



Living Like a Runaway

Lita Ford

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The legendary former lead guitarist of The Runaways—“heavy metal’s leading female rocker” (*Rolling Stone*)—opens up about the ’70s and ’80s music scene and her extraordinary life and career in this long-awaited, emotionally powerful memoir.

Lita Ford lived her dreams, until her life turned into a nightmare. She left home at age sixteen to join the world’s first all-female rock group, the Runaways—a band whose legend was sealed by the 2010 hit movie starring Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning—and went on to become the first woman hard rock guitarist, a platinum-selling star who gave Ozzy Osbourne his first Top Ten hit, a bare-ass, leather-clad sexy babe whose hair was bigger and guitar licks were hotter than any of the guys. She is also the mother of two sons whose harrowing tale of her catastrophic marriage to a metal rocker makes Ike and Tina Turner sound like life at the country club.

But in the end, Lita’s story changes from a music story to a woman’s story—a wrenching, desperate drama of human bondage and a mother’s love, a life-and-death struggle over her own soul. Trapped in an increasingly terrifying marriage, systematically stripped of her connections to the outside world, Lita Ford became a prisoner in her own life, a slave to her husband’s demands, living like a captive. She plotted her escape and her freedom cost her the boys she stayed in the marriage to protect. Her graphic, explicit story will terrify and horrify readers, but they won’t be able to put it down.

Living Like a Runaway will shock people with the candor that Lita Ford shines on her dramatic life story. At ease as a woman in the previously all-male world of rock, Lita shares with her male counterparts an unvarnished directness when it comes to topics such as sex, drugs, money or fame. No female rock star of Lita’s stature has ever before told the real story of women in rock. With unprecedented rawness and honesty, *Living Like a Runaway* reminds us that Lita Ford is not only one of music’s greatest pioneers, but also one of its fiercest survivors.

Living Like a Runaway Details

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From Reader Review Living Like a Runaway for online ebook

Ethan says

If you're a fan of Lita Ford's style of raucous, high octane rock and roll, you will not be disappointed by her autobiography. Lita has never been shy, and she delivers a book filled with all of the sex, drugs and rock n' roll adventures that take us through the genesis and downfall of The Runaways, her ascendancy to become the Queen of Shredding during the 80's Hair Metal era, and her turbulent and tragic family life after leaving the music scene for 15 years. While Lita was certainly my teenage crush, I always respected her legitimate skills as a bona fide Guitar Hero. I was saddened to read how many of her peers, many who were also my teenage rock idols, did not respect her talent, and treated her with disdain and sexism. Nevertheless, she persisted. While many of those who stood in her way are long forgotten, Lita is still touring, recording and wearing the crown as the "Queen of Metal!"

Emma says

I debated upping this to 2 stars because, after all, it gives you a little bit of a picture of the rock scene of the late 70s and 80s and also because Lita Ford loves dachshunds and someone who has a soft point for dachshunds cannot be bad, but I just can't because I hated everything about this book.

It's just terrible... it keeps telling you Lita Ford was the only Runaway who was serious about music (with, maybe, Sandy West), all the others were, I don't know, just teenage girls looking for fame?

Also, Lita Ford was the first woman EVER playing hard rock. I mean, no woman before Lita Ford ever played that kind of music. Do you think I'm repeating myself? Well, it's exactly what the book is doing and about 100 times. I'm not even sure she considers there were other female rockers after her, because, she is, and will remain the Queen of Rock'n'Roll (I mean, she just tells you about it about a dozen times at the very least).

The whole thing is dripping with internalized misogyny and although I know it's super common in Lita's generation, she's taking it to quite a high level and I just couldn't deal with that page after page.

The rest is filled with totally tedious anecdotes (it feels like she picked the most random ones without even trying to keep the reader interested...) and a lot of victimisation.

If you want to read a Runaway memoir, I'd recommend Neon Angel a million times over this one!

Rachel Khona says

I enjoyed the first part of the book but the end takes a decidedly weird tone as she enters her marriage with Jim Gillette. She paints herself as a victim in every aspect of her life with little explanation on how she got there. She describes the various moves, including the one to Turks & Caicos, homeschooling her boys, and other decisions as if they were just made and she just followed along. The whole thing is completely bizarre. I hate to say it, but she seems unstable and lacking in self-awareness. She thought Nancy Spungen was a

sweetheart? As in Nancy of Sid & Nancy? What planet would that be on. She talks about throwing a burrito at someone for a minor infraction but then paints herself as this person who didn't want any drama. I liked the book, but I ended up liking Lita less.

