

## LEVEL 2

Winner and national Honor Award recipient: Erikka Potts

Title: *A Child Called It*

Author: Dave Pelzer

Dear Dave Pelzer,

Like you, my mom would “punish” my older sister and me. At a wedding in a hotel, she gave me a bloody nose for pushing my sister. She told me to clean up my mess and that if there was any blood she would hit me again. Another time she pulled out a chunk of my sister’s hair. Growing up, our life was almost like yours – but all that changed one night.

As a child, I always had really bad self-esteem. My mom was a heavy alcoholic. She blamed my sister and me for all her life problems. I was a very hateful person inside and out because of her and from hearing how “worthless” I was and how I would end up to be like my dad, a “junkie who lived on the street”. After a while, I began thinking that I was only here to be her slave and servant, much like you did.

Like you, my mom would be better when my dad came around. He was my hero and savior. But eventually my mom started hitting us in front of him and he wouldn’t say anything. After a while I didn’t even care if he did come around.

One day my sister got her hands on *A Child Called It*. She hid the book under her mattress so my mom would not find out about it (in her eyes we were always trying to deceive her), and we would read it at night after she passed out. As we got further on, we realized that there are other kids who have lives like us. With that book underneath us, we worked up the courage to seek help and tell someone about it.

The one thing that has stuck with me to this day and that I say in my prayers every night is when you say “Before I open the car door, I bowed my head and with peace in my heart I whispered ‘And deliver me from evil. Amen.’” Something about this quote resonated with me and now when I am scared or nervous, I say this in my head. In this quote I felt like God was trying to talk with me. And I do feel that He answered my prayers.

My sister and I ended up telling my auntie about my mom’s abuse. Today I am in foster care alone, without my siblings, but I get to see them all the time. My mother is in rehab and has kicked aside her addiction. She is taking classes and I get to see her all the time. My foster home is my heaven.

Thank you for sharing your experience with me.

Sincerely,

Erikka Potts