

Alice #42

My eyes sting and stomach churns. The dismissal today of my AVO application is not particularly the low point of my journey. However, neither has it been a particularly enjoyable half hour spent being cross examined about my previous depression and alcohol addiction. This interrogation was notable by the absent mention of what drove me, loving wife and mother of five, into that terminal abyss.

I had known that I would not be able to easily define the escalating, debasing, utterly twisted constructs of abuse that had become my life over the past 15 years. Indeed, how can abuse, which leaves no bruises and physical scars, be verified and tested by man's court of law? Unreported, without documentation, and yes, I admit, even actively covered up by my own words and defenses. Sticks and stones, and all that nonsense. Even now, one year on, my memory of those times still recoils from my tentative prodding.

He wounded me constantly, then took me to doctors for fixing. He floored me and crushed me, then picked me up gently; he ripped out my heart, and soothed me with words of love. He created my unreality and stood resolute when my mind could no longer comprehend the lie I was living. He captured my spirit and promised, for a price, that my freedom lay solely with him.

And so what is today but another step forward, from the screams, silence and suffocating fear. Away from what I am not and was not; away from what he was, what he is.

The shame of today is not mine; it is yours. You, the man who lives with the knowledge that today this is all that you are or will be. A caustic shell that harbours only your own self disgust, self loathing, anger and depravity. A deceitful core of selfish desires and jealous compulsions; a man so devoid of goodness and truth that your survival demands you humiliate and destroy. A cuckold existence where anything good survives only despite you, not from you.

You, man; I dare you to wear your own shame, if you can. My own I have fully accepted, embraced, as an integral part of the woman now standing. I know who I am, who I was, where I was, and stand firm for what now I no longer allow. It separates us infinitely; me from you. I invite you; see me here and all that is mine, because I can see you, while you sit there still blind.

Dear Alice, my story is yours, if you need it. It stemmed from a fragment of hope and belief. To the family and friends who have loved me, I thank you. You gave me your strength when my own was destroyed. You gave me your voice when my silence had dumbbed me. You gave me your mind when my own was not trustful. You gave me the gifts that were all that I needed; you had faith in me, knew me, and loved me.
