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# Etched In Sand: A True Story Of Five Siblings Who Survived An Unspeakable Childhood On Long Island



## Synopsis

Regina Calcaterra memoir, *Etched in Sand*, is an inspiring and triumphant coming-of-age story of tenacity and hope. Regina Calcaterra is a successful lawyer, New York State official, and activist. Her painful early life, however, was quite different. Regina and her four siblings survived an abusive and painful childhood only to find themselves faced with the challenges of the foster-care system and intermittent homelessness in the shadows of Manhattan and the Hamptons. A true-life rags-to-riches story, *Etched in Sand* chronicles Regina's rising above her past, while fighting to keep her brother and three sisters together through it all. Beautifully written, with heartbreaking honesty, *Etched in Sand* is an unforgettable reminder that regardless of social status, the American Dream is still within reach for those who have the desire and the determination to succeed.

## Book Information

File Size: 774 KB

Print Length: 323 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks (August 6, 2013)

Publication Date: August 6, 2013

Sold by: HarperCollins Publishers

Language: English

ASIN: B009NG18Z8

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #8,085 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #4 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Siblings #7 in Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Siblings #13 in Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Abuse > Child Abuse

## Customer Reviews

I went to graduate school to become a therapist and read about and came across many sad and disturbing stories. I've read other memoirs along these lines as well, but this is by far the most

incredible abuse I've ever read about. My jaw dropped over what she went through repeatedly throughout the book. What's even more amazing is the bond she shares with her siblings as they all seek to survive, and how they all come together. It's a powerful story of overcoming incredible odds. As a book, the writing is amazing. She uses flashbacks beautifully and is able to change tenses with ease. I never once got lost with chronology, which is easy to do when people use techniques like this. The book almost never drags. There's a time toward the end where it slows down a little, but that's a welcome change after the intensity throughout the rest of the book. It was also incredibly honest without being gruesome. There's nothing that's added for shock value - it is just her honest portrayal of what happened to her. At one point she even glosses over what perhaps was the most severe abuse she encountered. She does come across as a little self-promoting toward the end, but she definitely earned that liberty and far more. I walked away feeling disgusted with the child welfare system (which I was anyway as a foster parent), but also so thankful for what I had growing up (even though it wasn't always great) and even more thankful for what I'm able to give my children. This is a story that will encourage and inspire anyone. I highly recommend it.

By far, one of the best memoirs I've ever read. I actually had to slow myself down to savor every word that Regina Calcaterra had written down so that I wouldn't read too fast through anything. I wanted to feel what she was feeling, experience the pain and sadness, feel the cold winters without a warm coat, and try to understand what it's like to be afraid of the one person who is supposed to love you unconditionally and protect you from the things that could hurt you the most. I actually read most of this book during three days I was working out on a machine at the gym. An hour passed each day so quickly because I was so engrossed and mesmerized by this story. The abuse and suffering that Regina suffered at the hands of her mother is the stuff of nightmares and monsters but in this case, the monster is real. I tried to imagine an 11-year-old caring for two younger siblings -- finding them food, trying to keep them clean, teaching them their ABC's, shielding them from beatings. I'm not sure where she found the strength or courage. God bless this woman! And then after surviving such a horrible childhood, Regina not only went off to college and put herself through law school, worked tirelessly for various causes, landed numerous jobs, and emerged as a functioning, contributing woman in society. She didn't let her early years grind her into a negative individual. She put her best foot forward and made it all work beautifully. This book should be required reading for every senior high school English class. Children need to see how to be self-sufficient even when there's no one to teach you how. Beautifully written. A wonderful story. I'm so glad I had the opportunity to read this.

This was a book that was hard to put down. Regina Calcaterra narrates the horror of growing up with her 4 siblings pretty much on their own on Long Island. Their mother was a drunk and mostly absent for months. The older kids would steal food just to stay alive. They were terrified of the "system" so they would lie about their mother being at work when the social worker would visit. When you read this book, your troubles will suddenly seem very small when you learn what it took for these children to stay safe and alive. Regina is now a very successful lawyer in New York, which is amazing after all she endured, many times being beaten so badly, verbally and mentally abused constantly. Full of suspense, shock, and wonder at how these children survived, this book is not something you will want to stop reading.

I started to avoid this book because after reading "A Child Called It" a few years ago I have not wanted to read any books that deal with severe child abuse. This book was worth the risk though. The author and her four half siblings are older now and so that helps a little. The book does deal with horrendous abuse but the book is a necessary one and well worth the price on Kindle. RECOMMENDED as well as little Rosie's companion book, "Girl Unbroken" which this book contains an excerpt at the end.

Etched in Sand is one of those books you aren't sure whether to recommend or not.. It is an excellent alarm for all who want to help children of abuse and neglect to be very careful about how you protect them once they tell of their hell. I really couldn't put it down and ordered its sequel immediately, Girl Unbroken, and it's equally good. From the abused child's point of view, the world looks very different from the case worker's (or Guardian's) view., graphically presented in both these books. One wonders how these children survived with any brains (head injuries) or emotional stability and I fear for their old age arthritis at minimum. (due to extensive beatings). The long term effects of malnutrition has to take its toll as well. This is a must read for anyone in the social services and teaching fields and not a bad book for every neighbor to read in order to diagnose the neighbor child who never has the right clothes or is dirty or moves a lot. The latter is not so you can report abuse in the neighborhood but so you can provide a safety net or entertaining safe interlude for a child with whom you are concerned. These children survived because they loved one another and took care of each other as much as they dared and because there were teachers who encouraged them to succeed, giving specific advice about books and going to school. Really good books.

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