

## afamily

Vietnamese woman opens up about being sexually abused by her biological father, a difficult childhood due to racism, carrying the stigma of the past to miraculously revive

Just because of the curiosity of a young girl who had just had her first crush, Isabelle was "brought into life" by the person who gave birth to her.

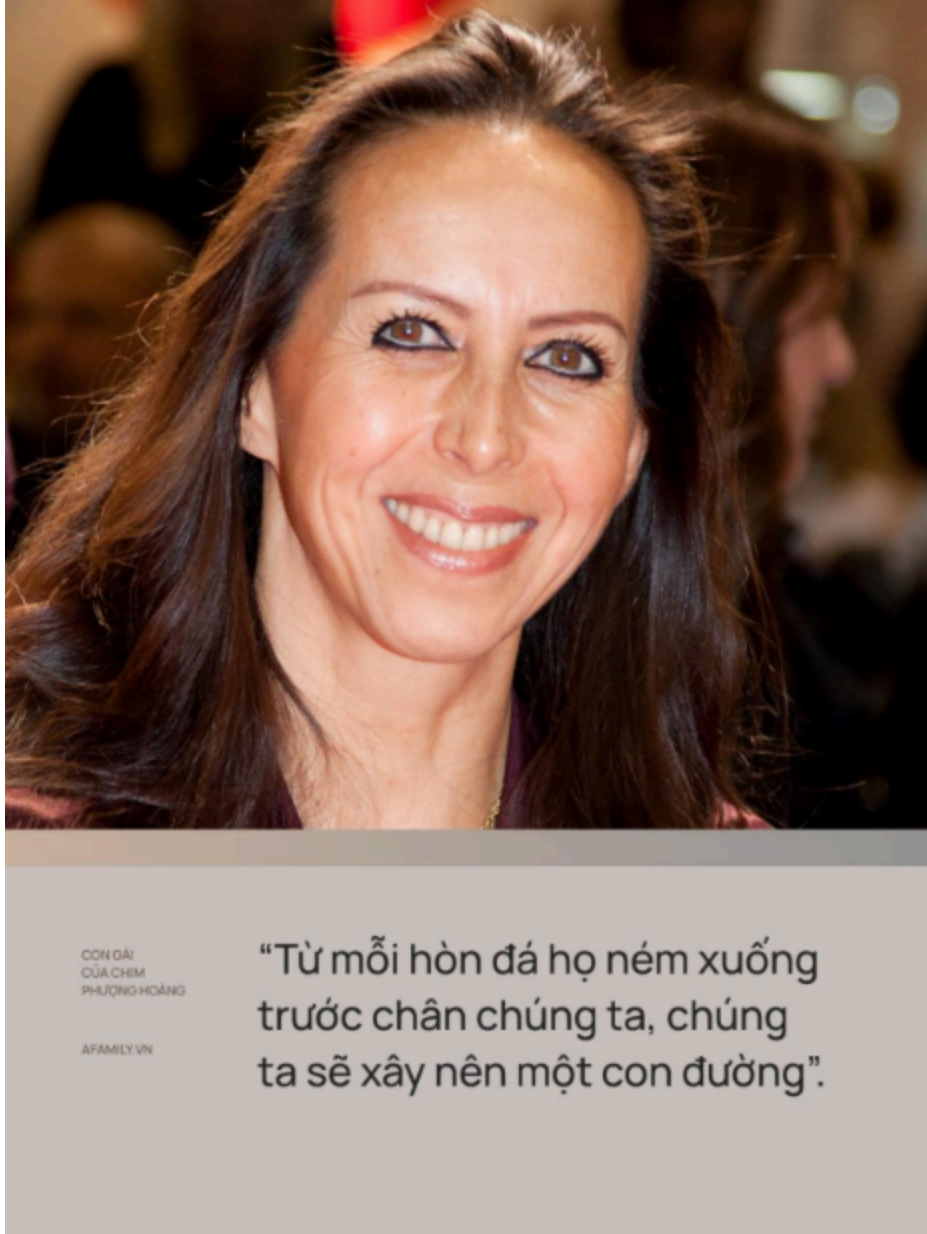
When it comes to the stain of the past, no one really wants to mention it, they just wish there was a deepest hole on Earth, throw it in there and bury it with thousands of layers of dry rocks and gravel. Or, throw it straight into the air so it flies into the distant universe and never to return.