Kethdredd says

Pretty typical rock star autobiography. The most interesting stuff was glossed over because of litigation with her ex husband Nitro singer Jim Gillette. A fun read overall.

Marissa says

I'm not entirely sure how I felt about this book, but I'll say it wasn't what I expected. The only writer credited to this book is Lita herself, and that would explain a lot of the way it was written (i.e. Lita is almost always the hero **or** the victim in her stories, she's the first rock n roll chick and the only one who has ever shredded on guitar, etc.). She does thank Martina Fasano for helping her co-write, but her name's certainly not on the cover.

The foreword by Dee Snider just served to annoy me right off the bat. He refers to Lita as "the only serious musician" in the Runaways, which is total bullshit. The world is not split into Lita Ford fans vs. Joan Jett fans, much as they would have us believe. While I am sure it was difficult for her to gain respect as a female musician, reminding us in every single chapter that "girls can rock!" seemed a bit overkill.

Let me say that I do consider myself a Lita Ford fan, and I think she deserves a certain amount of respect for her place in rock n roll. I also know that her marriage to Jim Gillette (whose name only comes up as "Gillette" or "my husband" in the book) was a very unhappy one that left her stifled for a very long time. Having said that, it's not that great a read. I wanted to know more about her as a person and as a musician, but I don't think there's anything particularly new presented here. Some of the stories are arbitrary, and I kept forgetting who a lot of these names were that she'd randomly throw out. I appreciate that she couldn't talk about her second marriage for 1.) the sake of her sons (who have been cut off completely from her since the divorce), and 2.) possibly legal reasons, but she could have expanded more on so many other things. Perhaps this just wasn't the time to write her memoirs, or perhaps she needed an active co-writer/editor to make it more cohesive and interesting.

Fun tidbits

- Lita acknowledges sleeping with the following:
 - * Ritchie Blackmore (Deep Purple)
 - * John Entwhistle (The Who)
 - * DeeDee Ramone (The Ramones - gave her an std)
 - * Paul Cook (Sex Pistols)
 - * Glenn Tipton (Judas Priest)
 - * Eddie Van Halen
 - * Nikki Sixx (Motley Crue)
 - * Mick Cocks (Heaven)
 - * Tony Iommi (Black Sabbath - abusive relationship, were briefly engaged)
 - * Richie Sambora, Jon Bon Jovi & Aldo Nova

* Chris Holmes (W.A.S.P., married, then divorced)

* that control freak she was married to for 17 years.

- She bought Nikki Sixx his first tattoo when they were in a relationship, just before Motley got big. He also told her that he wrote "Looks That Kill" about her.

- She also feels that the video for "Hungry" was awful and inappropriate (THANK YOU, LITA). Glad to know that wasn't her call.

- She disavows that horrible album she co-wrote with Jim.

I felt like this book could have been so much more than it was, or perhaps needed a few years to be written. It seems that the pain of her divorce and her children being cut off from her (so heartbreaking) is still very fresh. I do hope that her sons will be back in her life again some day, and then maybe that will inspire her to write more to fill in the blanks from this one. I still think Lita is as genuine as they come (even if some of the stories she tells seem a little puffed up), and I hope she continues rocking for as long as she's able.

Wynn says

Overall, what I take away from this is that Lita Ford loved drugs, sex, her parents, her dogs, and most importantly, her talent. The rest is just random obnoxious filler.

I would think Lita Ford who is in her late fifties would look back as a mature adult and have something of substance to say about a remarkable career in a male dominated genre. I get the sex, drugs and rock n' roll lifestyle, but give me more than just sex and drugs. The first half of this book reads more like a tell-all. She meets famous guy, snorts cocaine, has sex with famous guy, snorts cocaine, "shreds" guitar, and inserts stupid irrelevant story. Repeat. I liked her story about the Runaways, but she came off as being petty, jealous and slightly homophobic.

Other than tons of talk about her famous sexual partners (view spoiler), she offers random silly stories, for example, a flying cockroach, craving English chocolate, or stuffing her face with cheesecake. I read a detailed nauseating description of her experience with crabs (the STD). There is also a glamourous story of her having diarrhea while holding on to her tampon string. Really, that's what Ford wants to share? What about her guitars, her equipment, her experiences on stage, her many tours, her personal motivation in songwriting, or her obstacles other than chauvinistic men? There are some small glimpses into songwriting (like the song "Lisa") and she expresses how tiring touring with the Runaways was. She also mentions a touring prank with Poison, but there's not enough substance or depth overall.

