

Dear Reader,

*The Luis Ortega Survival Club* is quite different from my first book, *The Lesbianna's Guide to Catholic School*, but I hope it will be just as healing for you as it was for me. It is darker in subject matter, as it deals with sexual harassment and the aftermath of rape (not on page).

Even though this book deals with such difficult topics, I didn't want it to be depressing or traumatizing, especially for readers who have been through what Ari has. You may think that the biggest fantasy for a victim would be to imagine that the trauma never happened at all. But instead, I asked myself: What if a traumatized teenage girl like Ariana didn't have to be a warrior or a survivor? What if she was allowed to fall apart? What if the bad thing *still happened*, but it didn't stop her from winning in the end? Most importantly, what if Ari, and everyone like her, were allowed to get their revenge?

*That is the fantasy.*

You may be wondering why I chose to name a rapist in the title of my book. It was a conscious decision that I made, and if I could have used the real name of the real person who inspired the character for Luis Ortega, I would have. I believe there is power in naming predators. It holds them accountable for what they did and ensures no one will ever forget it. I can't name my Luis Ortega in real life, so I wanted to give Ari the catharsis that comes with naming and shaming her abuser.

When I first started writing this book, I had no idea how many of my own scars would come to light. But scars are a beautiful sign of a healed wound. I found that through my writing, I was healing myself. I didn't know how much I needed to give myself this fantasy until I did it.

To all the Ari's out there, I hope the fantasy brings you comfort. And to all the Luises, I hope it keeps you up at night.

Love,

Sonora