



Captive: A Mother's Crusade to Save Her Daughter From a Terrifying Cult

Catherine Oxenberg

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In this heartbreaking and shocking exposé, one of *Dynasty*'s biggest stars lays bare a secretive organization that is holding her daughter hostage and details her mission to save her in this powerful depiction of a mother's love and determination.

I am a mother whose child is being abused and exploited. And I am not alone.

In 2011, Catherine joined her daughter, India, at a leadership seminar for a new organization called NXIVM. Her twenty-year-old daughter was on the threshold of building a new company and they both thought this program might help her achieve her dream. But quickly, Catherine saw a sinister side to what appeared to be a self-help organization designed to help its clients become the best versions of themselves.

Catherine watched in horror as her daughter fell further and further down the rabbit hole, becoming brainwashed by the organization's charismatic leader. Despite Catherine's best efforts, India was drawn deeper into the cult, eventually joining a secret, elite "sorority" of women members who are ordered to maintain a restricted diet, recruit other women as "slaves," and are branded with their leader's initials.

In *Captive*, Catherine shares every parent's worst nightmare, and the lengths that a mother will go to save her child. Featuring interviews with past members of NXIVM and experts in the field of cults, Oxenberg attempts to draw back the curtain on how these groups continue to lure in members. She relates her continuing journey to try to reach her daughter, to save her from what she believes is a dangerous, mind-controlling cult.

Captive: A Mother's Crusade to Save Her Daughter From a Terrifying Cult Details

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Janine says

I picked this book up because I'd seen bits of the 20/20 piece on Nxivm and was shocked by Allison Mack's participation in it. My heart goes out to the author and her daughter, and their story made me sick to my stomach, but the book itself was...erratic? It seemed to jump around a lot, so much so that I couldn't follow the timeframe in which many events occurred. It was a bit confusing. I'm glad Ms. Oxenberg got her story out there because it's an important one, but the book was just okay.

Roger Bailey says

Without a doubt the cult is a fascinating story, but you won't get much more than what the gossip sites have told you already here. Instead we get the author almost trying to defend herself for her daughter joining.

Lisa Davis says

Yes, this book is an incredible expose of the craziness of the NXIVM cult, and yes, there are things in here to make your jaw drop open, but ultimately what is so powerful about this book is how one mother did anything and everything to bring her daughter back from the brink.

Anne-Marie says

Listened to on Audible : I can't believe I made it as long as I did. This book was awful and boring. If the author spoke more about her child instead of herself I might have been able to feel badly for her.

Marcyhowes says

Disturbing, but I couldn't put it down.

Candy Lievsay says

This was a hard book to read. Parts of it are VERY DARK. However, the love she has for her daughter and the ultimate justice make it worth reading. We need more of Jesus in the world and I see Jesus love in Ms. Oxenburg. Her daughter is blessed to have her as a mother! I hope Keith and Allison spend many years behind bars and never have the ability to hurt anyone else.

Barbara says

Catherine Oxenberg, actress, previously starred in *Dynasty* as the character Amanda Carrington. She decides in 2011 to attend a Nxium seminar with her oldest daughter, India, not realizing that this will change their lives forever. Little did they know that this supposed self-help organization turned out to be a full-blown cult, and her daughter becomes very deeply involved in it. As her daughter drifts further away from Catherine and their family, Catherine becomes horrified when she finds out what is really going on in this secret cult and tries to rescue her daughter, to no avail, as she is already brainwashed.

Keith, the cult's designer and leader, turns the women into "slaves" and they are overseen by "masters". Punishments are brutal if the women do not follow orders. They are also put on starvation diets and branded (yes! you read that correctly).

You really feel the heartache this mom goes through. Her celebrity status and connections help her in investigating and trying to get her daughter back. This is a mother's worst nightmare.

This book is very educational for young impressionable minds, and is also an eye opener for parents and educators to read, as there are many details on how to find out if an organization is a cult. A very interesting read.

Julie says

Captive: A Mother's Crusade to Save Her Daughter From a Terrifying Cult by Catherine Oxenberg is a 2018 Simon & Schuster publication.

I only follow the news sparingly these days. However, even if one only pops over to Facebook or Twitter for a moment, headlines and trending news or topics are unavoidable. I had seen the story about an actress involved in a sex cult, but didn't take the bait. However, the story remained a hot topic for several days.

But, when I saw this book popping up here and there, it never even crossed my mind that the 'terrifying cult' spoken of here, was the same one making headlines a few weeks back. Wow.

