

**I AM ME !**

By: Beth Lambert

# Foreword

It is time for my story to be told.

Many, many times I have to put pen to paper and tell my story, but I have always been too afraid.

I was afraid that I would hurt those I love. I was afraid I would offend some and sully the memories of others. Most of all I was afraid of the emotions that this story would evoke in me and those nearest and dearest to my heart.

To all of you, I apologise and I hope that once you have read this, you will understand me and why I once was the person I was.....and, maybe you will understand why I had to do this.

To my kids: Please, if you start reading and you know who I am, just stop. Don't read any further; rather keep the memories you have. If you decide to continue reading....well, then I sincerely hope you know that judgement should be left in God's hands and that parents do make the most terrible mistakes and have to live with the regret. These are my memories and I have tried my damndest to be as honest and objective as possible.

So.....here goes!!!!!!!!!!

My name is Beth. I am the second youngest of five children. My brother Dean was the eldest, Andrew was the second eldest. Catharine was my older sister and Theresa the youngest by a year. I was a timid and extremely shy child and kept mostly to myself.

We were an average middle class family and as close as most families are. Due to my fathers job we moved quite often but it didn't seem to have any negative effect on any of us.

Since I could remember, I had always been my father's favourite child yet he treated us all with equal respect and love. He often worked away from home and would sometimes be away for a week or more. When he was home he would play games with us or tease us to distraction and he loved us. It was always a treat to just sit near him while he sat reading or visiting with family and I loved playing with his hair. Sunday afternoons my parents would always take a nap unless mom had visitors or if she was busy with something, but dad took his nap no matter what. It was at these times that I would quietly lie down beside him while he read or until he fell asleep. We were seldom punished by him and discipline was left, mostly, to my mother.

My mother was not a very affectionate person, hugs and kisses were few and far between. Punishment came in the form of slaps to the head or a slipper to whichever part of the body she could reach. Wooden spoons, boxes, brooms, pots and pans, in fact, anything within reach became weapons or missiles when her temper flared. Please, don't misunderstand, my mother was not abusive toward us but she did have a terrible temper.

My Dad adored my mother and although they had their arguments they were happy. No matter what had happened during his time away we were never allowed to say anything bad about my mom. If we were punished for some obscure reason and told him, he would patiently hear us out and then say, "Mommy wouldn't punish you if you didn't deserve it, so I don't want to hear any tales."

My parents always backed one another up, no matter what. This was a trait I admired and one I wished for in my own little family.

I was four or five years old when my father came home after being away on business for the week. It was December and as was usual my dad greeted us with hugs and kisses and while having supper was told all that had happened while he was away.

Our dinner table was the one place where we were encouraged to share things and dinner time was usually an extremely noisy affair.

While having supper that night my dad asked Catharine and me, if we would like to go and visit our aunt and uncle for a few days on our own and they would meet us there for Christmas. Being the first time that we would be away from home, Catharine and I excitedly agreed.

A couple of days later we drove up to Aunty Rosie and Uncle Gerald. Mom and dad slept over and left the following morning.

Catharine and I were extremely excited. Aunt Rosie had arranged for us to participate in the church's Christmas pageant and as my parents would be back by then we would surprise them. Catharine would be mother Mary and I would be an angel in the play.

It was a very busy time for both of us. Costumes needed to be made and we had to attend the practises. It seemed as if everyone was busy with the preparations for the concert.

Our costumes were beautiful. Catharine would wear a long soft blue dress and mine was long and white and flowing with wings stuck to the back and a halo on my head. I would be an angel.

I was extremely happy and excited but something happened that changed everything.

A week or so before my parents were to meet us, Aunty Rosie told us to go and bath. She filled the bathtub with bubbles and while playing in the bath I heard a very strange sound.

I looked up and saw uncle Gerald standing in the doorway watching us, his face was a bright red and a strange sound emanated from his throat. He looked extremely angry and my heart leapt in fear.

