A fellow shopperI first read this book about 15 years ago. The whole story touched me deeply and I never forgot it. It was tucked in the back of my mind all these years. This book is about a 26 year old Native American, single college professor who desires to be a family man and decides to adopt a son. He is a nurturing sort, into his roots and waiting for the "right woman" to come along. (And she eventually does come into the picture) Meanwhile, he is a good father, doing everything he can to help his son have a better start in life and he tries with all his heart and mind to aid his son with health issues and soon to be apparent behavioral issues. He really is naive and doesn't know what he is getting into. But he perseveres and devotes his life to try to figure out his sons problems and discovers he is struggling with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. There are many compelling things to this story. The fact that it is a true story, where you follow his very personal journey from adopting at age 3, to his sons 20th birthday. (This is at the beginning stages of our understanding of FAS/FASE in the U.S.) Later, you see the introduction of alcohol to the American Indians, from the beginning and how it affects Reservation Life today. From there he branches into how alcohol abuse and FAS/FASE is a world wide phenomena affecting every level of society from the poor to the rich. There is a lot of science exposing the danger of

alcohol consumption on the developing fetus. This book was utterly fascinating. It is complete with loads of documentation and recorded conversations that shed light on the problems that are helpful for today. (Even though my copy was published in 1979, I think) It is written in a totally readable style. This book has become dearer to me, as we have adopted a boy at age 4 and who is now 10. I remembered this book and reread it recently, and was blown away! It helped me realize that we too, are on a very similar journey with our youngest son. I found many common behaviors and have become convinced as I research, that we too are living with Fetal Alcohol Effects. Our son's case is not as severe as Adam's but there are many, many similarities. I would highly recommend this book for every person to read. If you or someone you love is dealing with these problems, you will find this book encouraging, even though sad at times. It is helpful for broadening your horizons about the needs of people in general, maybe that person you see shabbily dressed, asking for money in front of the store. It is a book that will hopefully not only educate but challenge us all to deeper levels of compassion, especially towards those less fortunate. PLEASE READ! It is a real eye-opener. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It is the best book on FAS ever written. By David Reazin I read it when it was first published. It is the best book on FAS ever written. Michael Dorris was a very good writer. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not enough words to describe this fantastic book. Anyone who is at all connected with ... By Lena Not enough words to describe this fantastic book. Anyone who is at all connected with children of special needs, or connected with children in the adoption/foster system should read this book. It clearly, and engagingly gives such a clear picture of how life really is, not how one may imagine it is, living with children with special needs, or in this case FAS. The writing itself is so interesting that the book is hard to put down.

A skilled writer and expert on Native Americans tells the deeply moving story of his adopted son Abel, who suffers from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

From Publishers Weekly As a young bachelor over 20 years ago, Dorris was struck by the sudden conviction that he wanted to be a father. Approved for adoption with surprising speed, he shortly met--and fell in love with--a beautiful, undersized three-year-old American Indian, called Adam in this account. Records showed that Adam had an extensive medical history, but Dorris, with the dewy confidence of a new parent, was undaunted--no problems could withstand the forces of devotion and informed intelligence. After years of repeated epileptic seizures and minimal developmental headway, Adam was cautiously diagnosed: he was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, a profoundly debilitating, lifelong condition caused by his mother's heavy drinking during pregnancy. As professional anthropologist (he teaches at Dartmouth) and driven parent, Dorris spent years researching FAS, readily observable in the U.S. on Indian reservations; an American Indian himself, he offers alarming profiles and statistics about the high incidence of FAS in the Indian population. But the heartbreak of this preventable disease is felt most pointedly in the stories he tells about Adam's narrow life in a world closed to the effects of imagination. In graceful, unencumbered prose, Dorris (*A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*) bares the frustration of day-to-day living with Adam, admits his rage at his own impotence to make his son's life fuller and eloquently describes moments of pride, hope and--always--love. For in the face of the impossibilities in Adam's life, it was love alone that forced open the reliable, livable world this severely limited young man inhabits, and love that reveals for the father--and his readers--the possibilities that illuminate life within even such painfully narrow horizons. Included are a foreword by Dorris's wife, writer Louise Erdrich, and Adam's story, as told by himself. First serial to *Ladies' Home Journal*. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* In his intensely personal, disturbing, and moving account of a father's struggle to come to grips with the devastating and yet preventable condition, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Dorris gives us vital information about a crisis demanding worldwide attention. Himself a Native American, anthropologist/novelist Dorris (*A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* , LJ 5/1/87) adopted an Indian child in 1971 who, after batteries of tests and transfer from school to school, was finally diagnosed as suffering from FAS. To understand fully his son's condition, Dorris was compelled to "systematically confront Native American history." Here he tells of infants born in the throes of delirium tremens, of social workers so frustrated that they frankly discuss the possibility of incarcerating drunken expectant mothers during pregnancy or of sterilizing repeat offenders. Dorris includes a wealth of scientific data, excellent treatments of alcohol's effects upon Native American culture and of the physiopathological aspects of FAS, and a very complete bibliography. Highly recommended.- John Creech, Western Carolina Univ., Cullowhee, N.C. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.