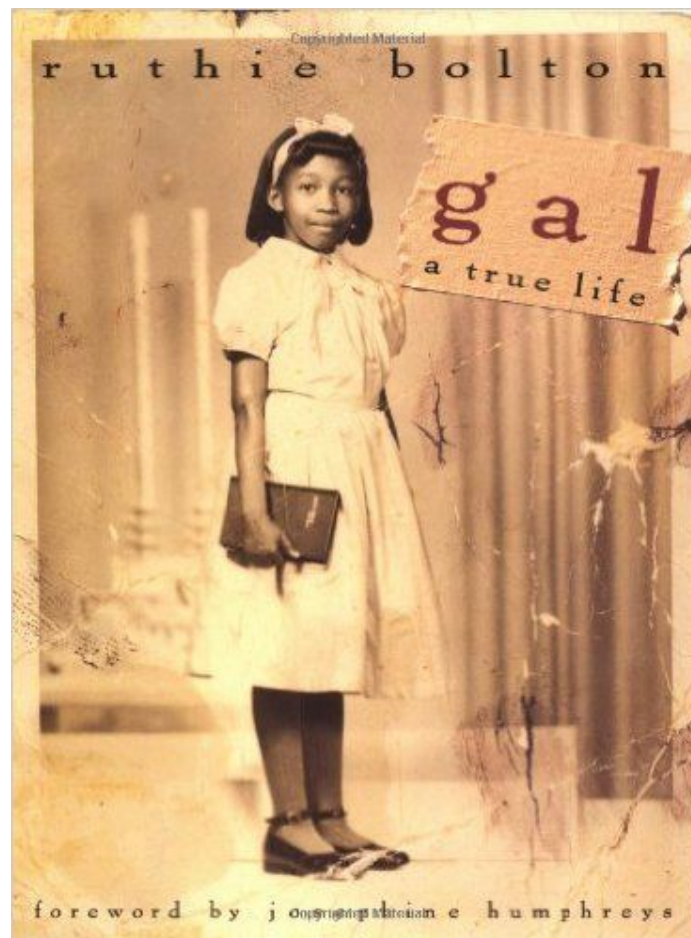


Social Literati Book Club
READER'S GUIDE

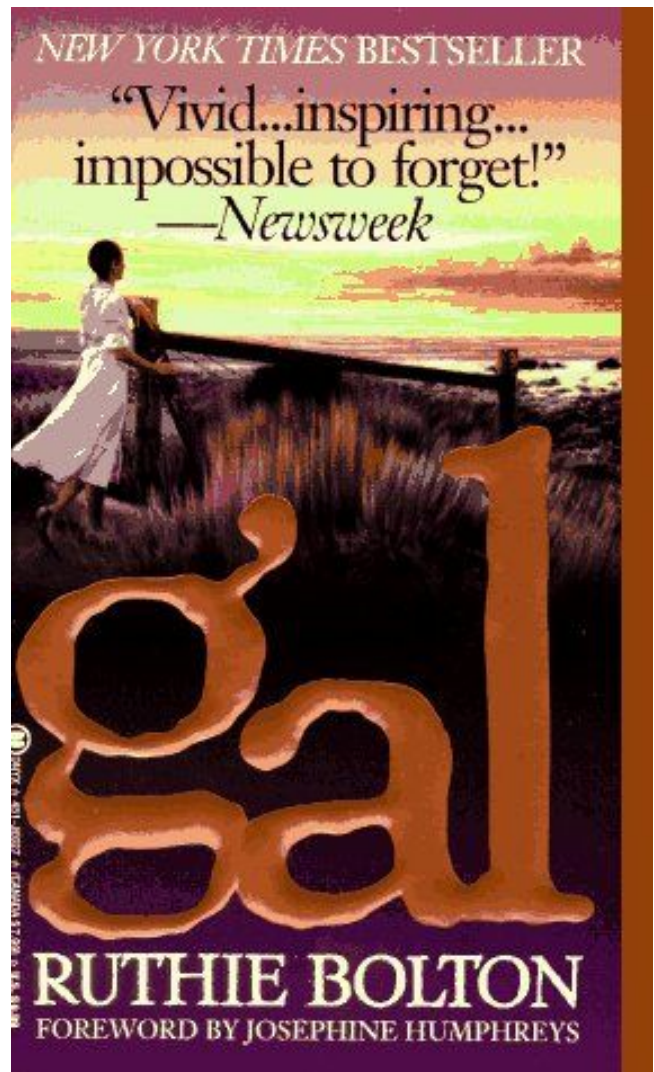
Gal: A True Life

By Ruthie Bolton



From buffalolib.org

Ruthie Mae Bolton was born January 6, 1961, in the Hungry Neck section of Charleston, South Carolina. At the time, her mother was thirteen; she has never known who her father was. Her mother was the wandering kind, so Ruthie Mae-nicknamed "Gal" by her stepgrandfather-was raised in her grandparents' home. One day Grandmama died as a result of a severe beating by her husband-it occurred to no one to call this to the attention of the authorities-and Gal was left in the brutal hands of her granddaddy, who beat her unmercifully as well. Ruthie Mae began to steal things in school and she developed a stutter; she drank and smoked dope. But she stuck resolutely with her education and graduated from high school, which was likely her salvation, for today Ruthie Mae is happily married, with children and a fine job. At last she is at peace-with herself and even with the memory of her grandfather. It is nigh impossible to convey the astonishingly eloquent simplicity of Ruthie Mae's witnessing to her time. Here is an absolutely remarkable document, as touching as it is painful, as ageless as it is timely.