That may be the feeling of many people when they have to endure something too terrible in the past. People choose to shake it off, toss it aside and move on.

But besides that, there are still people who are willing to hold on to that past, bravely speak up, not only for themselves but for the greater good, for the community, for society.

That is exactly what I want to say about the Vietnamese woman named Isabelle Müller.

She did not accept to bury the past but bravely spoke up, wrote lines that were not gentle but had a strong influence so that those who fell into the same situation as her would have enough courage to crush evil, like that!



Haunting memories of an 8 year old girl

On March 19, the Vietnamese-German woman Isabelle Müller launched her book "The Daughter of the Phoenix" in Ho Chi Minh City. This book

has been translated into Vietnamese and officially released in Vietnam 13 years after the German version was released and caused a stir.

Isabelle Müller was born on May 25, 1964 in Tours (France), the youngest of 5 children. Her mother is Vietnamese and her father is French, growing up in poor, slummy, and miserable conditions in a small village in France. Her father is a former French soldier who fought in

Vietnam, and her mother is a Vietnamese woman of Northern origin. She left home at the age of 12 because she did not want to bury her life in a marriage arranged by her parents. She went through many hardships before marrying a French soldier and settling in her husband's hometown.

With an Asian mother, Isabelle not only grew up in poverty and misery, but also had to endure discrimination and contempt from those around her because of the racial discrimination that was deeply ingrained in the blood of the people there. Fate seemed too cruel to her when at the age of 8, she was sexually abused by her own father.



CƠN GÃI  
CỦA CHIM  
PHƯỢNG HOÀNG

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Ngay cả khi chúng ta tự mình  
quyết định hầu hết mọi thứ  
trong cuộc sống và có thể quyết  
định một phần về cuộc đời của  
mình, không phải mọi thứ xảy ra  
đều nằm trong tầm tay chúng ta

Just because of the curiosity of a young girl who had just had her first crush, Isabelle was "brought into real life" by the person who gave birth to her. Innocently asking her father about "adult" kisses, the 8-year-old girl accidentally became her biological father's prey. After the first time being molested in the bathroom, Isabelle was abused in many different ways for many years.

Isabelle wrote in her book: "My father was standing by the sink. His eyes had a strange light that I had never noticed before, and on his lips appeared something like a smile.

"Because you care about such things," he said, "you also have to know what a man's thing looks like."

Before I could say anything, my father had unzipped his pants..."

That was the first time in a series of extremely haunting days for a little girl who was only 8 years old, and did not know anything yet. The words and phrases Isabelle used to recount her childhood abuse by her father, although they may not fully describe the extreme trauma of that year, somehow recreate the horrifying images and truly make the reader feel suffocated.

"Dad ordered me to kneel down to try "something new". This time there would be a different way. "What you just did", he said, "a normal man is not allowed to do".

It had to be like that, I sighed in my mind. But why did I have to kneel down?

I felt like blood was flowing from my veins when I saw Dad unzip his pants again..."

(Excerpt from the book: Daughter of the Phoenix, published on February 5, 2022, Ho Chi Minh City General Publishing House)

Having gone through such physical and mental pain alone, Isabelle did not dare to open her mouth to confide in her mother or siblings because the fear of losing her family was more terrible than just silently enduring it. She thought so, so she did not speak.

"My mother would never forgive anyone who persecuted her child. The torment for a long time made me silent, endure, and suffocate," Isabelle said.

In fact, Isabelle had many times "secretly" signaled her pain through drawings, hints... but was ignored by adults. I don't know if it was because the worry about making a living had blurred the sensitivity in their eyes or because of the default thinking that children didn't know such "nonsense" things.

Struggling in the tragedy that no one knew to share, Isabelle many times thought of death to free herself. Once, she rushed into the intersection like a moth but luckily the car driver braked in time.

