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# The Incest Diary



## Synopsis

“In the fairy tales about father-daughter incest—The Girl Without Hands, Thousand Furs, the original Cinderella, and Donkey Skin, and the stories of Saint Dymphna, patron saint of incest survivors—the daughters are all as you would expect them to be: horrified by their father’s sexual advances. They do everything in their power to escape. But I didn’t. A child can’t escape. And later, when I could, it was too late. Throughout her childhood and adolescence, the anonymous author of *The Incest Diary* was raped by her father. Beneath a veneer of normal family life, she grew up in and around this all-encompassing secret. Her sexual relationship with her father lasted, off and on, into her twenties. It formed her world, and it formed her deepest fears and desires. Even after she broke away—even as she grew into an independent and adventurous young woman—she continued to seek out new versions of the violence, submission, and secrecy she had struggled to leave behind. In this graphic and harrowing memoir, the author revisits her early traumas and their aftermath—not from a clinical distance, but from deep within—to explore the ways in which her father’s abuse shaped her, and still does. As a matter of psychic survival, she became both a sexual object and a detached observer, a dutiful daughter and the protector of a dirty secret. And then, years later, she made herself write it down. With lyric concision, in vignettes of almost unbearable intensity, this writer tells a story that is shocking but that will ring true to many other survivors of abuse. It has never been faced so directly on the page.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is chilling and disturbing. It is not necessary for everyone to read, but it is certainly thought provoking. It made me think of how much infantilization of women and even pedophilic behaviors are embedded in our society. There is a lot that could be done to make the world a safer place for women and young girls. This book opened my eyes to that.

Quick read, interesting and hard to swallow, I wonder if it is real though, this person is defiantly a good writer though.

This book has some layers to it. Firstly, there's a lot of sex and violence in there. You've got to be able to summon the fortitude if you're squeamish, because there's no shortage of things that will cause cringing, outrage or perhaps even nausea. I don't think it's out of place, though. When you read through it, we're looking into the recollections of a woman whose early life was defined by sex and violence. Her very worldview is impacted by this, such is the extent that I doubt many people could reach their imaginations to the way that the author thinks about the world. Sexual abuse is ugly, and this book is ugly for its unvarnished telling of the same. About halfway through the book I remembered the phrase "Let us welcome controversial books and controversial authors." by the late President Kennedy. While not easy, she tells a story that bears reading because it is happening to our neighbors and family members. Too often do we wait until an untimely death or something similarly horrific that we closely examine the pain of others. The author isn't pulling any punches. She talks about the graphic violences she imagined on her loved ones, the pleasure she herself derived from the experiences and shares with how it has shaped her relationships. Incest may be unwholesome and messy business, but I feel as though I got something from this. I used to have a friend who told me of her history of sexual abuse. I got bits and pieces, but the telling was very

taxing on her and it didn't have the coherence of an author dedicating their story to paper. It colored her perception and view on the world in ways that I could not fathom until now.

First I'm male, second I've suffered abuse, including sexual, at the hands of an 'older female relative' (I still don't want to admit details other than to my wife, my therapist and my sponsor). It lay dormant for 50 years, but the opened memory is as clear as my first meeting my wife. It rings true, the final paragraph of the NY Times Review: "This book offers more sensation than perspective. The author's scalded and mixed emotions are best summarized by these two sentences: "I want him to think that I'm sexy. And I want to savagely mutilate his body and feed his corpse to dogs." also rings true, save I would have her still living. I haven't finished it, my Kindle says over an hour to go, but I went as far as I could. I will finish it. It doesn't, as the Times says, offer perspective, but it is not sensational. It is what this living hell is like. I enjoyed what was being done to me, what 14 year old heterosexual wouldn't. I would suggest that those who find it pornographic make a fast appointment with a psycho-therapist, to find what is lurking in closets of your mind.

I didn't find this book to be tantalizing in any respect. What I found is a very deep sadness for the author. She exposes some raw emotions and it seems that no one was there for her. The book goes into the dark areas of her life and her reaction to these makes it seem she is still carrying a distorted view of herself and her feelings that begin when she was first molested. I can not imagine the trauma she experienced. Her young mind mixing up love with sexual abuse. In my opinion, this trauma has not gone away and still coats everything she sees, feels and experiences. I give it 5 stars because of its honesty and the author's bravery in telling it.

Beautifully and interestingly written, the latter for its motion through time and mind. An interesting phenomenon of being a victim of childhood abuse, whether sexual or other physical violence or even neglect, is that to reveal it is to become the accused. (Kathryn Harrison was blamed, by no less than the revered Frank McCourt for publishing "The Kiss" while her father was alive!) Even if believed, to be told "You just better forget about it and get on with your life," is, in my opinion, to be dealt another blow. The only way out is through.

This is a painfully elegant, deceptively profound book. It is not pornographic. Rather it is an incredibly brave book requiring great courage to write. I assume it is an act of deep personal

liberation for the author. The writing is spare, as if the author were holding her breath while she wrote. There is a sense of walking a tightrope, of imminent peril in the creative act as there was in the living of this nightmare/dream/poem with her father and beyond. It is far from a perfect book, I suppose, but we need more books like this, books that speak of genuine human, intimate acts no matter how taboo they might be. We get far too many books about war, about gratuitous violence. Here we have a book about a disturbing intimacy between two human beings. It's not a pretty book. It is rather like looking upon the Guernica of a human soul-- disturbing yet beautiful. Ultimately this is a very moral book.

Excellent but very difficult book to read if a person has never heard incest stories. I think a good book for any clinician that deals with this subject as part of their practice and wishes to get a first hand account of the damage done to a survivor. Fascinating and sad, nauseous feeling at times reading it. However, it certainly gives one a better understanding of the subject matter. A very short read but one finds after a dozen pages they might wish to take a break. Be warned, the language it's course and the author gives very explicit details. This was the book that stayed with me and forced me to think about the subject for a long lingering time.

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