Just then Aunt Rosie walked into the bathroom and Uncle Gerald sauntered off.

While Aunt Rosie dressed us, thoughts were milling through my head. "What did I do..? Why is Uncle Gerald so angry...? Are we going to get punished...?. These thoughts kept going through my head and I was petrified.

When we had dressed, Aunt Rosie sent us to the bedroom to play. She would call us when supper was ready.

At dinner that evening Uncle Gerald was his normal happy self and conversation flowed until it was time to say goodnight and go to bed. The earlier thoughts had disappeared and all was as it should be.

That night I had a terrible nightmare, probably because of the earlier fright. I was sobbing in my sleep and woke up as a result. It was then, that I saw Uncle Gerald next to Catharine's bed. He sat on his haunches with his back toward me and softly whispered, "it's alright little one, it's alright.... don't fight me, I love you."

I couldn't see what he was doing but could hear Catharine crying softly.

The next morning, in the hectic rush, I forgot what I had seen. Days passed and Christmas was slowly approaching.

"Tomorrow mommy and daddy would come; tomorrow night we would participate in the Christmas concert and the day after is Christmas. It's going to be wonderful. I am so excited I can barely sleep" I thought on that starry summer's evening.

"I wonder what Father Christmas is bringing me. Please, please Father Christmas, I want a horse, a real horse, a white one and his name will be Snowy. I will do anything, I will be good I promise, just please bring me a horse for Christmas." I prayed as I went to bed that night.

I was fast asleep when I felt something flutter against my cheek, my eyes flew open. It was pitch dark and someone was standing next to my bed. My heart was hammering against my chest, I wanted to scream but fear grabbed me by the throat and all that could be heard was a whimper.

"Shush" someone whispers "Shush... it's just me." It is Uncle Gerald's voice, "I just came to say goodnight Bethie." With those words he leaned over and kissed me. "Yuck, yuck, yuck...sis" I said while rubbing my mouth with the back of my hand. It was wet and slimy. He had pushed his tongue into my mouth,

"Shush." Uncle Gerald said, "Shush now little one, you're going to wake everyone, then I will have to punish you. I love you, you are my baby, my special one and I want to show you how much I love you." With these words he pushed his hand in under my nightclothes and started stroking my body. The more he touched the more laboured his breath became and the rougher he got. His hand slipped between my legs, he was hurting me.

"Please, please Uncle Gerald you're hurting me, please, please stop..." I begged. His breath just came faster and faster. It sounded as if he had run a marathon. "Please stop, you're hurting me, I'm going to tell mommy," I sobbed, while desperately trying to push his hands away.

Suddenly, Uncle Gerald stopped. "You won't tell your mother or your father, do you understand?" he said threateningly.

"I will tell mommy, I will." I said

"No you won't... If you do your daddy will hate you, He will give you away and never see you again. You were naughty and nobody likes a naughty child. You tempted me, so it is your own fault. You act like a tart prancing around in your short little dresses. If I tell your daddy what you did, he will hate you." With these words he turned and left the room.

“I am going to tell my daddy....no, I’m not.....yes, I am.....no, I can’t....yes, I can....but if I do they will think I’ve been naughty....and....and...they won’t love me any more.....What is going to happen to me....?What then.....? If I tell mommy and daddy they will hate me and daddy will never take me in his arms again and never tell me he loves me. I will die....., die....., die..... Why did Uncle Gerald have to hurt me? Why did he call me a tart and what does it mean....?”

So the thoughts flitted through my mind while I sobbed and sobbed until I finally fell asleep once again.

The following morning I felt so terribly ill my stomach and body were hurting and I felt extremely nauseous. I glanced over at Catharine’s bed but she must have been up already.

“Oh God, I feel terrible. Mommy and Daddy are coming today and I am supposed to take part in the concert tonight, but I feel so sick.” Slowly the tears started rolling down my cheeks.