Isabelle Müller

# CON GÁI CỦA CHIM PHƯƠNG HOÀNG

Hy vọng là con đường của tôi

PHÖNIXTOCHTER  
DIE HOFFNUNG WAR MEIN WEG

Trương Hồng Quang dịch

NHÀ XUẤT BẢN TỔNG HỢP  
THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH



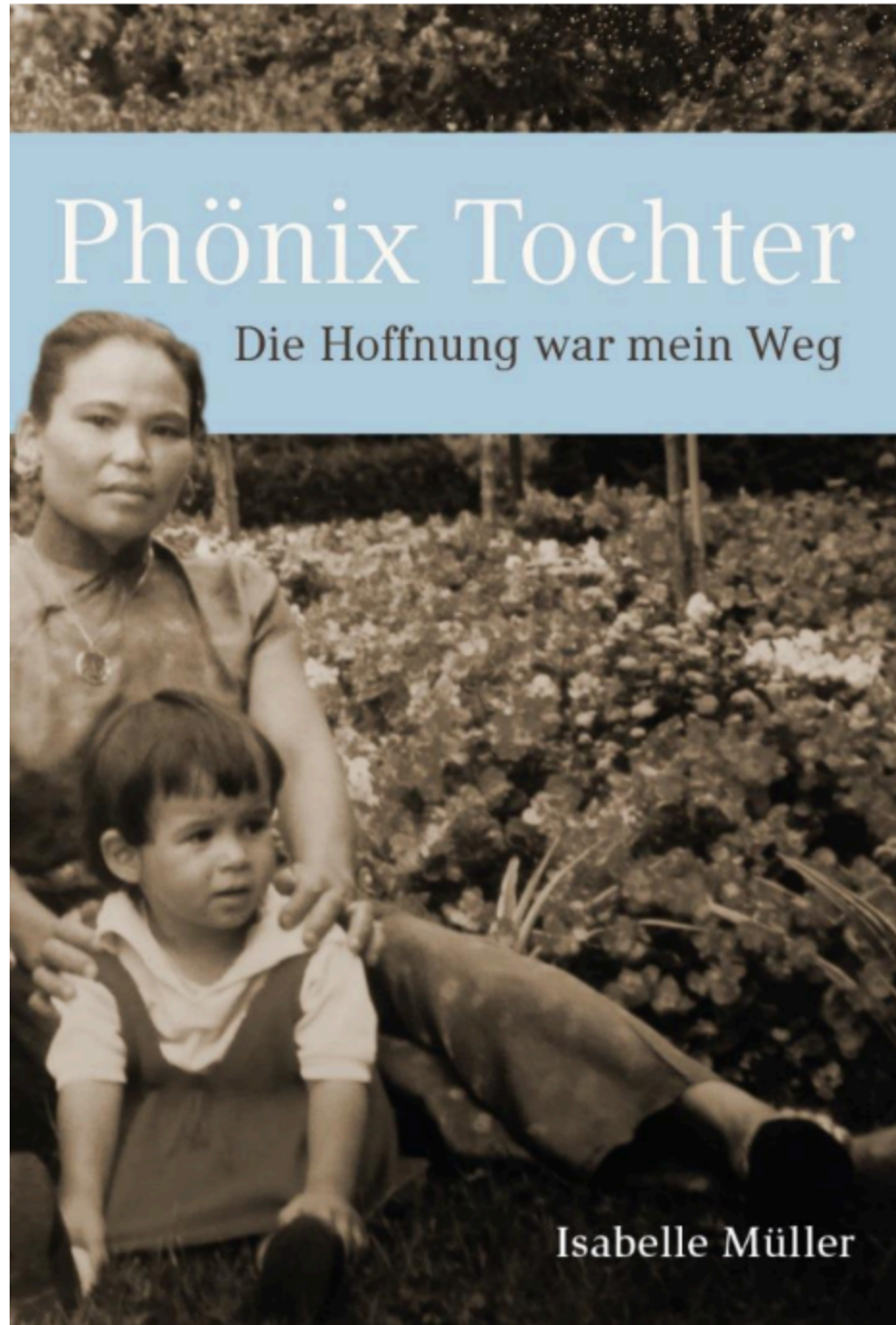


Having committed suicide several times but still remaining in life, Isabelle began to forget the idea of suicide but the childhood obsession still haunted her for many years.