Listen to sample audio version of the book:

<http://www.learnoutloud.com/Catalog/Biography/Autobiography/Gal/4357>

Review by Booklist Review

Ruthie Bolton, known as "Gal" to her family, was born in the Hungry Neck section of Charleston in 1961. Her mother was 13 at the time, her father unknown. Tired of the frequent beatings she got at home, her mother soon left, leaving Ruthie to be raised by her grandparents. Dominating the household was Ruthie's brutal grandfather, who kept his family in want despite a job that paid well, who beat his wife and children and had numerous girlfriends. When Ruthie was still small her grandmother was beaten to death, and the years that followed were marked by violence, also. Hardened by the abuse, Ruthie developed a stutter, took drugs, got married too young, and lost her child to her husband's family. Eventually she met Ray Bolton, and the love and acceptance she found in his large family were her redemption. Ruthie's own, authentic voice--aided by that of writer Josephine Humphreys, who transcribed Ruthie's story from tapes--helps make this story of pain, courage, and salvation completely convincing. ~~~Mary Ellen Quinn
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Review by Publisher's Weekly Review

The pseudonymous Bolton offers an unflinching account of her tragic childhoods she was born to a 13-year-old mother and brought up by an abusive grandfather and her eventual discovery of love and happiness. (Oct.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved

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Review by Library Journal Review

Gal is the true story of a young black woman. The author, who writes pseudonymously in order to protect the privacy of her family and friends, was born in 1961 and raised in the South. Her early life was bleak and unpromising. After years of sadistic abuse from the twisted man she knew as "Daddy," she seemed to be headed along a bumpy path. Despite setbacks, Gal managed to complete high school. After further difficulties with drugs, alcohol, and men, she was finally able to turn her life around through the love and support of her second husband and his extended family. This is an inspiring story of inner strength and the healing effects of love. For larger public libraries.-January Adams, ODSI Research Lib., Raritan, N.J. (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

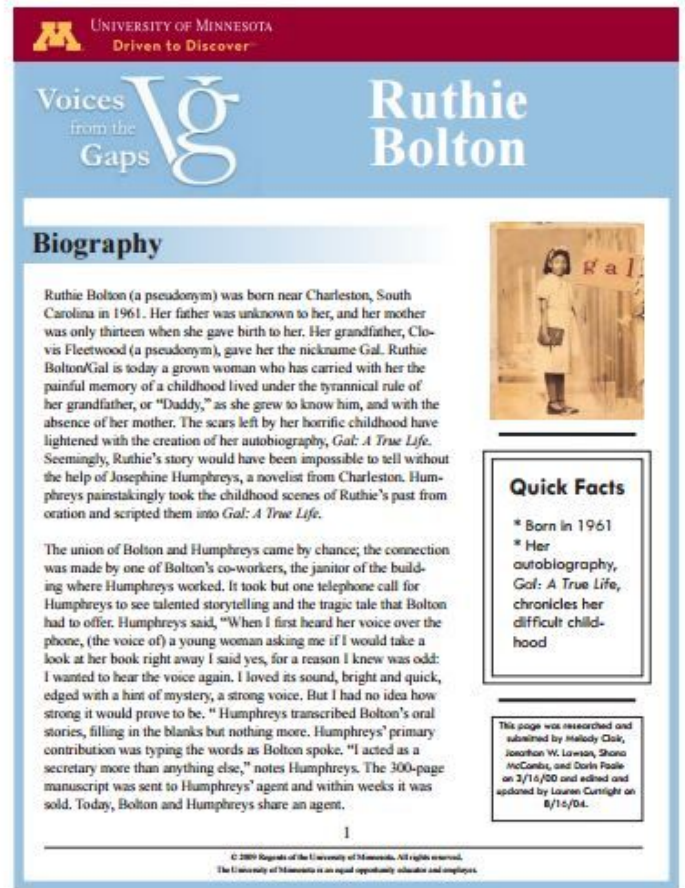
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AUTHOR NOTES

Ruthie M. Bolton is a writer and oral historian. The name is the pseudonym of an African American writer born on January 6, 1961 in Charleston, South Carolina. Bolton graduated from high school despite a difficult childhood. She wrote the details of her life of abuse and neglect and showed it to the novelist, Josephine Humphreys. Humphreys suggested that Bolton tell her story as oral history and helped by transcribing the tapes and writing the introduction to the finished book. (Bowker Author Biography)

Similar Reading Items

- [Parlor ladies and ebony drudges : African American women, class, and work in a South Carolina community /](#)
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- [Designs against Charleston : the trial record of the Denmark Vesey Slave Conspiracy of 1822 /](#)
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- By: Harris, J. William, 1946- Published: (2009)
- [Upheaval in Charleston : earthquake and murder on the eve of Jim Crow /](#)
- By: Williams, Susan Millar. Published: (2011)
- [Voices from the Gap: Ruthie Bolton, Biography](#)
- By: Melody Clair, Jonathan W. Lawson, Shana McCombs, and Darin Pooleo and edited and updated by Lauren Curtright on 8/16/04.



References for Document Preparation

Bolton, Ruthie. *Gal: A True Life*. First edition. Harcourt Brace, 1994. Search Catalog. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.buffalolib.org/vufind/Record/792534/Reviews>

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