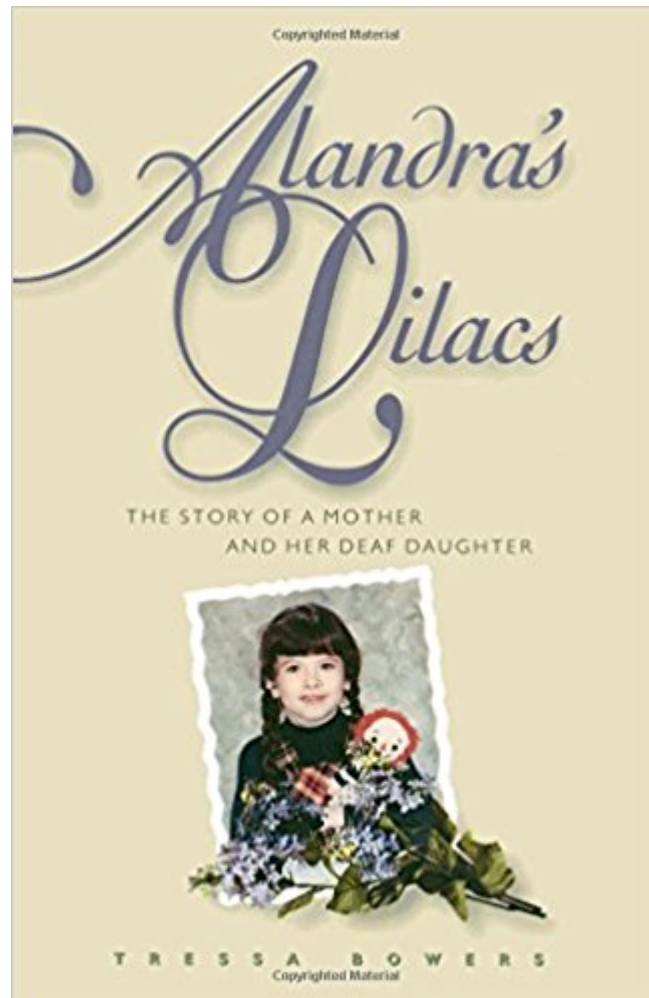




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# Alandra's Lilacs: The Story Of A Mother And Her Deaf Daughter



## Synopsis

When, in 1968, 19-year-old Tressa Bowers took her baby daughter to an expert on deaf children, he pronounced that Alandra was "stone deaf," she most likely would never be able to talk, and she probably would not get much of an education because of her communication limitations. Tressa refused to accept this stark assessment of Alandra's prospects. Instead, she began the arduous process of starting her daughter's education. Economic need forced Tressa to move several times, and as a result, she and Alandra experienced a variety of learning environments: a pure oralist approach, which discouraged signing; Total Communication, in which the teachers spoke and signed simultaneously; a residential school for deaf children, where Signed English was employed; and a mainstream public school that relied upon interpreters. Changes at home added more demands, from Tressa's divorce to her remarriage, her long work hours, and the ongoing challenge of complete communication within their family. Through it all, Tressa and Alandra never lost sight of their love for each other, and their affection rippled through the entire family. Today, Tressa can triumphantly point to her confident, educated daughter and also speak with pride of her wonderful relationship with her deaf grandchildren. Alandra's Lilacs is a marvelous story about the resiliency and achievements of determined, loving people no matter what their circumstances might be.