Someone is calling me but I don’t answer. I just curl up under the covers and close my eyes.

Then, I hear footsteps and peep out to see Uncle Gerald in the doorway. I jerk up and scoot back into the corner as fast as my little legs would propel me.

“Please Uncle Gerald, please don’t hurt me. I promise I’ll be good, I promise.” I begged.

“Don’t worry little one, don’t worry...” says Uncle Gerald “I will never hurt you, I love you too much. I never meant to hurt you. I was just showing you how much I love you. That is the way grown-ups show their love for one another. You are very special to me. Just remember, you can’t tell your parents what happened. They will never understand and they won’t love you anymore. Remember that... Come now; tell Uncle Gerald why you’re still in bed.”

“I feel sick uncle Gerald, my stomach hurts and my throat burns, I really don’t feel well,” and with that the tears started flowing once more.

Uncle Gerald told me to sleep a little longer and he would pop in later to see if I felt any better.

Somehow I dropped off to sleep only to be awoken by voices a short while later. Slowly I opened my eyes trying to hear the soft sounds suddenly recognising my father’s voice. I jumped out of bed and ran as fast as my little legs could carry me. Along the passageway, through the lounge, through the front door onto the veranda and just froze.

My dad was standing deep in conversation with Uncle Gerald; he looked so serious and angry.

“Did Uncle Gerald tell daddy I was naughty? Did he tell him what happened? Did he tell daddy that I acted like a tart (whatever that meant)? Did he..? Did he...?”

I wanted to flee, I wanted to hide. Dread clawed at my stomach. “Oh God, please help me, daddy must love me, please.”

Suddenly my father glanced up and saw me. A wide grin spread across his face and he turned towards me opening his arms wide. I flew down the stairs into his arms; he lifted me up, swinging me around, then hugged me tightly to his chest. I threw my arms around his neck and burrowed in under his chin. “This was my daddy...”

My fathers smell is still with me today, the fresh, soft, sweet smell of tobacco. The smell of love.

The following few days, I followed my dad wherever he went. If he went to the bathroom, I would sit in front of the bathroom door and wait till he came out. If he sat down, I would climb on his lap. If he walked somewhere, I would take his hand and walk along beside him.

We never took part in the Christmas pageant. Catharine was too ill and although Aunt Rosie was angry, I knew deep in my heart that it was Uncle Gerald’s fault, he had made Catharine ill.

I never told my parents what had happened, although both Catharine and I, and later Theresa were sent to stay with my aunt and uncle many times during the holidays.

The abuse never stopped and I dreaded the times that we were sent to stay there.

One evening, I must have been about eight or nine years old, we were once again visiting Uncle Gerald and Aunt Rosie. They had always had separate beds and this particular evening we were sitting in their room on the floor listening to the radio, reading or drawing while they lay in bed reading.

Uncle Gerald called me and told me to lie down next to him. I shook my head and carried on reading. He again told me to lie down next to him and again I shook my head, trying very hard to disappear into the carpet.

Aunt Rosie lowered her magazine and peered at me over her glasses, glanced at Uncle Gerald and went back to her magazine.

Uncle Gerald leaned over took my hand and gently pulled me towards him. I sat down on the edge of the bed. He placed his arm around me and made me lie down beside him. I lay there, stiff as a rod.

“What could he do to me?” I thought. “Aunt Rosie is right here, he wouldn’t dare do anything in front of her...”

How badly mistaken I was.

Uncle Gerald covered me with the blanket and started stoking my body with slow gentle movements working his hand in under my night clothes so carefully that Aunt Rosie never suspected anything. Just as subtly I fought him, trying with all my might to block his roving, probing fingers. He then reached over with his other hand, took hold of my hand and oh, so gently maneuvered it inside his pants. Then he wrapped my hand around his penis and released it.

