



Made From Scratch: A Memoir

Sandra Lee

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This powerful, emotional, and astonishing story will inspire anyone who has faced adversity to overcome challenges and persevere. Sandra's candid account of her personal journey offers a rare glimpse into the life of the woman behind the phenomenal success of Semi-Homemade. Smart, witty, and moving, *Made From Scratch* is an uplifting tale of determination and survival. Sandra is stunningly open about her abusive childhood and the responsibility thrust upon her at an early age to be the caretaker of her family. Through a series of tragedies and challenges, she painfully discovered that we are all responsible for the choices we make in life. With the guidance of her grandmother, Sandra learned to be a self-sufficient and independent woman. After moving to Wisconsin at 15 to live with her father, an unexpected tragedy and the fallout from his mistakes required her to get her own apartment while still in high school. At 21, Sandra moved to Los Angeles, where she found tremendous success, launching her first product line, Kurtain Kraft. Working with the gritty resolve and make-do skills she learned as a child, she became a millionaire by the time she was 25, only to lose her fortune before the age of 30 and have to start all over again. Sandra started *Semi-Homemade*, smarter and wiser from her past mistakes, and has never looked back.

Now dedicated to helping others through various charities and foundations, Sandra is committed to aiding and inspiring people to reach their dreams. Her unforgettable story will show that if she can do it, you can too. *Made From Scratch* will make you laugh, cry, think, and embrace the grace and glory in every day. Sometimes feisty but always sincere, *Made From Scratch* has all of the ingredients that make up the recipe of a courageous life and remarkable success.

Written by:

Sandra Lee is a lifestyle expert and a New York Times and Amazon.com best-selling author. With 13 books to her credit, she is the host of a top-rated TV show, *Semi-Homemade Cooking*, on the Food Network. Sandra resides in Los Angeles and New York City.

Laura Morton is the author of 30 books, eight of which are New York Times best sellers, including *The Truth Is*, Melissa Etheridge's memoir; *Bringing Elizabeth Home*, the Elizabeth Smart story; and *Healthy Living*, Joan Lunden's personal journey. Laura lives in New York.

Made From Scratch: A Memoir Details

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From Reader Review Made From Scratch: A Memoir for online ebook

Whistlers Mom says

I read a library copy of this book five or six years ago and have never forgotten it. At the time, I had never heard of Sandra Lee and Her "Semi-Homemade" cook books or show. I've always been too busy cooking to spend much time reading about it or watching cooking shows. To me, it's just a beautiful, memorable story of a person who lived through a tough childhood and survived and thrived.

The author says at the end of her book that it came as a huge surprise to many people that she had grown up in such awful circumstances and I can see why. She looks like a woman who grew up on an "estate" with horses and servants. But the reality was far different. She was born to a teenage mother who's ONLY act of maternal kindness was to abandon her two little daughters with their paternal grandmother. In her house, Sandy and Cindy learned the value of frugality and hard work in an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and high standards. It was unquestionably the grounding of those early years that enabled the sisters to survive the nightmare they lived through when their violent, neglectful mother choose to reclaim them.

Eventually, the mother gave birth to three more children by her second husband and (after he jumped ship) it was the author who raised herself and her younger siblings. She tells of efforts to stretch food stamps, keep the younger children clean and clothed, and bring in extra money with odd jobs - all the while navigating life with a volatile, angry pill-addict. During her teens, the mother was no longer able to hide the horrible situation and the children were taken from her. Sandra went to live in Wisconsin with her father and his new wife, but he was an alcoholic and eventually went to prison. Amazingly, his daughter managed to finish high school and even attend college for two years.

I found her account of her business career fascinating, although it's not really the kind of thing I'm usually interested in. Although the scars from her early life remain, she learned how to make use of her talents and build a good life for herself. Best of all, she has maintained strong ties with all of her siblings and their partners and children. Social workers who move mountains to keep siblings together know that children in dysfunctional families learn to rely on each other for the strength and support that they don't get from adults. The author and her brothers and sisters are very much a "family" even though their parents failed them.

