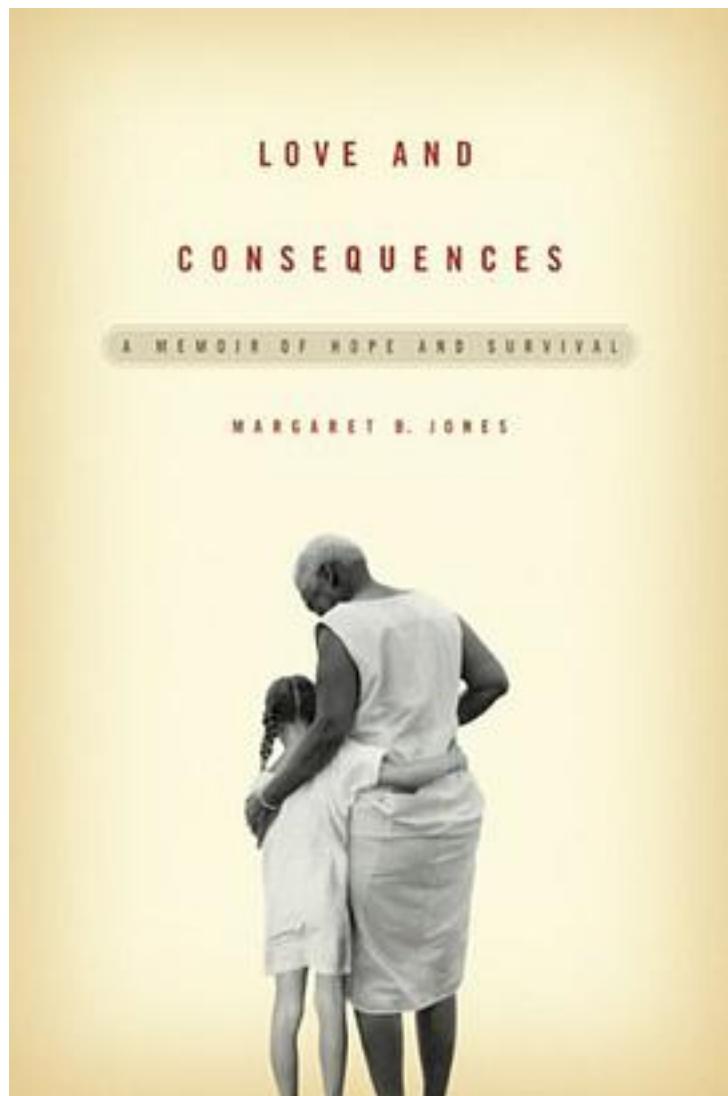


Love and Consequences



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Note: The following book description was written before the recent revelations about the book.
A stunning memoir of a mixed-race girl growing up in gang-ridden South Central Los Angeles, where she followed her foster brothers into the Bloods before she hit puberty: what she witnessed, how she survived, and-against all odds-thrived. This is a powerful portrait of life in L.A.'s gangland and drug trade as told through one household: a single, overworked grandmother, her two grandsons (who drop out of school and become Bloods before puberty), her two crack-baby granddaughters, and the foster child-the author-who comes to live with them at age eight, joins the gang, and then defies the odds, using education to climb her way out. After her two foster brothers were "jumped in" by the Bloods at ages twelve and thirteen, Margaret-renamed "Bree" in her new street life-followed their example. At twelve she was making deliveries for local dealers in the gang. For her thirteenth birthday she received her own gun. At sixteen, forced to find a way to keep the water from being shut off in her foster home, she learned to cook crack cocaine. Soon after, she fell in love for the first time, dating a seasoned gang member until he was sentenced to life in prison. We observe the lives of these characters from childhood through adolescence and into early adulthood. For some, this means following a trajectory of crime, pregnancy, imprisonment-and ultimately, death. But for Margaret, her obvious intelligence, will, and tenacity-aided by sheer luck-enable her to break free, to graduate from high school, and then college. The strength of this book is testament to the remarkable adult she has become. This unvarnished, humanizing portrait of people living in urban poverty transcends both statistics and stereotypes, and reveals the power of family in a chaotic world-and the poignancy of smart, philosophical teens who dream of a safer life waiting for them beyond the streets.

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