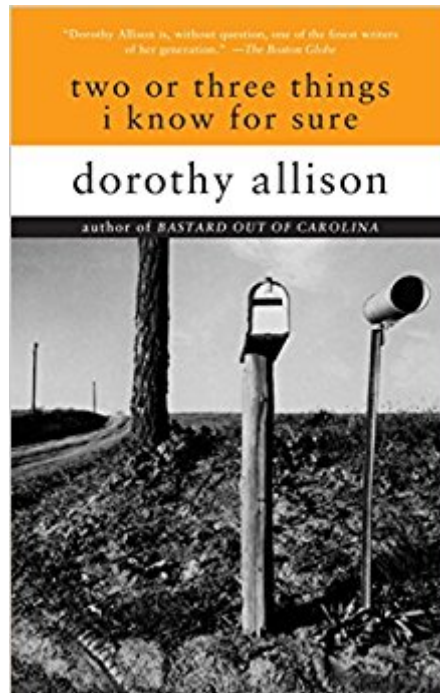




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# Two Or Three Things I Know For Sure



## Synopsis

Bastard Out of Carolina, nominated for the 1992 National Book Award for fiction, introduced Dorothy Allison as one of the most passionate and gifted writers of her generation. Now, in *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*, she takes a probing look at her family's history to give us a lyrical, complex memoir that explores how the gossip of one generation can become legends for the next. Illustrated with photographs from the author's personal collection, *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure* tells the story of the Gibson women -- sisters, cousins, daughters, and aunts -- and the men who loved them, often abused them, and, nonetheless, shared their destinies. With luminous clarity, Allison explores how desire surprises and what power feels like to a young girl as she confronts abuse. As always, Dorothy Allison is provocative, confrontational, and brutally honest. *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*, steeped in the hard-won wisdom of experience, expresses the strength of her unique vision with beauty and eloquence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Allison's much-praised novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* was inspired by her childhood in Greenville, S.C., but in this memoir, adapted from a performance piece, she cuts even closer to the bone. "We don't have a family Bible?" the author's fourth-grade self asks her aunt. "Child, some days we don't even have a family," comes the response. If Allison suffered horrors, notably rape by her stepfather when she was five, she has transmuted pain into stories, gaining control with maturity. Indeed, her title prefaces several hard-won aphorisms she uses to counterpoint her memories: "No one is as hard as my uncles had to pretend to be." Her mother was a beauty, as was her sister, but Dorothy,

smart and plain, felt a legacy of ugliness, one she shook off slowly as her feminism and her heart led her to lesbian relationships, often painful, finally rewarding. She is now, in her 40s, a new mother, and her stories?and life?are a triumph of love over cruelty. Read it aloud and savor the rhythms. Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Allison (Bastard Out of Carolina, LJ 3/1/92) is a poet, essayist, and novelist, but in all these she is a storyteller. For her, stories are not simply creations but the very things that create us. Resounding with a familiarity of the intimate turned universal, this brief memoir recounts the episodes and people of Allison's life who created her and her own re-creation of herself. Often painful and mean, the stories are never bitter or despairing because of Allison's ability to move beyond, if not transform, the meaningless cruelty of life. Written as a performance piece, the cadence of the prose reverberates in the head and begs to be read out loud: "Two or three things I know for sure, and one is that I would rather go naked than wear the coat the world has made for me." With this retelling, Allison remakes that coat in her own image and leaves readers waiting for more stories. Highly recommended. [A BOMC and Quality Paperback selection.]?Eric Bryant, "Library Journal.-?Eric Bryant, "Library Journal"Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Dorothy Allison's Aunt Dot said she only new two or three things for sure and added, "Of course,they are never the same things." This slim volume, a family history memoir, celebrates the way that women know and affirms that what women know is different from what men know. Allison not only tells an engaging story, she tells her story with clear compassion for all concerned. That doesn't mean she hedges around about the truth. It means that one of the things she knows for sure is that "if we are not beautiful to each other, then we cannot know beauty in any form." Compassion goes along with being beautiful to one another. This book is both honest and forgiving. and as such reminds us to look with an open heart on our life circumstances. Don't compound the hurt or the suffering with hate suggests Allison in a mere 94 pages. I suspect most people will want to read this book more than once. I pull it out when when I feel my heart closing and each time, the thing I come to know is never the same thing.

This was assigned reading in my college English class. Its pretty good, but very gritty and explicit in parts.

Grabs you and doesn't let go.

Great Memoirs! to read

Decent book

I bought this book because the author's books 'Skin' and 'Trash' are spotlighted in the anthologies 'Courting Pleasure' and 'Lovers: love and sex stories' by Tee A. Corinne. I enjoyed them both tremendously and sought out this book. From the back of the book - [...] Out of Carolina, nominated for the 1992 National Book Award for fiction, introduced Dorothy Allison as one of the most passionate and gifted writers of her generation. Now, in Two or Three Things I Know for Sure, she takes a probing look at her family's history to give us a lyrical, complex memoir that explores how the gossip of one generation can become legends for the next. Illustrated with photographs from the author's personal collection, Two or Three Things I Know for Sure tells the story of the Gibson women -- sisters, cousins, daughters, and aunts -- and the men who loved them, often abused them, and, nonetheless, shared their destinies. With luminous clarity, Allison explores how desire surprises and what power feels like to a young girl as she confronts abuse. As always, Dorothy Allison is provocative, confrontational, and brutally honest. Two or Three Things I Know for Sure, steeped in the hard-won wisdom of experience, expresses the strength of her unique vision with beauty and eloquence. Lambda Literary Award: Finalist

I checked this book out from the library after seeing mention of it in Louise DeSalvo's Writing as a Way of Healing. I loved Bastard Out of Carolina so I thought this would be a good read as well. The book is extraordinary. The shape feels organic with shifts in time yet somehow it all comes together. This is probably due to Allison's incredibly strong voice. I've been feeling stuck on my own memoir which is also about sexual abuse. Something unlocked for me when I read this book and I found the right voice I needed to tell my own story. Needless to say, I ordered a copy of my own.

From the Author's note at the end of the book..."Two or Three Things I Know for Sure' was written for performance in the months of completing my novel 'Bastard Out of Carolina'. The book is adapted from that material. I sure wish I had Allison's storytelling ability. She tells what it's like for the women of her family, a family from rural South Carolina, what it was like for her being part of that

family. What it's like is your dreams get done under early on in life, any possibility of being more than your family get squashed out of you by denial or brute reality of being poor and female in the South. That this didn't happen to Allison, that she continued to rise up, is a boon to the rest of us, and does what Marianne Williamson says so wonderfully, "by shining, she gives the rest of us permission to shine too." By daring to tell her story, she allows the rest of us to tell ours too. Difficult stories are the ones that NEED to be told. Thank all the gods above and below for Dorothy Allison.

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