I recently bought a copy of this book to pass on to a young friend and reread it myself. I'm just as impressed as I was the first time. This is a story of hope that would bring comfort to many people.

Emily says

I was introduced to The FoodNetwork and Sandra Lee while breast feeding my babies in the middle of the night back in 2003. I have to confess, I don't like her show much or her products. It especially bugs that she coordinates her outfit to match her kitchen, to match her "tablescapes" to match the menu. To me it also seems like she gets way too excited about cocktail hour. After browsing some of the other reviews I was curious to note that this has not gone un-noticed by others...

Whatever.

While clearly I'm not a writer myself... and often can't decipher good from bad writing, I really enjoyed reading about her life. She has ended up being quite the inspiration to so many. Here is a person who has every right to be bitter and angry about the hand she was dealt. I think it is really amazing where she has ended up so far. Her family being front and center. Those brothers and sisters really could have ended up in

different and very dire situations... Her love and devotion to them is genuine. A great lesson to us all.

Lorie says

Embarrassingly I thought I was reading about Sara Lee for the first hour or more - not that I knew anything about either of them, I just like to discover people by reading their books so I try not to read the description too thoroughly so as not to spoil the fun. Nice outcome this time!

Sandra Lee's story proves that your destiny is earned. She has a remarkable story that is inspiring and uplifting in a way I had not expected. I love stories of people who make something with nothing but stay true to themselves.

She reads the audio version herself which I especially like.

Antoinette says

In my years of culture snobbery I have learned a great many things. I have been shown time and time again that even though a title is on a best seller list it can still be a good read. I have discovered the joys of paperback fiction, and the thrills of celebrity memoirs. I have learned to appreciate pop music, country music, world music, and a variety of other musics I once found untouchable. I enjoy big dogs and little dogs equally, and I some of the finest people I have met have less than a high school education. However, Sandra Lee's memoir Made From Scratch is a gigantic piece of ass crap.

It is amazing to me that she not only managed to get this published and make best seller lists, someone requested that she write it in the first place. Though her childhood was not exactly pleasant, I didn't exactly find it unpleasant. Her worst claim of abuse was a sexual assault that *almost* happened. Her mother was barely in her life, but she did have several devoted relatives that helped raise her. She jumps back and fourth from different time periods several times per page, her emotions (no matter what they are) leave her with tears streaming down her face. There are several grammatical errors, and sometimes entire words are left out. The ghost writer must have been enjoying one too many of Sandra's famous cocktails.

Just in case you are still thinking about reading this book, here are some quotes of sections I feel represent her merit as storyteller...

I explained to Harvey that my demographic was made up of women I call semi-homemakers who are between the ages of 35 and 54 and are generally running their households. A semi-homemaker probably has kids and goes to church. She plays host at the holidays and is the center for family and friends. She is a stay-at-home mom or a working woman. Of course, most of us know that all moms are working women. She's the one in charge, although she makes her husband believe that he is.

It seems as though Sandra is encouraging some sort of repressed, '50's housewife mentality. She imagines her readers playing up the importance of their husbands? Why are they all married? As a lesbian college student (and fan of Lee's) I found that whole section terribly offensive.

(her future husband has request she sign a prenup) As I read through the document, my fairy tale quickly became crushed by the act of one attorney, I was shocked that my future husband made such a request and stunned by the aggressiveness of his attorney. I put up a fight for a while, but then I decided to give in and

sign the agreement. I was secure in the relationship...

She later refers to the prenup as a document that ended their marriage before it began. It was...awful to read that she had abandoned her beliefs and signed something she didn't believe in. It was handled with such nonchalance. In fact, her entire marriage seemed suspiciously unimportant.

What is the point of this book? If it was not about baking and designing, then it was supposed to be about her life. I guess we should assume that Sandra Lee is an emotionally unavailable twit. I cannot BELIEVE I read this entire thing, and I despise the fact that it has made so much money. She had better make some damn good casseroles next season!