I immediately jerked my hand away, shaking my head but he grabbed it and again wrapped my hand around his penis and held it there. At this stage I had no idea what he wanted me to do, so I just squeezed as hard as I could. He jerked violently upright in the bed and immediately lay down once more. Aunt Rosie looked over at him and without saying anything lay watching us.

Uncle Gerald just pretended to continue reading so I got out of bed, said I was tired and was going to sleep and walked out.

Later that night Uncle Gerald made one of his midnight visits again and got very rough. He was trying to push his thick, course fingers into me. I was crying and trying with all my might to push his hands away, gritting my teeth as I silently struggled while the tears rolled down my face.

Suddenly we heard footsteps, Uncle Gerald just calmly pulled his hands away and leaned over me whispering, “Shush, little one...Shush.”

Then in the darkness I heard Aunt Rosie ask what was going on. “Nothing...” said Uncle Gerald, “nothing. Bethie was having a nightmare and I just came to calm her down.”

“Bethie, are you okay?” asked Aunt Rosie

“Yes, Aunt Rosie, I’m okay.” I lied.

“Okay then, sleep tight. Come Gerald let the child get some sleep.”

The following morning I was sore and bruised. I was moping around the house and burst into tears at the slightest provocation. Finally Aunt Rosie asked me what the matter was. I didn’t know what to say to her so I just told her that I was missing my parents and I wanted to go home.

The crying and pleading lasted for two days before aunt Rosie finally decided that she had, had enough and they would take us home.



It was a long drive back. When we finally arrived home, the house was locked up and there was no sign of my parents or brothers. We finally managed to open a window and being the skinniest I squeezed my body through the burglar bars and opened the door for my sisters, aunt and uncle. Somehow, during the next few hours my aunt found out that my parents had gone away on holiday.

Dean at this stage was already in the Air Force and Andrew was away with friends. With my sisters and I being at my aunts, my parents had seized the opportunity to spend a few days away together.

I am unsure as to what my parents were told when my aunt finally managed to reach them but they returned the following morning and Aunt Rosie and Uncle Gerald were on their merry way home.

Because neither I nor my sisters ever told our parents what was going on we were sent to visit my aunt and uncle at least one school holiday each year and in this way the vicious cycle was allowed to continue unabated.

With each visit, Uncle Gerald became more and more emboldened.

One year Aunt Rosie, Uncle Gerald and their youngest daughter came to visit my parents, some of my mom's family were there too. There were six grown-ups besides my parents and they were all sitting in the lounge having tea and snacks and just talking.

Theresa and I were sitting in our bedroom playing a game and being quite a temperamental child; Theresa got upset and stormed out. I walked into the lounge to ask my mom something when Uncle Gerald took my arm and pulled me onto his lap. He started telling me how much he had missed us and asked questions about school and friends.

Being amongst a group of adults I thought I was safe and quietly answered him. It wasn't very long though, when I felt his hand worming in under my dress and tugging at the edge of my panties. Although I tried to squirm away without drawing any attention to us, he managed to slip his fingers inside and started his prodding and poking.

I looked around the room at my father, mother, aunts and uncles and to my utter amazement no-one seemed to notice what was happening right under their noses. Could adults really be that blind?

I started squirming again and when Uncle Gerald told me to sit still, I replied that I had to go to the bathroom (I really did have to go). He made me promise that I would come and sit on his lap again and only then let me go.

I ran to the bathroom, closed the door behind me and sat down on the toilet. My butt had barely touched the seat when the door opened and Uncle Gerald peeped around.

“Help,” I thought, “Oh, please somebody help me. What does he want?” I was frozen to the toilet seat in terror.

“What’s wrong?” I heard.

It was my mother. She had walked toward the kitchen and saw Uncle Gerald leaning into the bathroom.

“Nothing.” He answered. “I just wanted to come to the bathroom and didn’t realise Bethie was inside.”