## Book Information

Paperback: 132 pages

Publisher: Gallaudet University Press; 1 edition (May 28, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1563680823

ISBN-13: 978-1563680823

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 14 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #192,041 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Special Education > Physically Disabled #90 in Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Sign Language #191 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Special Needs

## Customer Reviews

When her daughter (called "Landy") was five months old, Bowers began to suspect that her baby

could not hear. Her fear was soon confirmed by an unsympathetic physician who told her that Landy was "stone deaf." Despite some awkward writing, Bowers honestly and successfully conveys the difficulties and joys of bringing up a deaf child and her determination to give Landy a good life. Unfortunately, educators for the deaf in the 1970s were still divided into traditionalists, who espoused oralism (teaching the deaf to speak) and forbade the use of sign language, and the emerging movement of those who advocated total communication. Relying on the advice of so-called experts, Bowers enrolled Landy in a strict oral program at the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis. However, when the state stopped paying Landy's school fees, Bowers placed her daughter in a residential school where sign language was taught and its use encouraged. Eventually, she was able to negotiate a place for her daughter in a supportive public school nearby. By the time Landy became a teenager, she socialized almost entirely with other deaf teens. Though Bowers learned sign language, she has never become proficient in it and now feels that she and the rest of her family missed an opportunity to enter Landy's world more fully. It is nonetheless clear that she raised her daughter to be a sensitive and self-sufficient adult: Landy is now married to a deaf husband and is the mother of three healthy deaf children. This is an involving look at deaf culture and the alienation that can arise between the deaf and the hearing. B&w photos. (Sept.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Bowers here recounts her experience as a hearing parent raising a deaf daughter and gives advice to other parents of deaf children. Don't dutifully do what the experts suggest, she implores. When she was a young parent, experts told her that the oral method offered the best hope for Alandra; as a result, even when this method had clearly failed her daughter, she continued to struggle with it. That is, until Alandra finally taught her otherwise. Bowers offers hope to parents just discovering that their child is deaf and gives them the questions to ask and the resources to pursue. Bowers's best advice? "Follow your heart and love your child." This engaging narrative provides good reading for anyone with an interest in the subject, whether serious or casual, and boldly takes on the oral vs. signing debate. A good addition to all public and academic collections. AKellyJo Houtz Griffin, Auburn, WA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Very nice insight into a hearing Mother's deep love and understanding of her daughter being deaf from her childhood through adulthood. I thought the Mother's detailed account of what she experienced as a hearing parent and the various issues of life she experienced from her daughter's deafness was heartfelt. She wonderfully describes her acceptance of her daughter's eventual move

and need for Deaf Culture. Hearing parents and family members, and those who interact and work with deaf adults, teens and children should find this very useful of not neglecting the importance of learning American Sign Language as a means of communication.

This narrative starts off informative and intriguing, but quickly takes a turn for the worst. Instead of being about the real life trials of a deaf child and her hearing parents, Tressa Bowers efficiently turned Alandra's Lilacs into an autobiography. For a majority of the 132 pages, she shares the concerns of an overly-protective and intrusive mother faced with the maturation and individualization of her daughter. Although aimed to be instructive and enlightening on the subject of raising a deaf child, Alandra's Lilacs better serves as an insanity plea by the author.

I read this book for my sign language college course and really enjoyed it. Alandra and her mother's journey is very insightful and really tugs at your heartstrings. Didn't want to put it down and definitely recommend.

I stumbled across this book and ordered it as fast as I could. I used to work with the author many years ago and can vouch for the fact that she is a wonderful person and mother. I was so happy to see she wrote a book about her lovely daughter, whose wedding my wife and I were fortunate enough to be able to attend. This book is so real and honest and it was a treat to have Tressa share this with us. Tressa, I am so proud of you and the beautiful daughter you raised. I can just imagine how much you are enjoying those grand kids. Always your friend, Randy.

I had to read this book for a class. I really enjoyed the book. Tressa is a great mom and her never give up attitude is great.

I bought this book because of an ASL class I had in college. This book is a fast read and helps the reader understand what it is like to be a deaf parent. I would not read on my own. At times the read was boring and slow.

I would recommend this book to others wanting to learn more about how a parent deals with the hearing loss of their child. This book was an easy read and I found it very interesting to read.

Great book! I read it for my Deaf Culture class. Easy read, pretty large print, too.

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