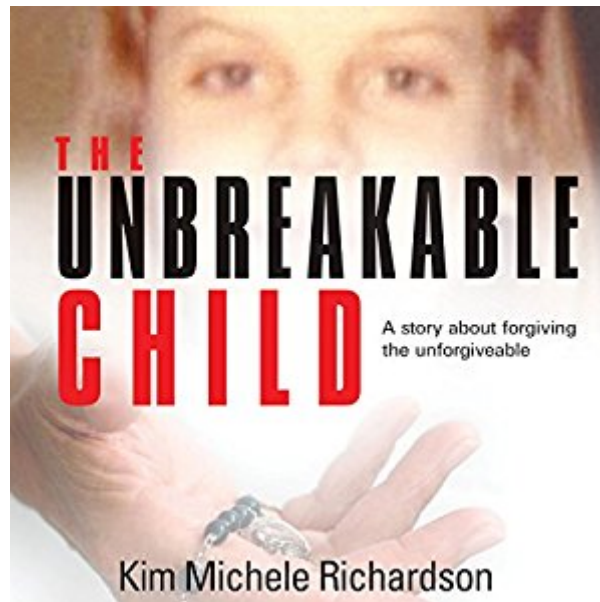


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# The Unbreakable Child



## Synopsis

The Unbreakable Child, a story about forgiving the unforgivable, is a riveting journey inside the secretive underbelly of the St. Thomas / St. Vincent Orphan Asylum in rural Kentucky. It is the first book in the United States to confront the institutionalized physical and emotional abuse suffered by countless orphans at the hands of Catholic clergy over these last decades. It also documents the historic United States lawsuit and first-ever settlement paid by Roman Catholic nuns in the United States as recompense for decades of brutal institutional abuse of the author, her sisters and 42 other children.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Unbreakable Child will rip your heart out of your chest and dangle it in front of you. You'll ignore that minor inconvenience, because your eyes won't move from the pages of Kim Richardson's debut memoir. This is the story of Richardson's nine years in a Kentucky orphanage. At the same time, it's the story of the lawsuit brought against the order of nuns who ran the orphanage by Richardson and forty-four other former orphans. You know those sensational stories splashed across the newspapers and leading the nightly news? The ones about priests and nuns abusing and molesting children? Kim lived it. Kim and her three older sisters were taken from their neglectful mother when Kim was a toddler. The beatings started soon after and didn't stop until the girls' mother was granted custody again nine years later. There were bright spots--the gardener's flowers and homemade cookies, the friendships, the visits from the mostly ineffectual social worker. But the

brightest spot was perhaps the death of Kim's main abuser. Interspersed with the story of Kim's childhood is the story of the lawsuit. Forty-five regular people against the might of the Church might seem too daunting to attempt. But one lawyer took on the task, and won. Kim's struggle against high-powered lawyers mirrors her indomitable spirit struggling against years of abuse. Kim came out the victor both times. The end of this book, with Kim loved by her husband and children, is a testament to hope and strength.

I simply cannot recommend this book highly enough. This edition of *The Unbreakable Child*, published by Behler Publications, is new and expanded, and contains a reader's guide. The memoir details Kim's horrific abuse as a child at the hands of the clergy who were supposed to be caring for her and nurturing her, and it also chronicles Kim's work, together with other former orphans, with William McMurray, a strong advocate for victims of clergy and institutional abuse. Kim and other former orphans were the first clergy abuse victims to win a settlement against an order of Catholic nuns. The book is very timely, with new horror stories of clergy abuse coming to light each day. Kim's story is healing to those who have themselves experienced such horrors, and it is a testament to Kim's spirit, her unbreakable strength, and the power which resides in her heart to forgive. Her memoir also offers encouragement to people who have suffered abuse, that it is possible to strengthen the broken places and live fully and freely. And last but not least, her book plays a strong and vital role in demanding accountability and apology from the Catholic church, acknowledgement by the Church of the wrongs committed by its clergy to bring about an environment, in all institutions of the Church, in which those wrongs will never be tolerated again. Kim Michele Richardson is an inspiration and a true heroine.

I just finished reading *The Unbreakable Child*. It was one of the hardest books I've ever read, yet one of the most necessary. I am a Catholic nun and was outraged at the humiliation, degradation, pain and exploitation that Kim and the others experienced during their years at the orphanage. I am so very, very sorry that those who should have shown God's love for them treated them with such cruel intent. Kim's amazing journey of healing is ultimately a beacon of hope, showing that in our darkest moments our light shines brightest.

Through the pages of this well written memoir, Kim Richardson puts a "face" on all children who have suffered abuse at the hand of those charged to protect and nurture them. In an age where abuse of children and vulnerable adults seems epidemic, her story reminds the reader of the

responsibility we all have to be vigilant for evidence of abuse of those who cannot protect themselves and quick to report suspected abuse to the appropriate authority. This is not just a story of injustice and cruelty beyond belief, but is a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit and the triumph of perseverance and determination over stark adversity. Readers who have suffered an abusive past will be inspired by Ms. Richardson's example of hope, courage, and reconciliation. Those who have devoted their careers to protecting children will face their work with a renewed sense of mission. No one will read this book and not be deeply affected. It is a must read for students entering the field of social work! Thank you, Ms. Richardson, for opening your life and sharing your journey for our betterment.

The Unbreakable Child is this generation's A Child Called It. An inspirational read, full of hope, justice, and redemption. With heartbreaking honesty, Richardson chronicles her abuses at the orphanage where she spent many years not only abandoned by society and the Church, but by her own family. Despite the brutal attempts to break her spirit, Richardson remained not only the unbreakable child, but a woman determined to break through the institutional wall to speak for victims everywhere. This book will break your heart, then open it to the possibility that through strength, determination, and love those once forgotten will be found again. There are poignant moments of clarity and tenderness, and even humor. One can never forget Richardson's first ice-cream cone and the delight of that first taste of sweet, or her first supper of fried chicken, her first gift of a beautiful bracelet, her first time to taste the wind - Young Richardson's gratitude for the smallest of life's gifts will stay locked in the reader's heart forever. And most beautiful of all is when Richardson at last finds her Forever Family. An unforgettable must read.

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