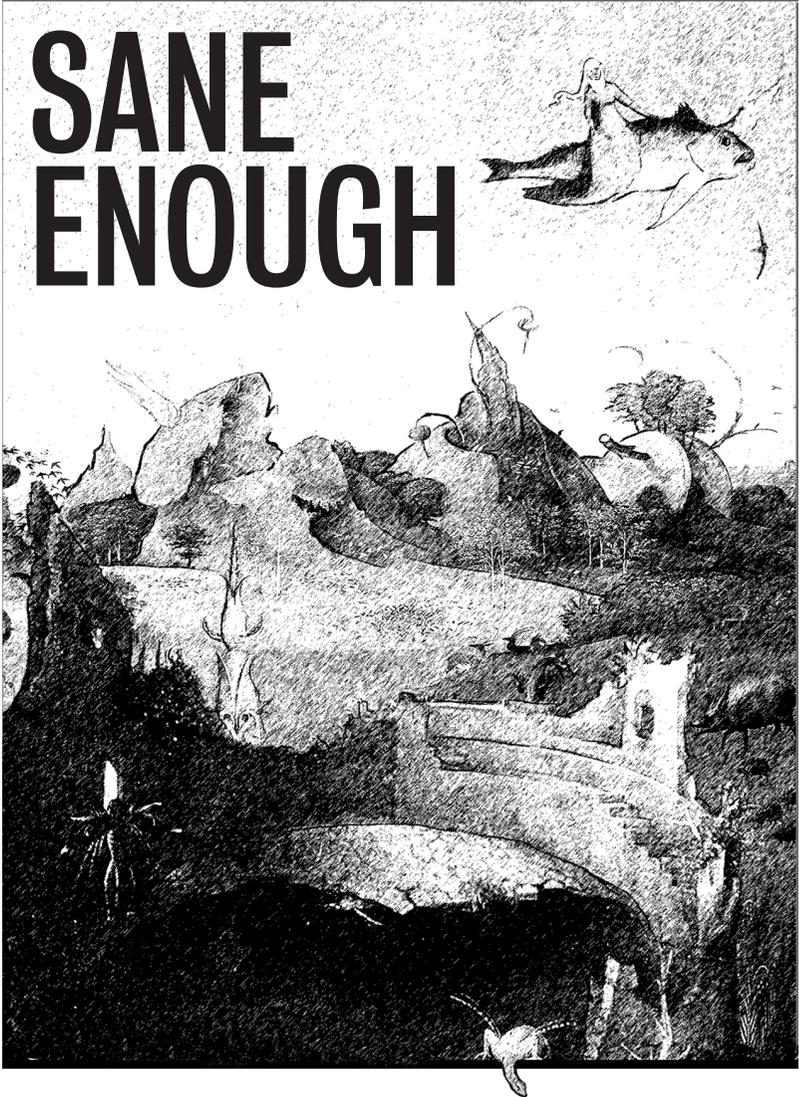


SANE ENOUGH



RECOVERY FROM A MOTHER'S SEXUAL ABUSE

a memoir by LINDA A. DAY

foreword by Dr. Michele Elliott, OBE


CROSSVINE
PRESS
2015

Foreword

Read this book. Why? Because it is a good read—you will be drawn into Linda's story right from the start. She has written an excellent memoir which will keep you turning the pages. You want to know what happened to her and how she survived the unthinkable sexual abuse by her mother.

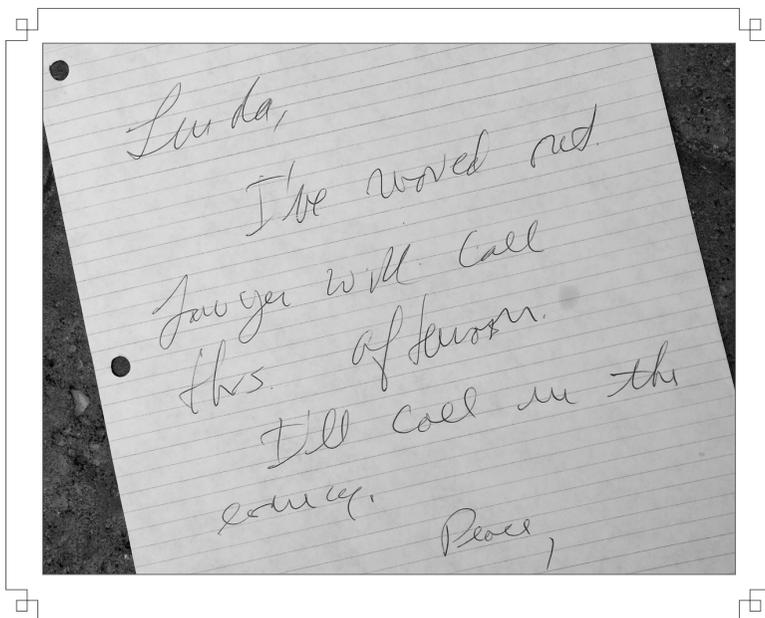
But this is more than just a recounting of terrible childhood traumas—it is insightful and pithy, and it brings you into a world the majority of us have thankfully never experienced. It is a hidden world which we need to know about and understand. *Sane Enough* is important, not only for survivors who will be comforted to know they are not alone, but also for their families, professionals and anyone who cares about children.

