

## MUST THE YOUNG DIE TOO

By Wyatt Sawyer

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### BOOK REVIEW:

Wyatt Sawyer is a gospel preacher. Brother Sawyer was born and schooled in Dallas, TX. He received his B.A. Degree from Harding College, Searcy, AR in 1945 and his M.A. at the Univ. of Houston. He began working with young people as a teacher, counselor, coach and youth camp director in 1940. He was on the staff of 5 different youth camps. He began preaching the gospel in 1941 and preached in TX, AR, MS, KS, OK, and LA. He and his wife Christine had 2 sons.

This book brother Sawyer wrote is based on a true story. The young criminal it's about is called Roger Scott in the book. The name Roger Scott is fictitious; some of the places and events in the story were also changed to avoid harming any of the real characters, whether living or dead.

This is the story of a young man who, like most American boys thought "it can't happen to me." But it did happen to him. He became a criminal for committing a terrible crime. He was guilty and stood before the judge and jury and fought for his life.

Roger experienced the usual problems of a growing boy in the ever-changing American culture. He had many decisions to make. When he made the right ones, things went well. When he stubbornly refused good advice his fortune took a turn for the worse. His life is potentially the life of any boy or girl in this country today who clamors for freedom from the home too early and who demands the right to do all his thinking before he has acquired mature judgment.

The reader will laugh with Roger in his humorous moments and weep with him as he struggles through the transformation from a "hardheaded" adolescent boy to a contented Christian young man . . . in his prison cell.

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## BOOK EXCERPT

Excellent for reading aloud in a teenage Bible class. Just chose 4 students to assume the characters of Roger, the Narrator, the Judge, and the Mother.

### Readers:

Roger: young man (early 20's with Texas accent)

Narrator: man with excellent reading voice, pleasant appearance, suit and tie

Judge: older man (60 to 70 yrs.)

Mother: young woman (25 to 35 years old)

### BEGIN READING . . .

#### ROGER

“My name is Roger Scott. I am a murderer! However, I don't look like one at all. . . . They tell me I look like any other average American young man. I am twenty-six years old.”

“I've been in the courtroom now nearly an hour waiting for my trial to begin. I'm nervous. I'll be glad to get this over with because I've been dreading this ordeal for about a year. Some have told me I should be acquitted. Others are doing everything in their power to put me in the electric chair. The Judge is coming in now.”

#### NARRATOR

The Judge's first words rebounded off the back wall and stopped the low muttering of the overflow crowd of curious people, thrill-seekers and town gossips.

#### JUDGE

In this case a young man must stand trial before a jury of his peers. I think I need not remind those present that this is a most grave occasion. The outcome of these proceedings will determine whether this young man will live or must die for his crime.”

#### ROGER

I gripped my chair hard when the Judge said those last words. I still hadn't gotten used to the idea that I might die before I'm thirty. I was scared—plenty scared. My lips were quivering. I had rehearsed this moment a thousand times in my cell. But here it's different. There are hundreds of people here; some are for me and some are against me. Some of them hope I die.”

#### NARRATOR

The trial proceeded . . . Kindly old Mr. Simmons took the stand and after being given the oath to tell the truth he sat down in the witness chair. Roger listened to Mr. Simmon's testimony attentively for awhile. Then his mind wandered back to that fateful night when he fought with the three men he later killed.....

#### ROGER

The whole incident was still vivid in my mind. I could never forget that night. There were those three drunks and we had a fight and I shot them. I can still hear the echo from the gun as it traveled through the swamp and down into the bayou. And the men, I remember them too. My .38 was

talking to them in a language they could understand. I hadn't expected to ever use the gun; I just had it along in case. Now I wish I'd left it where it belonged."

"I've asked myself thousands of times why I did such a thing. But I still don't know. One thing led to another, and then it was all over before I realized what happened. It was too late to think then."

NARRATOR

And now excerpts from chapter 2

ROGER

"What does it take to make a home out of a house? I asked myself. Then I lay there in my cell and tried to figure my riddle out. Someone had said it takes 'a heap o' living' and I guess that's right. But what causes the reverse? If I'm logical, the answer is the lack of good living. That's how our home changed. It lost the good living in it.

"Somewhere down the line something happened to my moral fiber. If I hadn't been weak in character somewhere I would never have gotten into the position where I had to kill those men. But I keep wondering. What influenced me in the wrong direction without my knowing it?"

"The answer came into my mind clearly. I had learned from the Bible not to resist the police or the laws of the land. In my readings I learned not to challenge the 'higher powers' because they are 'ordained of God' and they 'bear not the sword in vain' when it comes to law violators. I remember the reference now; it was in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans. There I learned that I resisted the power of God when I resisted the government. And that time I was planning to run away, I was trying to run away from God too, but I found out I couldn't.

NARRATOR

Wyatt Sawyer as you can see does a wonderful job of telling Roger's story. You can see how well Brother Sawyer knew him. In chapter 3 Roger tells about his home life when he was a young boy. He says,

ROGER

"I remember some things about my first home, though I was quite young when I left there. I can still see it. Those were precious memories and those days turned out to be the only really happy home days I had as a youngster."

NARRATOR

Roger's father was an alcoholic; they had money problems and 4 children. This is where the tragedy begins.

ROGER

"Daddy came home very drunk. He had the wildest look in his eyes and we got real scared of him. I remember I wanted to get under the bed, but I was afraid he would come under there after me. I guess I didn't do anything but just stand there with my mouth open. He went after mother's savings money in the drawer and she tried to stop him. His temper was rising and he doubled up his fist and struck mother a crushing blow in the face. She fell limp and hit the floor hard as blood began to run out of her nose and mouth.

MOTHER

"Get out of this house, Albert! Get out of here and don't ever put your foot on this place again. You don't deserve a wife and kids. You couldn't take care of a home if you had one. Now get out of my sight!"

ROGER

A twenty-pound hammer couldn't have hurt daddy worse than those words from my mother. He was the most pitiful-looking man I ever saw. He fell down by momma and begged her to give him another chance. He promised to quit drinking and stay on the place more and treat us kids better, but momma's ears were deaf to him. I turned my head when he got up and stumbled out of the house. We never saw him again. We never knew what happened to him.

NARRATOR

After this incident the book goes on to tell about Roger's parents divorcing and the 4 children being farmed out to relatives. Two sisters went to live with an uncle in Oregon and another sister with a cousin in NC. Roger was sent to live with his grandparents on a farm. He was devastated to be separated from his mother.

ROGER

That was another episode in my life that I've never gotten over. I was so lonely and depressed that leaving my mother was more than I could stand. I think after that I just buried my face in my hands and cried and cried.

NARRATOR

Rogers's grandparents were Christians, members of the church of Christ. They loved him and were kind but he missed his mother who was far away. By the time Roger was 8 his mother had remarried and started a new life. He stopped hearing from her at all. His grandparents tried to reach her but couldn't find where she lived.

The book continues on about his life story, high school days, the influence the church and preachers had on his life. He marries, has problems in his marriage, and then the tragic incident that put him in prison. He tells about his repentance and acceptance of the consequences of his actions.

This book is dynamic in its presentation of a life that was wasted due to wrong choices and horrible consequences. The fact that it is a true story makes it even more potent. I highly recommend this book to you.

Physicians have a motto: "*Primum Non Nocere*," which means above all do no damage. They are concerned with the physical body. They make decisions everyday that have the potential of healing or . . . if not a careful choice . . . may cause devastating damage to an individual.

The Bible tells us how to make the right choices. You can begin making the right choices by first wiping the slate clean. God offers Grace, Mercy, and forgiveness of sin if we choose to obey HIM.

THE END