While he spoke to my mom, I stood up, pulled up my panties and in a voice loud enough for her to hear said, “it’s okay Uncle Gerald, I am finished,” and pushed past him toward my mom.

Many of the memories of this time were purposefully suppressed. I had to, in order to survive. The encounters with Uncle Gerald were painful both physically and mentally and were to change my life irrevocably. I had learned to grit my teeth and endure anything that came my way in silence.

As it turned out, I became even more timid, more shy and reclusive. I built a wall around me that was impenetrable and my emotions were suppressed.

We were a very large family and always had aunts and uncles and cousins visiting. When visitors arrived, I would hide either under my bed or in a cupboard somewhere to avoid facing them.

Books became my friends and companions. I would quite often climb into the top of my cupboard (where nobody would even think of looking for me) with a torchlight or candle and read books until I got either hungry or needed the bathroom. When someone called, I would just ignore them and often fell asleep in my “hole”. If one of my hiding places were discovered, I would find another. I became adept in climbing trees and sitting hidden in the branches for hours at a time.

I often got into trouble for disappearing especially when there were chores to be done and I couldn’t be found. I feared people in general and was terrified of all men besides my dad. Should any man, be it friend or family member, touch me, I would recoil in horror, although my face would show no emotion whatsoever.

Although I tried to avoid physical confrontations with my sisters it was sometimes unavoidable. One morning, I was still very young, Theresa took money from me and would not return it, I tried to grab it from her and she hit me. The next minute I heard my mother’s voice saying “hit her Theresa, hit her...”

I turned glared at my mother and just walked out the gate. I went to my aunt, clear across town. When I arrived I told my aunt what had happened and knowing my mother she believed what I told her.

A couple of hours later Catharine and Theresa arrived looking for me. My aunt hid me in the bedroom and told them she hadn't seen me. I heard all that was said and heard them telling my aunt that my dad was coming home that night. I left my hiding place and walked out as Catharine and Theresa were about to leave. Theresa was on my bicycle. I took my bicycle from her and went home arriving minutes after my father. As I walked in my father asked, "Where were you? Your mother said you ran away and they have been searching for you all day."

Before I could answer my mother chipped in "Beth and Theresa were fighting and when I tried to stop them, Beth ran off. God knows where..."

"That's a lie." I said

My dad jumped up grabbed me by the arm and said, "You don't ever talk to your mother like that. Do you understand? Not ever. If I ever hear you disrespect your mother in any way your arse will burn. Now go to your room."

I learned quickly and knew that my father would always believe my mother no matter what really happened, so I tried my utmost to avoid any confrontation with her and never said anything about her to my dad again.

I was twelve when I saw something that was deeply disturbing.

Catharine was fourteen and extremely precocious. My cousin came to visit, my parents were at work and Catharine and I were supposed to keep my cousin company. He was slightly older than her. I was paging through a book when I heard the two of them whispering. The next minute my cousin put his hand under Catharine's dress. She tried to fight him off but he soon overpowered her and pinned her down. In shock I just stared while he forced his hand in under her dress and started poking a prodding, suddenly she relaxed; he also slowly relaxed his grip on her but continued playing with her while she sat spread-eagled on the carpet. She looked at me and smiled, saying, "that's nice, that feels good..."

I just jumped up and ran and hid as I usually did when things scared me.

It wasn't very long after that I heard my mom and Catharine arguing and I heard my mom slap her and start yelling at her. That night my parents went to their room and called Catharine in.

When I quietly asked Catharine what had happened she just said that my mom had found out that she had, had sex with a neighbour's son. He was eighteen.

Nothing ever came of it, not that I was aware of, life just went on.

School meant nothing to me. I went because I had to. The only joy I felt was when I ran long distance in the annual sporting events and friends were few and far between yet I always had one close friend.

