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Carol Dawson, Carol Johnston

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The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Luby's Cafeterias

CAROL DAWSON AND CAROL JOHNSTON

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Carol Dawson, Carol Johnston : House of Plenty: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Luby's Cafeterias before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised House of Plenty: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Luby's Cafeterias:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ok writing, great storyBy RizzoHere's the deal, my father was a Luby's Manager for 30 years or so. He started in the golden days and lasted till it fell apart so I have an insider viewpoint. I have not found another story written to this extent before on Luby's so form that perspective its a great read. The writing could have been better, more precise and chronological perhaps.Luby's represented essentially the best of American historical business practices that generated massive middle class wealth for a lot of what I'd consider

normal people who were not geniuses just hard working labor. Harvard Yard came to the rescue of this success and ultimately dismantled in 15 years what took 40 to build. The only other comparable company I can think of is Costco. Luby's proved that local control worked, they proved incentive compensation worked, they proved sharing the success of the company worked. Papas brothers proved removing those items would sink a loved successful company into a mediocre laughable glorified fast food chain. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unique By Ed Griffith From Carol's heart! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Larry Burns Great story of a great food chain.

Scarred by the deaths of his mother and sisters and the failure of his father's business, a young man dreamed of making enough money to retire early and retreat into the secure world that his childhood tragedies had torn from him. But Harry Luby refused to be a robber baron. Turning totally against the tide of avaricious capitalism, he determined to make a fortune by doing good. Starting with that unlikely, even naive, ambition in 1911, Harry Luby founded a cafeteria empire that by the 1980s had revenues second only to McDonald's. So successfully did Luby and his heirs satisfy the tastes of America that Luby's became the country's largest cafeteria chain, creating more millionaires per capita among its employees than any other corporation of its size. Even more surprising, the company stayed true to Harry Luby's vision for eight decades, making money by treating its customers and employees exceptionally well. Written with the sweep and drama of a novel, *House of Plenty* tells the engrossing story of Luby's founding and phenomenal growth, its long run as America's favorite family restaurant during the post-World War II decades, its financial failure during the greed-driven 1990s when non-family leadership jettisoned the company's proven business model, and its recent struggle back to solvency. Carol Dawson and Carol Johnston draw on insider stories and company records to recapture the forces that propelled the company to its greatest heights, including its unprecedented practices of allowing store managers to keep 40 percent of net profits and issuing stock to all employees, which allowed thousands of Luby's workers to achieve the American dream of honestly earned prosperity. The authors also plumb the depths of the Luby's drama, including a hushed-up theft that split the family for decades; the 1991 mass shooting at the Killeen Luby's, which splattered the company's good name across headlines nationwide; and the rapacious over-expansion that more than doubled the company's size in nine years (1987-1996), pushed it into bankruptcy, and drove president and CEO John Edward Curtis Jr. to violent suicide. Disproving F. Scott Fitzgerald's adage that "there are no second acts in American lives," *House of Plenty* tells the epic story of an iconic American institution that has risen, fallen, and found redemption; with no curtain call in sight.

"Intrigue, mystery, and strategy; all in a historical profile of Luby's Cafeterias. This is a book about an institution we all knew as home; never thinking that the foundation was a business plan destined to work for fifty years. What went wrong? Read on! A 'must-read' for business schools everywhere, and a fun read for everyone." (on Brumley, Forbes Entrepreneur of the Year, Cofounder and Chairman of the Board of Encore Acquisitions Company) "House of Plenty is a great tale. . . . It will be of great interest not only to the public, but also to students of American culture. I literally do not know of a book that deals in any major way with the history or culture of the cafeteria . . . a subject of great social and cultural importance." (Robert Abzug, Oliver H. Radkey Regents Professor in History, University of Texas at Austin) "Who knew that the key to American success and salvation could be found on the cafeteria line? Only Carol Dawson. In crystalline prose, she tells a morality tale that is both as compulsively readable as a mystery novel and as illuminating about the American psyche as anything published in recent years. The death Dawson ultimately investigates is business ethics with a body of evidence that is utterly fascinating and utterly convincing." (Sarah Bird, author of *The Flamenco Academy*, *The Yokota Officers Club*, *Virgin of the Rodeo*, *The Mommy Club*, *The Boyfriend School*, and *Alamo House*) "Intrigue, mystery, and strategy; all in a historical profile of Luby's Cafeterias. This is a book about an institution we all knew as home; never thinking that the foundation was a business plan destined to work for fifty years. What went wrong? Read on! A 'must-read' for business schools everywhere, and a fun read for everyone." (on Brumley, Forbes Entrepreneur of the Year, Cofounder and Chairman of the Board of Encore Acquisitions Company) "House of Plenty is a great tale. . . . It will be of great interest not only to the public, but also to students of American culture. I literally do not know of a book that deals in any major way with the history or culture of the cafeteria . . . a subject of great social and cultural importance." (Robert Abzug, Oliver H. Radkey Regents Professor in History, University of Texas at Austin) "Who knew that the key to American success and salvation could be found on the cafeteria line? Only Carol Dawson. In crystalline prose, she tells a morality tale that is both as compulsively readable as a mystery novel and as illuminating about the American psyche as anything published in recent years. The death Dawson ultimately investigates is business ethics with a body of evidence that is utterly fascinating and utterly convincing." (Sarah Bird, author of *The Flamenco Academy*, *The Yokota Officers Club*, *Virgin of the Rodeo*, *The Mommy Club*, *The Boyfriend School*, and *Alamo House*) About the Author Carol Dawson is a writer in Austin, Texas. She is the author of the novels *The Mother-in-Law Diaries*, *Meeting the Minotaur*, *Body of Knowledge*, and *The Waking Spell*. She has also written for *Texas Monthly*, *Southern Living*, *Oxford American*, and a number of other publications. Carol Johnston is the only

granddaughter of Lola Luby Johnston and the only child of Luby's cofounder and corporate executive Charles R. Johnston and Gertrude Johnston. Carol grew up in the cafeteria business. Today, she is a professional designer in San Antonio, Texas.