Eventually she gets serious when she marries Jim Gillette, but she shuts up about the divorce. Sorry, Lita sells it, but I'm not buying it. She doesn't have enough power, money or fan base to sway law enforcement, judges, psychiatrists, or an entire court system. I don't get the whole alienation thing. Her ex-husband has sole physical and legal custody. I'm guessing for a reason. (Out of curiosity I googled Jim Gillette and found some of the court documents posted on-line. Lita admits in court documents that Jim never hit her. So ummm? Plus, Ford writing lyrics wanting her ex-husband crucified and left to die as in the song "Mother" isn't smart.) After her talk of Gillette and his evil ways, she goes on with her career and tosses out more random stories that I guess are supposed to have meaning. Like her infestation of black widows, her expired Visa and a switchblade knife. (Snore) In between such stories, her reunions with Cherie Currie and Joan Jett

were interesting. I love Joan Jett.

What really got me was when she said the award she received from *Guitar Player* magazine in 2014 made her life “complete”. Really? That was it? Not her kids? Hmm... I also highly question her statement that she and Michael Dan Ehmig “would go on to write some of the era’s greatest hits.” Seriously? Like what? I believe the biggest hits came from Madonna, Michael Jackson, Journey or Pat Benatar. I also take issue with her comment that the rock band Vixen was a bunch of Lita Ford “wannabes”. You’re not all that Lita.

What I did like about this telling was her relationship with “Edward” Van Halen and I was fascinated and shocked by her relationship with Tony Iommi, but after completing this book, I wonder how much I should believe. Although it was very brief, I loved what she had to say about Ronnie James Dio. He was one of my favorites. Plus, her love for her parents was deep. I could feel Ford’s loneliness after their deaths, but her decisions afterwards were her own and did not belong to anyone else.

This could have been so much more. Drop all the silly and gross stories, add some depth and detail about actually being the “queen of metal”, express more emotion other than the love and loss of her parents, and if she would have been open about her divorce, it would have been an entertaining memoir.

Monique says

Even though I have always been a Joan Jett fan, Lita Ford was and is THE female guitar hero. Before starting this book, the only personal thing I knew about Ms. Ford is that she had been born in England. After a fabulously funny foreword by Dee Snyder, I was bit disappointed when I started *LIVING LIKE A RUNAWAY*, because I thought the writing style was too unpolished, on the other hand I thought refreshing that Ms. Ford had not used a ghost writer, although a friend helped her with some trifles, I felt it all sounded very spontaneous, and I enjoyed the tone very much. By chapter two, I was completely immersed in the book, and because of the writing style: I felt I was having intimate conversations with my best friend, who also happens to be a heavy metal legend.

Lita Ford’s story resembles other rock stars’ to a certain extent, however a lot of it is different, of course – unfortunately – because she’s a woman, but also for her relationship with her parents, especially her mother and how Ms. Ford handled drugs and booze. I loved her candour and her honesty, and she accepted her failures with grace. I did not know Lita Ford, the person, before *LIVING LIKE A RUNAWAY*, and I got to know, respect, and love the woman, and her integrity as an artist.

There is some vagueness regarding Ms. Ford’s second husband, and I fear it’s because of legal issues, but then again, I consider it one’s prerogative not to tell all; it is the memoirist’s choice, and I respect that as I would respect it from a friend.

Long Live Lita!

Amy says

An easy conversational read that grips with its sincerity as well as with the sex and drugs and rock and roll, Lita Ford's memoir *Living Like a Runaway* revolves around content and tone. Edgy. Confrontational. Honest. Lots of swearing. Lots of run-on sentences. The writing falters at times. Most won't be reading it for its scholastic merits. 80s heavy metal icon Lita Ford dishes about The Runaways, her solo career, being a woman in rock and roll, her romantic hookups—with Eddie Van Halen, Nikki Sixx, Dee Dee Ramone, Toni Iommi of Black Sabbath and others-- and more. The chapters on The Runaways run flat and lack energy. The passion-fueled intense guitarist fails to draw those emotions and details to the page.

read complete review here: <http://entertainmentrealm.com/2016/02...>

Kim Peterson says

I love Lita and she told some entertaining stories but the writing just wasn't great.

Reese Copeland says

I have always been a Lita Ford fan. She's talented, she's beautiful and she shreds on the guitar better than most male guitarists I never knew much about her life, but this book was great to get an idea of what life was like for her and how she worked her way up the ranks to the Queen of Metal. It's heart breaking regarding her family and children and you really feel for her, but wow. What an inspiration!

Kelli says

Entertaining - needed better editing.