When I began writing in the 1980s about sexual abuse of children, there was disbelief that anyone could do such things to children and babies. Those of us who were declared as experts decided that sexual abuse was perpetrated by men and was the result of male power. Therefore women could not be sexual abusers of children, even though we knew that women battered, emotional abused and sometimes killed children. But sexually abuse? No.

Many years later, when I was speaking at a conference, a young man approached me and with tears in his eyes said, 'You know it isn't only men who do this.' That brought me up short, and I started asking audiences on radio and television if any of them had been sexually abused by a woman. The response was overwhelming—hundreds came forward saying they thought they were the only ones that had been abused by mothers, aunts, grandmothers, babysitters. So I wrote a book, *Female Sexual Abuse of Children*, with their stories—and was attacked by my fellow experts for doing such a disservice to women.

That is history, but it is true that today sexual abuse by women is still rarely spoken of or written about by professionals or those who are survivors. I am impressed that Linda Day has had the fortitude and will to write *Sane Enough*. She is an inspiration to us all.

Dr. Michele Elliott, OBE
Kidscape, Keeping Kids Safe
London, August, 2014



1. The Note, 1978

“Linda, I’ve moved out. Lawyer will call this afternoon. I’ll call in the evening. Peace Geoff.”

This is the note I find on the piano stool with the clawed feet, blocking my path, just inside the back door of our suburban ranch house. It is Wednesday afternoon, June 28, in a middle-class Houston suburb, and I have just returned from art classes at the University of Houston.

This morning my husband kissed me tenderly on the cheek before heading out the door for work. He never does that. I should have known.

I run past the stool, down the hallway to the room with the milky fragrance of childhood. I find my son’s teddy bear missing, the drawers open and empty. I phone the Montessori kindergarten. Geoff showed up this morning and pulled Mark out of class. They don’t know where he is.

I fall into the wooden rocking chair that Geoff gave me when Mark was

born. Every day Mark brought me his triumphs and tragedies for a listen, a kiss of congratulations, a hug of empathy, a band-aid of love. Every night at rock time, he fell asleep here in this rocking chair, in my arms, smelling of contentment. He whispered, “I love you Mommy.” Now he’s in trouble and I’m not there for him.

I’m here in this chair, an Aztec sacrifice still breathing after her heart has been ripped out. This is not the Geoff I trusted.

I remember Mark’s exultant first steps. The time he put together his first wooden puzzle and carried it triumphantly to his room — “I did this myself!” I remember him offering one of his toys to console a little boy whose mother had just smacked him. I remember his teachers telling me, Oh all the children love Mark.

I go to the bank. The safe deposit box is empty, the savings account gone. I transfer money from our remaining checking account into a new account for myself, \$937.

The lawyer calls at 4 PM. He finds me at my friend Margaret’s house and reads the restraining order he filed this morning: It accuses me of being a “homosexual pervert and probable child molester.” I am to have no contact with my son because such contact could cause him “immediate and irreparable harm.” I have until next Friday, nine days away, before I must appear in court to show cause why Geoff should not be granted permanent custody and I should not have my parental rights terminated.

The phone does not camouflage the smile behind the lawyer’s voice, the relish in “probable child molester.”

It will take years to discover there *is* a child molester behind all of this. It won’t be me.

2. Orbit, 1944

Mother spins above me in the kitchen, the cooking dance. I see the yellow butterflies on the hem of her apron flash by. I smell sizzling onions and the Lysol from house-cleaning. She crams chunks of meat into the grinder clamped to the counter, and a thick tongue of hamburger comes out.

But I don't want to watch the hamburger. I have already watched the dust mop and the toilet-bowl scrubber and the dust rag. I want her to watch me. I am a small forgotten planet orbiting her sun, as she blazes through the kitchen, intent on meatloaf.

I lean against her.

She flares, knocking me to the floor with the plate of meat, which clatters and breaks.

I start to cry.

Stop crying! Look at what you've done!

You pushed me...

Shame on you! Go to your room!

She looks like she is going to cry. She bends down to the floor, but not to me. Picks up the broken plate and the meat, washes the meat in the sink and pats it dry, pats her eyes with the towel. Then she turns back to me.

Now!

I get up. My knee hurts. My eyes and nose are running into my mouth.

If I have to say it one more time!

In my room, I know I've been bad again.