

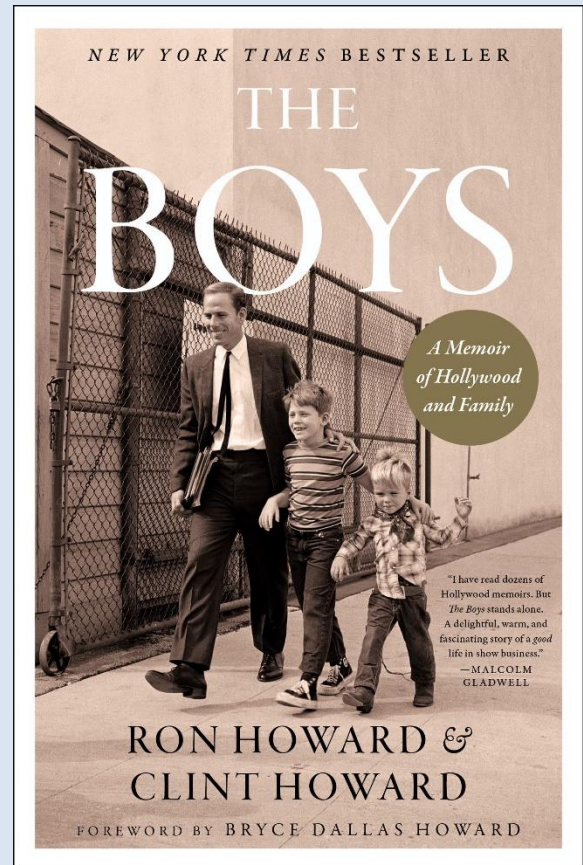
Allison's Book Corner December 2021

The Boys: A Memoir of Hollywood and Family by Ron Howard and Clint Howard
(William Morrow 2021)

In this time of pandemic and uncertainty it is so refreshing to have a memoir come along to remind us that there are some things in life that actually turn out the way they should. All of those years of humming along to the theme song of *The Andy Griffith* show and laughing along with Opie and Barney...didn't we just imagine that the cute little boy playing Opie had a charmed life? It turns out that he did and does. I grew up watching the actor Ron Howard play Opie on one of my grandma's favorite shows, *The Andy Griffith Show*, and then play Richie Cunningham on *Happy Days*. This was some great family television at that time. In the center of it all was Ron Howard - whom we now all recognize as a great Oscar-winning director - and his younger brother Clint Howard, who is also an actor.

These brothers have penned a wonderful memoir of old Hollywood. If you love television and movies as much as I do, you also know that adorable "Ronny" Howard also appeared in the great movie musical classic *The Music Man*. The best thing about this memoir is that dear Opie on television and in real life had the childhood that we all thought he would have. Ron and Clint Howard's parents somehow knew how to raise two Hollywood actors and turn them into successful human beings. Not a small or easy feat.

In this well-written memoir, each brother pens his own section of each chapter. Sometimes they give us their individual point of view on things that occurred in their family. But most of the time we learn about what each child actor was going through at a particular time. As Ronny Howard became a



household name to millions as Opie, his little brother gained success on a show called *Gentle Ben*.

Their parents, Rance and Jean Howard, were also actors. Originally from the Midwest, they brought those values along with them to Hollywood. The boys became more successful than the parents as actors. The family adapted. Rance Howard was a marvelous acting coach for both of his boys. Mom held the family together through various film sets and locations. They also got to act in some of their sons' projects. There are so many hidden gems in this book. We find out that Rance and Ronny Howard actually wrote a script for a popular episode of the *Flintstones*. Who knew?

I will try not to reveal any more secrets. Ron Howard takes us behind the scenes at the *Andy Griffith Show* and at *Happy Days*. This is great fodder for all of us who loved these shows. And the reader may be surprised at all of the films Clint Howard has appeared in as a great character actor as an adult. This book certainly makes me want to go back and watch *Apollo 13* again so I can catch Jean Howard in her cameo.

We have been witness to the success of the Howard brothers, but absolutely no life is really a fairytale. Clint Howard is very honest about his foray into drugs and alcohol. Thankfully, he is still here with us to tell us about it. I believe the love and support of his parents and brother kept him here.

Just look at the back cover of the book and the cast of famous actors who heap great praise upon the Howard brothers as writers. It comes as no surprise when Ron Howard reveals that fellow actor/director Tom Hanks urged him to write this memoir. It really just makes you want to say "Well, golly gee whiz, Opie, life really does turn out just fine." Cue *The Andy Griffith* theme song or *Happy Days*. They both work here.