As my friend, Debbie, Theresa and I were walking home from school one hot summer day, a man on a bicycle approached and passed us. He then turned around and passed us again. When he turned around and approached us for the third time, I told Debbie and Theresa to walk close on either side to me as the man was riding directly toward us. He aimed directly for Debbie and at the last second she jumped out of the way. As the man whizzed past between us he reached down and tried to grab me between my legs but I fell toward the ground and felt his hand smack me just below my navel. I yelled at Theresa and Debbie to run then jumped up and ran after them.

When we got home Theresa told my mom what had happened. She asked if he had hurt me so I told her he had missed because I had ducked out of the way. When I finally went to the bathroom I saw deep scratches across my stomach.

It was easy to keep the marks hidden. After all, I was very shy and self conscious and would not undress in front of my sisters. I was twelve.

I could not understand why men were so preoccupied with what lay between a young girl legs. What was wrong with me? Why did strange men feel it was their right to touch me? What made men think that I would let them do to me as they wished?

I withdrew from life, I withdrew from people and I withdrew from my family. I became a loner although I would appear to be a shy but normal functioning human being.

I was determined not to show how easily I could be hurt and I hid behind a wall of silence and utter calm, although deep below the surface lay a whirlpool of emotion.

If my mom asked one of my brothers to take me to the store for something, I would run off on my own. I just could not be alone with either of my brothers. Even though I knew that neither Dean nor Andrew would ever hurt me in any way, the thought of being alone with either of them evoked a terror so deep and so profound that no amount of rationale could calm me.

My father was the one person whom I trusted beyond life itself. He was my hero, my haven, my island of peace and serenity. He was everything to me. Just the thought of disappointing him in some way was unimaginable. For this reason I had learnt to keep silent and my lips would forever be sealed.

In a way, I blamed my mother for what was happening to me; I avoided her as far as possible. I was never and will never be her favourite child, but I sensed that even then.

Mom was unapproachable and her tongue was sharp. One day we were in the kitchen, mom was busy packing stuff into boxes and I was busy doing my chores. Theresa and I were arguing for some or other reason; suddenly my mother grabbed a box and bashed me over my head.

I immediately lost my temper and without thinking blurted “If I end up in an asylum one day it will be your fault.”

“What are you talking about?” My mother asked laughing out loud.

“You keep hitting me on the head and I can get brain damage and end up in an asylum as mad as a hatter” I sobbed, more hurt by her laughter than any caused by her actions.

Theresa always got away free and clear, whether she started the argument or not.

Sex education was unheard of in schools and absolute taboo in our house. So I was a totally naïve, blissfully ignorant child and later, teenager.

I must have blocked these memories but as I sit writing here today, the memories are flooding back.....

All I aimed for was to grow up without attracting too much attention, get married and have children of my own. That was my deepest desire. As far back as I can remember I wanted a career working with children, be it in a medical or welfare capacity, but it had to be with children. I wanted to do whatever it took to prevent children being hurt.

In my fifteenth year, just before we were to be sent to Aunt Rosie and Uncle Gerald for the holiday, my mom called my sisters and me into her bedroom.

“Girls, there is something I need to talk to you about,” she said, “If you have any questions just ask. Okay?”

“Okay mommy.” We answered

“Girls, just remember something..., you must never ever let a man play with you...” she said, “you could get pregnant.”

I was shocked and absolutely horrified; I just turned and calmly walked out of her room.

“What? What on earth is she talking about? Why am I not pregnant? If what she is saying is true, I should have been pregnant a long time ago. Is there something wrong with me? Am I normal? Can I even have children? Am I pregnant? How does one even know? Why is mommy even saying things like that? Does she know what Uncle Gerald has been doing to me?”

I was reeling but knew that I had to act as if everything was just great. After all, it should be easy. I was used to being manhandled in front of a group of adults and keeping a straight face so this should be child's play.

The entire pregnancy issue was an enigma and bothered me tremendously. Soon after, Theresa's friend came to visit and told us of a book that her mom had given her called "I am woman."

