

Alice #19

My name is Alice #19

I was in my late teens when I moved to Australia, a country I knew nothing about. I knew no one in. I met a guy not long after and when things didn't work out for me with work and living he was right there to help. He promised a home, a future, security and adventure. I fell for it and he gave me all that he had promised.

I thought to myself after a few months that this must be too good to be true. Why had he fallen in love with me? Why was he treating me like a princess? I got my explanation about a year after we had got together.

This man had no control over himself when he had been drinking. I was the one who never left his side no matter how angry or dangerous he became. He turned from a happy, funny and social guy to a monster. His eyes turned black and he looked for anyone ready to fight. I witnessed three fights between him and one, two or three other guys. There was no stopping him. He would punch the lights out of these guys and then stand there laughing while kicking them in the head. I said to myself: "he would never do that to me though."

After this his family started to act weird and kept on giving me hints about "how lucky he was to have me" and they "felt so much safer when I was around because he was calm". When I asked them what they meant, they would say "he just gets really depressed and angry sometimes, but no need to worry".

A few months later I copped my first punch. We were engaged and about to get married. I was so confused. He was so apologetic. I was terrified. But I was in love. We got married and this is when it all turned really bad. He had me where he wanted me or in his words "now I could never leave him". He started taking control of my money and picking out which of my friends were suitable and which ones that weren't good enough for me (meaning which ones who fell for his charm and which ones did not).

When I was about 8 months pregnant with our child he sat on top of me with a knife against my throat. When our child was six months old he strangled me over and over for about 2 hours. Six months later he dragged me in my hair across our apartment and broke any personal memory I had from home. Six months from that he kicked my front door in, hit me in the head with different objects and spat at me while I was on the ground.

All of these times, I left him. But I always went back. My reasons were financial, emotional and fear.

In between all of these big fights were the small ones accompanied with little threats and warnings such as 'I am always watching'. I woke one night (after I had moved in to my own place) with him standing next to my bed staring at me. That's when I decided that my fear of not knowing where he was, was bigger than the fear of him itself. So, we got back together. I wanted to survive. I thought: just keep him happy. Just please him and do what you need to do for your child. And I did, until I, once again, was hit so hard across the head that for a moment I thought my teeth were going to fall out.

I looked up at my child standing there asking me why daddy was crying, and why is he saying sorry. And I thought: do I want this for her - because this is the life I was showing her. Do I want her to grow up thinking this is okay - because that is what I am allowing? Do I want my child to grow up thinking it is okay to be called a bitch and a fat cow - because that is what she will believe?

I left; with no money, nowhere to live, no family or job.

Amazingly, people came around and helped me. They helped me without asking a question (unless I told them my story). They gave us clothes, food and a place to stay. I have never received so much love and support in my life. And for that I am very grateful.

I still do not know why I did not go to the police. It makes me angry that I let him get away with what he did. But, what I do know is that I am so proud of myself for leaving when I was at my weakest. I am also damn proud that I have control over what my daughter will grow up thinking about herself. She will be strong, confident and loving. Because that is the example I will give her.

And no matter how hard it was to leave, I know that that decision made a difference to her life.
