

## Alice #43

I met my first husband to be at 18, he was 23 and had previously lived with someone. This was my first serious relationship. We got a small flat together. It was a volatile relationship, but he was always sorry and loving afterwards, and I thought I couldn't live without him.

I worked full time, he stayed at home and said he was looking for work. I became pregnant with my first baby and worked up until three weeks before I gave birth. After giving birth he finally got a job, that's when the "full on" abuse with no niceties afterwards began. He controlled the money, what I could and couldn't buy and would often leave me alone with the baby for days on end, with no money or food. He would come home from work in a foul mood and start an abusive argument, which often became physical, he would then leave; I heard years later that he'd be partying, drinking and looking for sympathy - telling his friends I was a bitch and he just wanted to be with his child. To this day I have people in town who won't give me the time of day, due to his lies.

I became pregnant again, even though I was on the mini pill; he actually punched me in the stomach, luckily my darling bubby was okay. After another weekend of being left alone with no money for shopping etc, I decided enough was enough so I went to Social Security and enquired about the single parents benefit, got the flat put into my name and got rental rebate, that's when the stalking and harassment began. It was awful, he broke in one evening and bashed me, punching the phone off the wall and threatening to kill himself and let our toddler watch; he was totally unhinged, he threatened to take my babies. I went numb and called his bluff, saying "okay then" he literally began back-tracking and took off, I sat on the floor shaking and crying.

This went on for quite awhile, everyday I'd have to make sure everything was done during daylight and have us all locked inside before it became dark. It was a horrible way to live. I've found out since that while he was stalking and harassing me, and making my life miserable, he was seeing numerous other women.

My advice to others is: if anyone ridicules you, uses you, hits you, puts you down, alienates you from family and friends, controls the money and so on, then get away. No matter how much you think you love them, no matter how much they say they're sorry and turn on the charm, IT IS NOT LOVE, PUT YOUR CHILDREN ABOVE THAT HORRIBLE LIFE AND HORRIBLE PERSON, you will reap the rewards eventually,

I am now a Nanna and live happily by myself, I am confident and content, my children love me, they also love their dad but have no respect for him at all. They have seen him at his worst and know what he is capable of, and know that he never cared if they had a roof over their heads, shoes on their feet and food on the table.

He is an alcoholic and a gambler, when he's down on his luck he imposes himself on our adult daughter, who due to her kind heart helps him out, but certainly draws a line with how much she'll put up with.