I was a big fan of the night time soaps for a while in the early eighties. I did watch 'Dynasty' for a while, and vaguely remember Catherine Oxenberg from that show. However, I hadn't thought of her since, well, the early eighties. In fact, it took me a little while to make the connection. So, it wasn't so much that the book was written by a quasi-famous person, but the topic of the book that piqued my curiosity. Cults??

Are cults still a thing? Apparently so.

While they no longer make headlines, well, besides 'Scientology', there are still more cults out there than I'd realized.

This one was called NXIVM/ESP. It is marketed as a professional development group, sponsoring seminars designed for self-improvement.

Catherine and her daughter, India, joined the group, but as Catherine remained a skeptic, India bought into the whole ideology hook, line and sinker.

Of course, we all know now that the group was a cult- a sex cult to be more precise, in which women were enslaved and even branded- yes, you read that right- branded!!

I'd never heard of this group until I picked up this book, so all the information provided was news to me. Some readers may have been following those aforementioned news stories about the cult, and as such may not discover anything here you didn't already know about it.

But, even if you have been keeping up with the headlines and are familiar with the lurid goings on in the cult, this book will give you a look at how the brainwashing operation works and the will and tenacity it required for Catherine to get people to listen to her, to see that crimes were being committed, and to hopefully save her daughter in the process.

I added audio for this book, which is narrated by the author. I found Catherine's British accent to be appealing, and I think she did a good job at keeping her voice and emotions tempered and even. I'm about as far removed from the life Catherine has led as one could possibly get. This made it hard for me to relate to her and her approach to life and parenting. She admits to having spent a great deal of time on self-help groups, constantly in search of some kind of pat answers, which of course there is none. Yet, she seemed to try everything under the sun, and although she claimed to have finally realized she was wasting her time with all that, she still joined NXIVM with India and remained a part of it for a lot longer than she should have, especially since she blatantly balked at their practices. She may have stayed because India was so involved, but I found myself questioning her actions on more than one occasion. Of course, it's easy to armchair quarterback, and I did try not to pass judgement- but only won out half the time.

However, once she realized the hold the group had on her daughter, and the true nature of the organization, it would appear she at long last found her life's purpose- to expose the cult and hopefully free her daughter in the process.

Once she began working to get India away from Keith Raniere, Catherine, whether she realized it or not, seemed to morph into a person with stronger backbone, became more disciplined, focused, and emotionally mature. While I still questioned the approach she took with her daughter, I couldn't help but admire her determination. By the time all was said and done, she'd begun to prevent other women from falling into Keith's trap, making it her ultimate goal to see the cult shut down, to free as many women as possible, with the fervent hope her daughter might be one of them. The reality was, though, that her daughter was so entrenched into the cult, she might be one of those facing criminal charges.

Catherine did not give up, and her work to get the media's attention, to shine a spotlight on this eerie and bizarre cult finally paid off.

The book is not as organized as I'd have liked, and Catherine does spend a lot of time explaining herself or justifying her actions. I think she is grappling with her role in India's susceptibility to this type of brainwashing, and her initial participation obviously weighs on her.

But, one only need look at the list of people who have at one time or another been associated with NXIVM to see that anyone, no matter what their background, social standing, financial situation, or popularity, might be open to groups like this.

How people become so brainwashed, why they stay in these situations, and why it is so hard to get them to leave, to see reason, is still a mystery, and is beyond my ability to understand. I don't suppose cults like one will ever go away, as long as people are in search of some kind of enlightenment or way to find peace and fulfillment, or ways to make them more successful or to make them become better people. It is truly frightening, though, to see powerful leaders and businessmen have been a part of this organization, as well as

other influential people whose popularity or occupation had the capacity to lure others into the lair of sex trafficking and slavery and forced labor.

Despite some issues with the writing and organization of the book, it is still a chilling story, which prompted me to do some Google searches and additional reading. I'm glad people like Oxenberg fought against this group and am happy to see her efforts rewarded. I hope India, all those victimized, will come around and find a meaningful and productive way to live life from here on out.

3.5 stars

Lisa says

A story of a Mother's hope and fierce determination to save her daughter from a cult. This book provides any depth look at the horrors that took place inside the Nxivm cult; including branding of women and significant brainwashing. I wish that the book had the end result the author sought but that wasn't indicated. However, many of the cult's top leaders have been taken down! A must read,
