

Dugard updates memoir for summer release of paperback

By Los Angeles Times

Nearly three years after Jaycee Dugard was rescued from the ramshackle compound where she gave birth to two daughters while being held captive, she is still learning how to be a free woman.

“My growth has not happened overnight, and every day brings new challenges and choices that I have to make,” she writes in a new afterword to her 2011 memoir, “A Stolen Life,” which comes out in paperback July 3. “Living out in the world has its share of problems, and I am learning what works and what doesn’t.”



Now 32, Dugard was kidnapped in 1981. The gap-toothed 11-year-old had said goodbye to her stepfather and was headed off to catch her morning school bus in South Lake Tahoe when she was abducted by Phillip and Nancy Garrido.

For the next 18 years, the couple kept Dugard in a series of tents and soundproof sheds in their Antioch backyard. Phillip impregnated her twice during years of methamphetamine-fueled rape. Nancy helped deliver Dugard’s daughters.

The Garridos pleaded guilty to rape and kidnap charges 14 months ago; he will spend the rest of his life in prison, while she could be up for parole in 30 years.

“A Stolen Life” became an immediate bestseller last July. In the original version, Dugard wrote about missing her mother and raising her children. She spared no detail of her ordeal and chronicled the growth she had undergone during her first

months of freedom.

In the short section produced for the paperback version, Dugard acknowledged that she felt like that kidnapped 11-year-old when she worked on the memoir. But “as I write this addition for the book, I feel a whole heck of a lot older. I have truly started to take back my life and live in the sunshine.”

She is still learning to feel comfortable with everyday activities, she says, like eating out: “When I go to a restaurant as much as possible I sit with my back to the patrons so they can’t see my face,” she writes. “Why? Is this old behavior or new? I think it is a combination. What am I afraid of? If asked then, I would say, of being seen. If asked now, I would say of being seen.

“What has changed?” she continues. “Yes, I’m free, but to truly be free, I must fully accept who I am and what I have been through. Not just for me, but for my kids... I feel that in order for my children to move forward with their lives they have to see that I am moving forward with mine.”