*I just remember something else awful about this monstrosity! There are quotes from Kafka, THE BIBLE, and Nietzsche thrown about randomly in every chapter. Somebody is trying hard to be an intellectual, aren't they?

Sherri says

I watched numerous TV network shows of Semi-Homemade. This gave me an insight into her upbringing and her career before the show stardom. Harsh days. It's a rags to riches story that is probably not far off from so many others who make it successful in their chosen career. It is unbelievable how she was all of a sudden in the right place at the right time and wasn't afraid to speak to people as she started her home business and trade show circuits.

I think there were too many details that didn't need to be there; more of just filling time. It was unbelievable how she could be this "Suzy homemaker" while jet-setting to Paris, St. Tropez, L.A. and New York all the time. It didn't seem believable that she could relate to the stay-at-home or working woman; only remembering her childhood with her grandma's recipes and decorating.

I did the audio version and Lee was the narrator.

Cindy says

Here I thought Sandra Lee was just another privileged blond bimbo who made it rich because of people she knew and her looks. Little did I know about Sandra Lee. She had a difficult childhood and is truly a survivor. Quite an inspirational success story.

Amy says

Okay so I'm giving this 3 stars only because I think I laughed more reading this book than I have reading a book in a long time. That's not necessarily a good thing, but it was hilarious nonetheless. I thought maybe I'd gain some newfound appreciation for Sandra Lee after reading this, but really I just dislike her even more. It's really a riveting book, whether it's the extended explanations of her illustrious career selling stun guns at home shows or when she rewrote what were probably perfectly good recipes from Le Cordon Bleu to make them easier and faster, and no doubt suckier. Also the inspirational quotes (including the one attributed to the Apple Computer commercial...pure poetry) and completely irrelevant chapter titles really added to the

reading experience. And we can't forget about those god awful window treatments that made her into a millionaire at 25 (what a difficult life). The name of the product alone was genius: "I went with Kurtain Kraft because I was making curtains as a craft." Thanks for clarifying that. And call me heartless, but I was under the impression she was like...living in a box on the side of the road or something, her life didn't seem to be as awful as they made it seem. Parental issues, welfare, and food stamps aside (note: you're not on food stamps anymore, you can stop cooking like you are), she seemed to have things under control as a kid and plenty of people to help her out later. People have it a lot worse. Unless it actually was worse than it came across and it was just so poorly written that it didn't seem as severe as it was. But I mean. That part about her mom asking her "where the hell" her shoes were and the subsequent rant about the word "hell." Please.

Leane says

Went in to a LOT of completely unnecessary details. (Retelling the details of room decorations from years ago.)

I like Sandra Lee and I always enjoyed her Semi-Homemade show but the book wasn't anything that great.

Meg Powers says

Ugh. I wish I could give this a half star. Her autobiography was co-written. This probably has to do with a lack of any real personal voice. Reading the dust jacket, I'm going to assume that this is a pretty common thing for vapid sort-of celebrities who can't write for shit.

I suppose I have to clarify I knew this would be awful, but I just LOVE the train wreck that is Sandra Lee, and I thought it would be a good goof. I did consider that MAAAYBE reading her autobiography would humanize her to a point where I could no longer yell at the screen as she churns out another 1940s Disney idea of Chinese culture themed "tablescape", and as her pendulous boobs dip into her latest taco seasoning/soup mix casserole slop without feeling a little guilty. She's had a hard life of hunger and troubled household-hopping. HOWEVER, her narration is self-absorbed, self-congratulating dreck, and when she does talk about how difficult her life has been, it's in the vaguest and inhuman way, leaving me completely cold.

No, this was not a good goof. The only funny bits in this book are the constant cheesy quotes, which are obviously taken from a book with "inspirational" written all over it, and the climax where she talks about the incredible and, once again, INSPIRING, poem "Footprints in the Sand." Sandra Lee's autobiography was uncomfortable and downright boring. For good wince-inducing Sandra Lee, stick with the t.v show.

Josephus FromPlacitas says

Sandra Lee, the personality that could launch ten thousand psych thesis projects.

