

Slightly Bruised and
a Little Broken

**“God will take our tragedies and transform
them into triumphs” (Romans 8:28)**

**“He has sent me to heal
the brokenhearted” (Isaiah 61:1)**

**“Strip yourselves of your former nature...
And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind
(having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude)”
(Ephesians 4:22-23)**

Slightly Bruised and a Little Broken

A MEMOIR,
rewritten and revised.

Petite Breaux

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This book is meant for mature audiences only as it describes scenes of abuse and violence. Please, do not continue reading if you are under the age of 18 or if this content is disturbing for you.

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Acknowledgments

To My family, I love you all.

Special thank you to my eldest daughter for remembering dates, times, and events of the past. Thank you to all my children for loving me through all the difficulties.

Thank you, Mother, for loving me unconditionally.

Thanks to my significant other for always being there.

Thank God for giving me the strength and courage to move forward.

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Introduction



Writing this book, my goal is to help others. While my story isn't unheard of, I am optimistic the way I tell it will allow someone out there to feel less alone. Initially, I believed keeping things about my life private was best and not sharing wouldn't affect me in the long run.

I was wrong.

I had a voice, and I should have used it—should have told someone what was happening with me and to me.

“Why would anyone stay in a violent relationship?” I used to be one of those who ask this question. But not anymore. Apparently, it takes being in the shoes of someone in a toxic relationship to begin to appreciate the reasoning behind some of the things they do or don't do. I

have learned that looking in from the outside can be very misleading.

My past has affected certain aspects of my life, aspects I haven't even come around to think about. That said, our past doesn't define the person we are today. We have all gone through something in our lives. Whether it's chaos, drama, failed relationships, dysfunctional family or employment—we have experienced those less than happy moments in life. By sharing my experiences, I am trying my best to cope with life and not let anything hold me back.

People always say that I don't smile. I respond saying not smiling is no reflection of my happiness. I mean, my life is not perfect. Do I wish it could be better? Yes!

I think about so many parts of my life, and I often find my thoughts are all over the place—as was my life since childhood. As children, we sometimes mock our parents' lifestyles. Although my children know I love them, it was never shown verbally or physically. I regret this. I have many regrets. But all I can do is try not to repeat my mistakes.

Consistently trying to be a better mother, a better daughter, a better person. I was a young mother of three by the age of 22. I, therefore, had to grow up fast. No one to

blame but myself. However, I didn't have the chance to enjoy my adolescent years like others my age.

Revengeful thoughts on all those who had wronged me. What could be done and how? I didn't know. Some I would just curse at, and for others, I would just keep the hatred for them inside me. This was not a feeling anyone should hold on to because it causes underlying health issues. Despite this, I love helping others. I would give my last to help another person, but I don't like being taken advantage of or used.

A male friend of mine that I used to hang out with, had witnessed my generosity towards others. He told me if I continued to be this nice, nice person giving my last, I would always leave myself open to be fucked over.

~ One ~

FATHERLESS DAUGHTER



My mother, Francine, did her best raising me and strived to protect me from the dark sides of society. In retrospect, she did an excellent job: I had all the material items a young girl could want. I dressed well, my hair was always done in pigtails with ribbons and bows. I knew my mother loved me, but she never really demonstrated her affection toward me—no warm hugs, cheek kisses. There generally was no real physical display of a mother's love to her child. I decided this was because she didn't have it in her childhood.

Besides all that, my mother was an extremely strict woman. Dishes had to be washed in a certain way, beds had to be made in a certain way, clothes had to be folded in a certain way, and the house had to be cleaned in a certain

way. Everything had to be done in a certain way. If none of this was done correctly, I would have to do it all over again.

I always told my mother I would move out the second I turned 18. I would leave home and live on my own. I was a hardheaded child, and I did not like to listen. I wanted to do things my way.

She did not want me hanging out with friends or going to school dances. I loved getting out of the house. I was always somewhere I should not be, and once Francine found out, I got a whipping. I was always getting a whipping, not only for being elsewhere but also for my smart tongue and for lying to get out of trouble. My behavior only got worse as I reached my teenage years.

As a teenager, I was not happy with how certain parts of my body looked. For instance, I thought my nose and ears were too big, so I hated them.

I also did not have many friends. I concluded this was because I was unconventional and a loner.

I took band in school and played the flute. I additionally went out for track and made the team. It was a bit of freedom, but just as I made the team, I got into trouble in class for speaking rudely to my teacher. I was off the team immediately because of it. I had to find another way to keep myself away from home. That's when I took

advantage of the times I could spend nights at my aunt's house with my cousins. I also stayed with my grandmother as much as possible—I had all the freedom I wanted.

But the freedom was only the beginning. I soon started skipping school and snuck around town.

I spent my newfound time outdoors—I've always loved being outdoors all day. I'd ride my bike, skate on the sidewalk, play hopscotch, jump rope, play marbles and hide-and-seek, climb trees, jump off home rooftops. I'd also go to the park to sit on the merry-go-round, making it go as fast as it could; and the swings, swinging as high as my legs could pump. I was what I would call a dainty tomboy. I even had the style of dressing to go with it: always donning my cute short outfits and dresses.

There were also downsides to being outdoors often.

Sometimes, I would see fathers playing with their daughters at the park. These reminded me of my situation. I knew of my father, but he didn't raise me, I also never lived with him, and neither was he in my life. My mother and father were not married when I was born. And a few months after my birth, my father got another girl pregnant and chose not to be there for my mother and me. Within a year he married that girl, and they had a daughter.

I'm not sure how long he was married the first time, but sometime later, my father remarried a second time and had two sons.

I have always known about my younger sister and brothers. I remember meeting my sister and playing with her as a child. Her mother and mine even became friends.

My father didn't attempt to have a relationship with my younger siblings, which wasn't surprising at all. I mean, he never bothered to have a relationship with me. That said, these family dynamics caused some rather unusual moments.

Back then, many kids used the city transit to get to and from school. One time, in the sixth grade, while riding the city transit back home from school (Holy Redeemer Catholic School in New Orleans), I saw this little boy. He was about four years my junior and looked so familiar. Then, it dawned on me: he could be my younger brother.

He was getting off at his stop, so I decided to do the same. I never said anything to him, but I continued to follow him. He'd look back at me now and then. I wanted to know him, but after trailing him for a few blocks, I turned around and headed back in the direction of home.

That next Saturday, I searched the yellow pages for my dad's phone number. I found it and called the number.

However, a small boy answered:

“Can I speak to Joseph?” I asked.

“This is Joseph.”

“No. Your father Joseph.”

“Who is this?”

“Your sister Petite.”

“You’re not my sister!” he shouted. “I only have one sister—Margarite.” Then, he hung up the phone.

I never called again.

I tried on several occasions to have a relationship with my father. As a small child around the age of 10 or 11, I would cross the wide and busy streets of New Orleans all by myself. I would walk to my father’s home and knock on his front door. Never invited inside, I would have to talk to him on the porch.

I got the impression he was uncomfortable with me dropping by because he constantly looked back at his front door—anxiously so—while he talked to me. I mean, we didn’t talk exactly. He basically looked at me and tried to make small talk with me. It appeared he didn’t want his wife to know I was on her front porch. I’d stay for a few minutes, and I would be on my way. He never cared that his little daughter would be walking those streets alone. No concerned parent questions: