



Go Ask Ogre: Letters from a Deathrock Cutter

Jolene Siana, Bonnie McLaughlin, Ogre (Foreword by)

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Go Ask Ogre: Letters from a Deathrock Cutter Jolene Siana , Bonnie McLaughlin , Ogre (Foreword by) Teenage hell has never been captured with such intense honesty as these actual letters sent in the late '80s from a suicidal girl to the singer of her favorite band.

Go Ask Ogre peers into the world of a misfit "cutter" who lives with an abusive mother in the rust belt. A tailspin of suicidal depression and self-injury leads her to write Ogre, front man for the industrial rock band Skinny Puppy. Soon he receives a flood of elaborately illustrated letters and journals filled with Jolene's most intimate thoughts—from her most painful secrets to hilarious observations and lucid realizations about her life and those around her.

At a concert, Ogre confides to Jolene that he has saved all her letters. Nine years later, a box from Ogre arrives at Jolene's door. Re-examining the documents, she realizes that writing these letters had saved her life.

Go Ask Ogre compiles Jolene Siana's actual letters, artwork, illustrations, and ephemera into a unique and powerful story of an extremely troubled teen who made it through the worst years of her life, and, through the power of music and art, transformed herself in the process. It is heavily illustrated and full color throughout.

Critical Praise:

"Pure, lucid and engaging...more authentic for a new generation of young women than, say, the 1971 cautionary tale about drugs, *Go Ask Alice*."—Susan Carpenter, *LA Times*

"Dark, funny and touching..."—*boingboing.net*

"Cringingly confessional, persistently desperate, yet often uproariously funny. All rendered and packaged in labor-intensive psychedelic outsider graphic design. An overdue riposte to the bludgeoning morality of the fabricated *Go Ask Alice*."—Doug Harvey, *LA Weekly*

"By turns fierce, funny, heartbreakingly wise, Jolene Siana's *Go Ask Ogre* burns onto the page in an intense collage of words and images that together create a portrait of a gifted young woman fighting to hang on to her own life and choosing an unlikely—but strangely suitable—ally for her battle."—Caroline Kettlewell, author of *Skin Game*

"Amidst the cultural and political corruption of the late 1980s, seeking and artistic teens like Jolene Siana found cathartic solace in aggressive and so-called 'morbid' bands like Skinny Puppy. That she persevered with the help of music that parents, preachers, and politicians condemned, but rarely tried to understand, is a moving lesson."—Alan Rapp, editor of *The Journey is the Destination: The Journals of Dan Eldon and Dan Eldon: The Art of Life*

Go Ask Ogre: Letters from a Deathrock Cutter Details

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From Reader Review Go Ask Ogre: Letters from a Deathrock Cutter for online ebook

Ryan says

Great book! based on letters sent to the frontman Nivek Ogre of Skinny Puppy and carries a theme of Ask Alice... but with great visual layout of photos, clippings and quotes from 80's goth songs. Pretty much a must have for Puppy fans...

Darlene says

I saw this author read at a local bookstore so I knew I would like this book. Since the book consists of letters she wrote as a teenager, there is a lot of cringeworthy material—really who would want to publish their innermost 16 year old thoughts? Still, this book is funny and heartbreakingly honest and I think many teenage girls could relate, even if they didn't have the rough teen years that the author had.

Cassandra Carico says

This book is definitely not for everyone, but for me it resonated fiercely. My life mirrored hers in so many ways, but a little over a decade after. I did not use the same outlets that she did (i.e. writing to Ogre), but I see the benefits she derived from setting pen to paper and believing that her voice was heard.

Daryl Barnett says

This woman's personal story fascinates me but what the book is made up of; personal letters that she wrote to the leader of a rock band (which he kept and returned to her so she could make copies of the letters to create the book) is what is really mind blowing. I see elements in this style that I'd like to incorporate into the novel I am writing. She is on MySpace too. A very successful and well-adjusted woman today, it seems.

Norman says

Wow. I was really surprised how much I liked this book. A bunch of people recommended it to me, since I've always liked Skinny Puppy. Most who recommended it were cutters, themselves, so I thought the book would be more about pity in regards to being depressed. While there was some of that, most of the book showed the crap that someone went through growing up, and then a slow road to feeling better, and coming to grips with the crap that we need to deal with in life. I did laugh at quite a few things, and smiled at so much more.

My biggest complaint about this book is that it's VERY one-sided. It's only letters and journal entries from Jolene. As a reader, I wanted to see Ogre's friendship with her in his voice, not just her journal entries. On the flip side, if I think about the lack of his voice, I do get the feeling that the recovery all comes from her,

which does match up with my feelings in regards to existentialism...

Tom Schulte says

Go Ask Ogre collects the letters, journal entries, and artwork created by Jolene Siana from 1987 to 2003. Siana spent much of her late teens in Toledo reacting to a dysfunctional family atmosphere by nurturing self-destructive habits and sending an avalanche of mail to Skinny Puppy vocalist Nivek Ogre. Certainly Ogre received much unsolicited correspondence, but he did nothing to squelch this largely one-sided conversation. Indeed, he fostered a friendship with Siana and they met on multiple occasions.

While Ogre obviously recognized something special about Siana's missives, much of her written material is forgettable. The most engaging parts of Go Ask Ogre consist of her journal entries about their personal interaction (including helping bail Ogre out of jail) and her compelling gothic artwork. As a matter of fact, her book would have benefited from fewer words and more of her art.

I lived in the Detroit area at the time covered by Siana, attended some of the same shows, and even shared a few of her acquaintances. For scenesters from northern Ohio and southeastern Michigan, as well as hardcore Skinny Puppy fans, Go Ask Ogre will be sure to hold some interest. Also, the resources listed at the end suggest Siana's tale is partly meant as a moral lesson on some of the extreme pitfalls of adolescence, particularly stress-motivated self-mutilation. If black candles, goth music, and razor blades are your only way of finding balance, I suggest you hear Siana out.

(My review from Ink19.com)

Moya says

my second time trying to read this book. i like the idea of it. the tone and the theme is right up my alley. i read further this time -- seriously, i'm probably 20 pages from the end -- and yet i still can't finish it. maybe if i was still in high school...still an adolescent. as an adult i find that it's just too self-indulgent, too self-centered, too woe-is-me. and i'm emo! in the end, i think i needed more context. volume. depth.

i'm marking this as done even though, as i said, i have yet to finish it.

Jennifer says

Siana has published her letters and journals that she wrote to Ogre (a member of Skinny Puppy) in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The letters aren't surprising for those of us that remember our teenage years (or work with them currently). Non-sequiturs, numerous mentions of being bored and trying to find her place in the world all ring familiar and true.

For many (including me), it brought back memories of how much music meant to me as a teen, as well as her descriptions of intense relationships and friendships at that age.

I highly recommend this over other teen memoirs like "Go Ask Alice." There is no doubt that this one was written by a teenager. Also, Siana's epilogue is interesting and I appreciated her including a note from her therapist as well as a resource list and recommended reading.

Ellis Amdur says

A collection of letters from a frequently suicidally depressed, chronically cutting teen to the lead singer, OGRE, of the group Skinny Puppy. A very well constructed book, with much of the artwork - particularly envelopes - that she sent her letters. It's not great literature - it was written by a teenaged girl, kind of goth style, with an emotionally abusive mom, who is intrinsically nice and kind, but miserable as a half-drowned cat. There's no great drama - neither high points or low.

But it is truly a worthwhile book - how better to understand the unfathomable mind of the kind of teen to whom people say: "You are such a lovely girl . . . and so talented. Why are you unhappy all the time?"

I wonder if this would be a good book to give to other teens in the same position. I think it would - IF it inspired them to find someone trustworthy and decent to write to or otherwise communicate with, so that all the pain has somewhere to go - and thereby, someone to help in holding it.

That this decent and kind man to the core was this man - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZAhL...> simply shows the goodness can be found in the most unlikely places.

Michael Roop says

ummmmm...There ain't much I can say about this book that hasn't been said already here. I think if I were still an angst filled teen this book would be a lot better read. Sadly I'm in my 30's and far past all the rebellion and angst of youth. I really wanted this book to be epic too. I think it's a great book. Perfect for teens and preteens. A great book to let the youth of today know they are not alone in their venture of coming into their own. I find it amazing that Ogre actually took the time to write her back and took the time to be there when possible. Something like that speaks volumes about Ogre vs. the public perception of "satan" music. After all the 80's and early 90's was the hey day of the satanic panic. This book speaks to the greatness of the human spirit and the compassion humanity is capable of. Again, this book is filled with rants, poems, gossip and teen aged drama all teens go through. Ogre's portion of the book in replies is that of brahman. Read this one at your own pace and discretion.

Liesa spring says

I don't think I could say enough positives about this book. I don't classify it as a teen drama girly book even though it is in the teen section at the library because it just gave me so much more than other books have. This is the book that started me with taking up a journal. It also gave me a new perspective on bands and groupies and obsessive behavior. and the security in loving someone you don't know but feel a insane connection to through music...

anyways very good book, in my opinion.

Sophie Mia says

Oh man, I read this book a lot when I first discovered it sometime around eighth grade. I've always had some never-ending obsession with "old diary" recounts.

I think the way Jolene has organized her book is very well-done... Really love seeing old pictures, letters, entries, artwork. (Also really makes me wish I hadn't mindlessly tossed my most depressing middle school journal, filled with only black and red pen art and crappy handwriting)...

I totally connected with Siana's obsession with a favorite musician, and her need to constantly reach out to him, as if it was the only thing keeping her somewhat sane. (Naturally, I also connected to her manic depressive stages).

Imagine said-musician actually WRITING you back?! Her story is almost like a very 80's Disney tale. Oh, and still a way good read for those who aren't fans of Skinny Puppy, at that.

Christine says

This is one of my favorite books. I read this book a long time ago but just am now getting around to reviewing it. This is an immensely personal and beautiful account of Jolene Siana's teenage years, in the form of letters she sent to the lead singer of her favorite band, Skinny Puppy. These letters became a form of diary for her, where she poured out her feelings and thoughts, along with brooding artwork. Although Ogre (the singer) only replied to a few and ended up not opening most of them, he did save them and end up giving them to her when she got older. The result is this book.

I think this is such a deeply moving portrait of how intensely and personally musicians can impact the young people that idolize them. Their music becomes an outlet for self-expression that can sometimes make the difference between life and death. Although in most cases, these teens will not have any correspondence with their idols, I think in a way, Jolene's story will seem familiar to many people out there who had particularly troubled teenage years and found some kind of solace in music. Through the letters, you get a portrait of a very thoughtful, disturbed, confused, passionate young woman trying to battle inner and outer demons and make it through alive. These letters--real, messy, scattered--convey the feeling more authentically than anything else ever could.

I found a very personal and deep connection with the book, sharing a lot of personal experiences with the author and a love of the same kind of music. I kept a diary that looks and feels chillingly similar to the letters published in this book. For me reading it was a touching and cathartic experience. As soon as I opened it, I couldn't put it down until I'd finished. I cried, I laughed, I was inspired. It reminds me that, like music, writing is another way we can share our pain and joys with each other as a reminder of our common struggles. Just as Ogre's music gave Jolene hope, I know this book will give many young (and older!) people hope as well. I really commend the author on sharing these letters with us and hope that someday I will have the courage and eloquence to share something like that with the world too.

Jan says

This was a pretty good book. It was actually a book of letters. Books like this and diaries always seem to

have a more intimate feel about them. You are really seeing into someone else's life and their struggles. Sometimes it makes you appreciate your own life all the more.

Stacie says

it's exactly that...a 17 year old girl in the late 80s discovers skinny puppy, becomes obsessed with ogre, and starts writing him letters about random crap in her life. it's non-fiction. She is depressed and suicidal, but doesn't want to be. it's fascinating in a fucked up way. it reminds me so much of being that age, and of people i knew when i was that age. (you probably shouldn't read too much into that.) she puts art on all the letters and envelopes, some of which are shown in the book, and that art is in the same style as some of my high school friends. is that just the art of the dispossessed teen? how weird to think that it's somehow inherent in the emotional state and nowhere near as unique to that person as it seems in the moment. since the book is actual letters written in journal form (and some journal entries) the writing style is utterly personal and is now stuck in my head. of course i did just sit down and read half of it in one sitting. it's weird, it's kind of thrown me into a pale shadow of the emotional state of being that age. it's an odd feeling.

disclaimer: a friend got the book at a garage sale, could bring herself to read more than 50 pages and sent it to me because she thought i might be interested. i'm a little horrified to see how strangely into it i am.