If you don't know the magic of Sandra Lee's culinary and decorative stylings, I suggest you read every single entry on these two forum pages:

<http://www.poe-news.com/forums/sp.php...>

and

<http://www.poe-news.com/forums/sp.php...>

The disaster that is her cooking is as engrossing a six-car pileup on the Interstate; the disaster that is her personality is no less absorbing.

Lee's cooking and memoirs are paragons of un-self-consciousness. The lack of awareness of good taste or good nutrition is central to her cooking. On page 30 there's a perfect example, she's lost her shoes, making the family late for school, and her mother Vickie is "livid."

"Vickie kept saying I was so disorganized and screaming 'Where the hell are they?' I vividly recall the word 'hell' because Grandma Lorraine never swore. Grandma would have hated that word being used in her house. It wasn't Christian. I thought I had done something really terrible for Vickie to be yelling and swearing. Vickie's reaction left a lasting impact. To this day I make it a point to always be organized."

Did you catch that? The thing that left the biggest life lesson and had the most long-term impact on her wasn't "Christian" civility, it was heathen abusiveness. I don't think any recognition that irony comes anywhere near Sandra Lee's empty little head. [Also, I've always been confused by the "Christian-ness" of not using scary, evil, Satan-invoking **BAD WORDS**.]

Angelar says

Apparently "overcoming adversity" means the following: growing up with your Laurence Welk fan of a grandmother who thinks the angels save people parking spots at the grocery store, enduring some abuse at the hands of your parents and having to take more responsibility around the house, and then becoming insanely rich making as-seen-on-TV gadgets for hanging revolting curtains and writing books about how you can substitute Cool Whip mixed with vanilla extract for actual whipped cream because the real thing is "too much work."*

I read this for my own amusement because, to me, Sandra Lee is the face of food horror. There are some entertaining "food" anecdotes and blatant misinformation within -- describing Costa Rica as "South America," &c. -- but this would be a far more satisfying memoir if it were less emotionally detached, if it weren't so goddamn money-worshipping, and if it didn't feel like it was written for a 6-year-old. Self-awareness be damned! I suppose that's what you get when the author dropped out of college after a few years of living next to a sorority house. Sorry about your abusive family, Sandy, but maybe you should have spent more than 6 weeks writing this piece of garbage -- or just bought a pre-made memoir at the grocery store and dumped a can of apple pie filling into it. Once you come to terms with your own lesbianism and alcoholism and write a scandalous new memoir, we'll talk.

*This is why grocery stores carry whipped cream in a can. Just sayin'.

Kathleen says

I enjoyed her show, and had seen a piece about her on Chefography. That is what interested me in finding more about Sandra Lee. She is a strong woman who overcame tremendous odds.

Victoria says

A fast read. Not particularly well-written, but a decent rags-to-riches story. I have not been a fan of her TV show, but now that I know how hard she worked to get where she is I think I'll give it a second chance.

Darlene Payne says

I wanted to read this book because I had heard there was a lot more to Ms Lee's background than one would think. She's beautiful, famous and successful, so I didn't know what to expect. I was surprised to learn that she was the product of a neglectful home, and her mother dropped her and her sister off at her grandmother's and didn't come back for years. That was actually the bright spot of Ms Lee's childhood, because living with her grandmother she had structure, affection, guidance and love. Unfortunately, after her mother remarried she wanted her daughters back, and started adding more children to the mix. By the time Ms Lee was 12, her mother was having depressions and becoming abusive. Even at that young age, she was responsible for cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping and watching the younger children.

There's a lot more to the story, and it's an interesting one. It also shows what you can overcome by working hard and believing in yourself.

Paula says

I read this book in one afternoon/evening. I have never done that before. I just felt like I wanted to know how it turned out, even though I pretty much already did. I had always thought she was a Dr.'s wife or something that just had to entertain and have parties. After seeing part of her chefography show on Food Network, I learned otherwise. My mom happened to have this book so I was excited to read it when she was finished. What a life Sandra had and what an inspiration she is/could be to girls who think they have no one to help them.