Chris McGowan says

I was too young to be a fan of the Runaways, but I have an interest in Rock Star biographies - especially if it covers the 80's and 90's. You do learn a little about her time in the Runaways and how they were ahead of their time (true). I am fine with the name dropping and stories - that's what I want in a rock star biography. I just wish there was more about her as a person, a little more depth to her thoughts at the time and maybe a little bit more detail about the albums she put out and how successful they were.

I am happy she is happy now. I was glad to see the mention of Eddie Trunk and That Metal Show and her comeback. She seems genuine - I've always enjoyed the singing Happy Birthday story for ET in Wyoming - I followed that on Twitter. She is just not a good writer (repetitive, run on sentences, etc).

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

I loved Lita growing up so I was stoked to get this book. Of course, I have had it since it came out a million

years ago and sitting with the other not so new books in my stacks. But I digress

I actually loved Lita and Joan Jett all of my life.

I very much enjoyed this book and the stories Lita had to tell. Some things I didn't agree with but it's all good.

We get to learn about the younger childhood years and her years with The Runaways. All leading up to life in 2015/16.

It was like walking through the 80's and 90's with all the talk about the rocker bands and dudes she hung out with.

I also (because I truly live under a rock & never REALLY know what's going on) had no idea she wrote the song "Lisa" for her mom while she was dying of cancer. Her mom loved it. I damn cried!! And I'm not going to get out my cd's and listen to it either!!

I love the fact that Lita's parents supported her in what she wanted out of life. Not all rock stars or people in general get that. Lita's mom was Italian and her dad British.

It was also cool to find out that at one time Lita was managed by Sharon Osbourne and that Sharon and Ozzy would come to Lita's parents house for dinners. They were pretty close until things with south with drugs and what not.

Anyway, it was fun for me to read. Most of it at any rate.

Happy Reading!

Mel ❤?

Mindy says

Actual Rating 2.5 stars

I rounded up because it was Lita fucking Ford! This rating is for the book/writing not the person. I have always been obsessed with The Runaways. I wanted to be the Runaways, unfortunately I never learned how to play an instrument so there you go. Being apart of such an iconic band is amazing and then to go on and continue to pursue your career in such a male dominated field is extremely impressive. Even more

impressive is the fact that Lita seems to have remained true to herself. She is a Hard Rocking/ Metal loving musician when that has been out of fashion for some time now. So learning about Lita and her fantastic adventures were great. Unfortunately, the writing made it difficult to enjoy the book as a whole. Maybe now that I'm done I can get the song *Kiss me Deadly* out of my head.

Noetic_Hatter says

I feel a little bit guilty rating this book so low. Lita comes across as a genuine person who has suffered a lot in the last 20 years. But the truth is, this book is badly written. Her co-writer must have worked for cheap.

The storytelling is amateurish, with confusing chronology even from paragraph to paragraph. It starts with Dee Snider's smoke-blowing preface (though the story he tells does take on some more emotional heft when we hear the same one from Lita's perspective towards the end of the book), and it just stays on a low level from there. I understand that Lita's not highly educated -- but then, that's why you get a *good* editor and co-writer.

The Runaways period is the best in the book for me, especially since we have heard the stories from Joan and Cherie. It's nice to see Lita's side of things. Once that period ends, it becomes half music memoir and half groupie memoir. I swear Lita must have slept with every rockstar that existed in the 80's. Not true, of course, but her "and then Edward Van Halen and I had sex; and then my friend and I had a 5-way with Richie Sambora and Jon Bon Jovi and some dude; and then I met up with Glenn Tipton once a year for a good shagging" and so on.

She's constantly talking about how no one respected her as a musician because she was a girl. But I have to wonder if her actions made it easy for them to think of her as just another groupie who happened to play guitar. She also has a real tendency to blame everyone else for her career not working as well as she'd hoped, especially following the success of "*Kiss Me Deadly*". It's always someone else who screwed her over, starting with Kim Fowley and moving through Sharon Osborne and RCA records and so many others.

By the end of the book, Lita's in a much more positive place. That's coming out of the most intriguing portion of the book - a chronicle of her horrific 20 year marriage (that recently ended). She leaves out a lot of details -- out of disrespect for her ex and respect for her two sons, she says. But it's a gripping story just the same. It's nice to read about her putting her life and career back together following those events, even if she does have an exaggerated view of her own importance in rock history. Outside of The Runaways and a handful of good singles, her music isn't all that. Yes, the woman can play guitar. Doesn't mean her albums are any good. (Give me Joan's catalog over Lita's anyday.)

I am going to give this book an extra star that it probably doesn't deserve because I am always eager for more Runaways tales. And that's a good part of the book. But the rest of it, I could take or leave. I wish it had been better-written.
