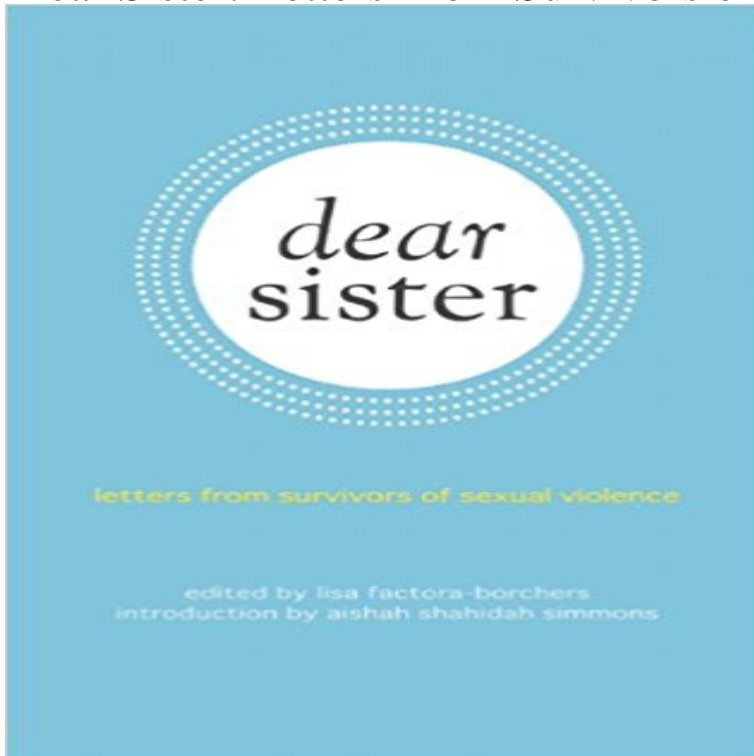


Dear Sister: Letters From Survivors of Sexual Violence



Dear Sister, It wasn't your fault; it was never your fault. You did nothing wrong. Hold this tight to your heart: it wasn't your fault. At night when you lay there and your mind fills with images and you wonder if only, if you had . . . if you hadn't . . . Remember: it wasn't your fault. In Oakland, California on March 24, 2015 a fire destroyed the AK Press warehouse along with several other businesses. Please consider visiting the AK Press website to learn more about the fundraiser to help them and their neighbors. Dear Sister shares the lessons, memories, and vision of over fifty artists, activists, mothers, writers, and students who share their stories of survival or what it means to be an advocate and ally to survivors. Written in an epistolary format, this multi-generational, multi-ethnic collection of letters and essays is a moving journey into the hearts and minds of the survivors of rape, incest, and other forms of sexual violence, written directly to and for other survivors. Dear Sister goes far beyond traditional books about healing, which often use experts to explain the experience of survivors for the rest of the world. Where other books about rape weave the voices of feminists and activists together and imagine what a world without violence might look like, Dear Sister describes the reality of what the world looks like through the eyes of a survivor. From a professor in the Midwest to a poet in Belgium, an escapee from a child prostitution ring, a survivor advocate in the Congo, and a sex worker in San Francisco, Dear Sister touches on issues of feminism, love, disability, gender, justice, identity, and spirituality. Praise for Dear Sister: This chilling, heartbreaking, and necessary collection consists of letters from 40 artists, activists, writers, and students, who are survivors of sexual assault and here offer counsel to sister survivors. Every story is shadowed by the teller's sense of shame, brokenness, depression, and pain,

but at the same time, in anticipation of the addressees experience of sexual assault, the letters also offer comfort, solidarity, reassurance, the possibility of healing, and testimony of survival. Publishers Weekly There is nothing on earth more changeable than telling our stories honestly, and listening to the stories of others with an open heart. That's especially true for survivors of sexualized violence who have been silenced by shame. These 50 brave Letters from Survivors of Sexual Violence will open floodgates of memory, expose body-invasion as the most traumatic of crimes, and show victimizers the roots and damage of their acts. I'm very grateful to Lisa Factora-Borchers for editing this book, to Aishah Shahida Simmons whose foreword sets a high bar of honesty, and to all the voices in it. I think you will be, too. Gloria Steinem Lisa Factora-Borchers is a Filipina writer and editor whose work has been published in *make/shift*, *Bitch*, *Left Turn*, and *Critical Moment*. Contributors: Aminah Shakur, Adrienne Maree Brown, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Allison McCarthy, Amita Y. Swadhin, Amy Ernst, Ana Heaton, Andrea Harris, Angel Propps, Anna Saini, Anne Averyt, Annu Saini, Ashley Burczak, *brownfemipower*, Brooke Benoit, Denise Santomauro, Desire Vincent, Dorla Harris, Harriet J., Indira Allegra, Isabella Gitana-Woolf, Joan Chen, Judith Stevenson, Juliet November, Kathleen Ahern, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Marianne Kirby, Maroula Blades, Mary Zelinka, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, Melissa Dey Hasbrook, Melissa G., Mia Mingus, Michelle Ovalle, Premala Matthen, Rebecca Echeverria, Renee Martin, River Willow Fagan, Sara Durnan, Sarah M. Cash, Shala Bennett, Shanna Katz, Sofia Rose Smith, Sumayyah Talibah, Sydette Harry, Birdy, Viannah E. Duncan, and Zoe Flowers.

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