

A Woman's Tale

I can't remember my childhood very much.

Girls aren't seen as happy moments for parents or families particularly for fathers. Mothers carry us for nine months, but they are elevated when the boys came along.

I suppose our home was overcrowded. We struggled to get by. Coal fires. No hot running water. Mum sewed at home on the machine to make ends meet. Dad "worked".

I seemed to enjoy primary school. I did well.

I played out a lot.

The boys got pampered. We were in the way. We got scolded. Smacked, swore at. I remember going shopping. Helping out with the younger ones

Time and time again we were told no-one will want to marry us. If we couldn't cook. We would be the laughing stock. We would be beat up by our in-laws.

My father did not want us to go to school. When we did we had to be careful what we wore- cover up. Cover up even in the house!

Personally I was exposed to sexual (abuse) encounters but not from direct family necessarily and not just in the house.

Once I came across some porn magazines in a vehicle I was travelling in with two male members of my extended family. Wondering who they belonged to, they knocked me sick. In the vehicle – they knocked me sick.

My first trip abroad back home lasted about a year- so I missed school. I was 13.

It was around this time I seemed to come across as a rebel. I began fighting with my siblings and arguing with my mother. I would scream at the top of my voice so my voice could be heard outside of my house. My mother would tell my father to sort me out. I wasn't doing well at school. I played truant from PE until I got caught out. I got caught smoking.

By the time it came to leaving school I hadn't gained any qualifications. I couldn't be bothered. It was my mother who pushed me to carry on so I did... for two more years.

Eventually the time came when my mother with the support of my elder sister by three years, began "looking" for my future partner. They showed me the photo of a lad who I thought had a big nose but after some thought I agreed because basically I wanted out of that household.

The idea (my idea) was that I will move abroad and live with him. Him and his family had other ideas. Why else would they want to choose a fair skinned, young, educated girl. Simple, with a BRITISH PASSPORT?!!!!....

I stuck it out with him until I was seven months pregnant with my first child and had the excuse I was looking for to travel back to the UK alone. He did not have UK status then but he was working on it! I hated him. I loathed him. He was totally immature. I lived with his family. I became ill. I wasn't looked after very well. He was ordering me about and I was feeling very miserable. It got worse from there....

I am still living with him. I have more children. I'm still not happy. We hardly ever speak. Communication is zero, I have to answer to his beck and call or else. He's walked out on me. I've left him. The families are disgusted. We have our share of cat fights. He has left a thumb print of himself on our son.

I feel oppressed. My life is up and down. I know I am the only one that can pick me up. He doesn't want me to answer the phone, open the front door to anyone, work, have friends, be involved in anything, particularly education. He cannot stand me so much as glancing at the opposite sex, let alone speaking with them.

I just get on with it to the best of my ability.

I feel free when he isn't in the house but he is always checking on me.

I am expected to have a cooked meal waiting on the table for him whenever he decides to walk in through that front door and then, if he wishes, he may/may not eat it. He usually snubs his nose at it. He commands a drink of water or tea. He never says please or thank you. He doesn't want to know how my day went. He wants access to the phone and remote controls as soon as he sits down. I am expected to be attentive to him and only him – oh and bearing in mind the house is clean and in order. Kids have to be well, homework done, fed, scrubbed up, sat in front of the TV preferably.

Every penny has to be accounted for. Just as my every move.

My life and what I make of it keeps me going. I dread the future of my kids with his thinking. He still hasn't matured.

I am an example for people to TAKE HEED.

OTHER ISSUES: Sex and consummating the marriage with someone you've agreed to marry but not knowing