

The Walk

by Richard Paul Evans

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Richard Paul Evans is a New York Times best-selling author who has had twelve consecutive bestsellers since 1993. His first self-produced book, *The Gift*, was handed out to twenty family members and friends, but once word of his marvelous story telling ability leaked out to the rest of the world, he began to amass a legion of faithful fans. Those steadfast readers wait anxiously for the release of each new novel he writes. He's won numerous awards, and several of his books have become made-for-TV movies. With all that success, one would think that every once in a while he would write a story that fails to measure up to his previous work. Not yet.

The Walk is a wonderful story about a man who parlayed his talent for selling things, into a successful ad agency. Alan Christofferson was the quintessential American success story; he lived in a beautiful home, was married to an intelligent, gorgeous woman, and owned only the best cars. While he enjoyed all the trappings of success, his primary focus was always his wife, McKale.

The book's protagonist is a man who enjoys writing. He has maintained a diary since his childhood. Each chapter of *The Walk* opens with a snippet from that diary, a foreshadowing if you will, of what is to come in the pages that follow. Many of the entries are powerful enough to stand on their own, similar in wisdom to the *Book of Proverbs* in the *Bible*. In one chapter, he writes, "The only way to remove pain from death is to remove love from life." Powerful, thought provoking stuff. Through his journal entries, the readers gain an insight into his love and devotion to his wife. She is his alpha and omega.

The couple met as children, and as often happens in the real world, become best friends and eventually, soul mates. Early on, Alan explains, "If McKale didn't like something, we didn't do it. I could never figure out why she always got to make the rules, but I always followed them. I eventually decided that's just how things were."

Alan and McKale are content, devoted spouses blessed with an enviable lifestyle, until one day that serenity and idyllic existence comes to a tragic end. Alan loses what means most to him, and in the midst of tremendous grief, also learns his business partner has stolen his company from him.

Bereft of all material possessions and with no friends to lean on, he decides the only course of action left is to get away from it all. He devises a plan to walk from where he and McKale used to live, Bellevue, Washington, to the farthest point in the United States: Key West, Florida. As he embarks on the sojourn, he experiences moments of both darkness and enlightenment, chronicling his experiences as he travels.

The author's concept is risky. It's his intention to release a new novel in the series each year, as Alan completes another segment of his soul-searching excursion. When his character reaches his final destination, the author has invited his readers to meet him at Key West to celebrate the journey. Ambitious and confident best describe Evans' template. My guess is that he won't fail.

Richard Paul Evans has proven to be one of America's most precious gifts . . . an inspirational writer who has the ability to read our very souls and heal broken hearts through his prose. His books are the ones you can't wait to finish, but when you do, you wish you hadn't. I suggest readers accompany Evans on *The Walk*.

John M. Wills is the author of Grippled by Fear (TotalRecall Publications), the second novel in the Chicago Warriors Thriller Series; he is also a former Chicago Police Officer and retired FBI Agent.