She could not feel sublime every time she was close to her boyfriend. She had to see a psychologist and of course the answer was due to the obsession from the past. It was thought that Isabelle's life would fade away with the pain that could not be erased, then a man appeared and pulled her out of the mud. That was Stephan, who is now her Husband.

Isabelle confided in Stephan about her memories after a long time of knowing each other. And then, what she received was not rejection but love, understanding, sharing to help her heal her wounds. Throughout her life, in the journey to escape the bitterness of the past, Isabelle has always taken her mother as a support. Every time she felt hopeless, she remembered her mother and gradually calmed down.

The woman with Vietnamese blood flowing through her veins, who did not allow herself to be overwhelmed by misfortune, rose to take control of her life and finally - despite all the constraints of fate - became a successful entrepreneur in Germany. Isabelle devoted the last page of the book to her mother: "Today, I know that I could not have survived without my mother's example. I learned from her how to find hope in moments of deep despair, to see obstacles as challenges to be overcome. Her strong faith, Vietnamese blood and determination were my salvation. Her example helped me overcome all difficulties. I will always feel her love".



Isabelle Müller's story is not only about the search for happiness, but also about the path to finding it. It is about turning unhappiness into happiness. It is about learning to turn a negative spiral into a positive spiral. All experiences form the author's philosophy of life. That philosophy is the essence of a happy life.

Although she "certainly experienced bad things, including sexual abuse, psychological terrorism, exhaustion, exclusion, discrimination, poverty, betrayal", in return, she always tells herself: "I have also experienced true love, warmth, affection, encouragement, willingness to help,



empathy, friendship, luck and happiness. And I am allowed to live well here on earth and enjoy this life".



CƠN GÁI  
CỦA CHIM  
PHƯƠNG HOÀNG

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Tôi chắc chắn đã trải qua những điều tồi tệ, bao gồm lạm dụng tình dục, khủng bố tâm lý, kiệt sức, bị loại trừ, phân biệt đối xử, nghèo đói, phản bội. Và? Đổi lại, tôi ý thức tự nhủ: Tôi cũng đã trải qua tình yêu đích thực, sự ấm áp, tình cảm, sự động viên, sẵn sàng giúp đỡ, sự đồng cảm, tình bạn, may mắn và hạnh phúc. Và tôi được phép sống khỏe mạnh ở đây trên trái đất và tận hưởng cuộc sống này

Despite having gone through the worst years, being sexually abused by her own relatives, having to endure, being silent, not being able to tell anyone, living in despair for many years... she did not surrender to adversity, trying to rise up and inspire people.

Through her writings, Isabelle also encourages victims of sexual violence to break their silence to break the power of the perpetrators. In 3 and a half years, Isabelle Müller has given 150 speeches in 8 federal states to audiences, has been a guest on television and radio, and has been invited to the headquarters of the Federal President of Germany for her commitment.

### **The heart of a child always aches for the homeland, the origin**

Together with her mother, Mrs. Dau Thi Cuc (also known as Loan), Isabelle Müller made trips to Southeast Asia in the 1990s to learn about her Vietnamese roots.

In May 2016, the author founded the LOAN Stiftung Charitable Foundation, which specializes in implementing education projects for ethnic minority children in the poorest mountainous areas of Northern Vietnam.

In nearly 6 years of operation, Loan Stiftung has carried out a total of 35 projects, of which 29 have been completed and handed over. The amount of contributions reached 1 million Euros from donors. In addition to supporting poor provinces in the North of Vietnam such as Cao Bang, Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Loan Stiftung also implemented a project to help children in difficulty during the historic flood in October 2020 in Ha Tinh - the hometown of Ms. Dau Thi Cuc.



The author will donate 100% of all proceeds from the book copyright to the LOAN Foundation (LOAN Stiftung) to help poor children in Vietnam have a better life.

Thank you Isabelle Müller for her inspiring story and book!  
According to Law and Readers