



The Road Runner: An American Odyssey

John Stover

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The Road Runner is an autobiographical novel detailing the traumatic life, various loves, habitual tragedies, ultimate triumphs and chaotic times of John Stover. The story is loosely based on Homer's *Odyssey*; entailing the search described by Homer almost 2,700 years ago. The themes are similar; the quest for identity, the search for love, the value of family and the continual challenge of being true to one's values and ideals. Many of the temptations encountered by Odysseus are placed before the title character. He meets the one-eyed Cyclops, is tempted by Circe and Calypso and walks among the lotus eaters. The story begins with painfully descriptive details of the author's harsh home life. Mr. Stover, the fourth of seven children, describes the family dynamics and how they play out as dysfunction slowly and completely manifests itself in its various forms in all the children. His father, a self-made man is also an alcoholic, sexual compulsive and rage-a-holic. The author, through his revelations, points out sexual dysfunction as a Stover family legacy, passed from generation to generation. Tracing the family genealogy back to the infamous triangle of John Alden and Priscilla-the very woman who snubbed Governor Miles Standish's amorous advances, the author recounts what may well be the beginnings of the Stover family's sexual dysfunction. Tales of other, closer relatives running afoul of the law as a result of their sexual compulsions are also chronicled in great detail. The author introduces us to his brother whom he calls Thor the God of Thunder and Gloom. The brother, six years older, tortures, beats and molests the young author. Mr. Stover spent his youth working at his father's hotel; The West Elm Hotel in Brockton, Massachusetts where he observed men from the Brockton Veteran's Administration Hospital. As a youth Mr. Stover found several of the tenants who had succumbed to an accidental death, suicide and even murder while playing in his father

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