Being an avid reader, I asked her to borrow me the book. It was a sex education book and I devoured it. This was the first time I understood what life was about and what Uncle Gerald had been doing to me although the guilt and shame would follow me throughout my life

After, "the big talk" by my mom, our visits to Uncle Gerald and Aunt Rosie stopped. They still came to visit us but it was easier to avoid them and I came up with some believable excuses to be away from home.

When I was sixteen, I met Peter, also sixteen, handsome, dark, blue eyed and the cutest bandy legs I had ever seen. He was my first real boyfriend. I was still terrified of men but Peter was different and we were never alone together. One late afternoon, Peter and his friend, Ian (who at this stage was dating Theresa) were just about to leave when Peter asked if he could kiss me goodbye. Fear just gripped hold of me but I nodded my head and Peter stepped forward and without laying a hand on me, gave me the sweetest kiss I have ever felt.

I adored Peter but I never showed him just how much I cared. I was just too scared. One day Peter and Ian invited Theresa and I to go to Peter's house. When we got there, Peter told me that he had chosen a song to tell me how much he cared for me and put "Annie's song" by John Denver on the record player. To this day it is one of my most favourite songs.

I just could not show Peter how much I cared. I didn't know how to. I had hidden my feelings for so long. I had put myself in a walled enclosure and could not show my feelings nor could I accept that someone could care for me. How could they? I was soiled, damaged goods and I didn't deserve anyone's love. I had come to believe that people only loved me for the things I could do for them. The more I did the more they would love me. I truly had a warped view of love.

Peter must have sensed how vulnerable I was because nothing ever extended further than sharing a few innocent kisses.

Whenever Peter and Ian came to visit, Catharine and Theresa would be all over Peter, sitting on his lap and doing anything possible to try and make me jealous. I just acted as if I didn't care although my heart was breaking.

Nevertheless, life went on. One day just before Peter and Ian were to come over. Theresa told me that she did not want to date Ian; she would break up with him. She never cared for him, she wanted Peter.

For some reason, in my insecurity, I told her that if she wanted him, she could have him. After all, Peter only asked me to be his girlfriend because Ian had asked Theresa and as Peter couldn't be with her, he would be as close to her, as possible, by dating me, or so I believed.

How screwed up I was. I phoned Peter and told him that I didn't want to date him any longer because Theresa liked him and I thought they would be good together.

Inside I was being ripped apart but I couldn't show it. After all, Theresa was cute, chubby and bubbly and I was tall, gangly, awkward and ugly. Why on earth would Peter want to be with me?

That Friday night, Ian, Peter, Theresa and I went to the disco (my dad would not allow Theresa to go on her own so I had to tag along). During the night Theresa and Peter disappeared and Ian and I were left to keep one another company. While chatting Ian told me that he loved Theresa and that she had broken up with him. We were both broken hearted but I would not show him or anyone else, how hurt I was.

When Theresa and Peter finally showed their faces I said that I would like to go home and we left. Being the gentlemen they were Peter and Ian walked Theresa and I home.

Peter and Ian were walking a little way behind us when I asked Theresa where they had disappeared to. I didn't get any reply but a week or so later found out that they had sneaked away to have sex.

I know now, that this was Peter's way of hurting me as much as I had hurt him, but back then it just confirmed the fact that I was just a tool so that Peter could be near Theresa. Ian and I kept in contact for a short while but Peter stayed away. It was while talking to Ian that I realised that Peter had not cared for Theresa and that he really loved me but the realization came too late. Our relationship had lasted all of three months.

At this stage I was working part time. As I was earning my own money my mom stopped my allowance and all my personal items and clothing became my personal responsibility. If I wanted something I had to pay for it myself. This gave me the independence I so desperately craved. The less I needed from my mother the better.

One day Catharine asked me if I would go on a blind date with her, she was barely eighteen and had met Vernon, a sweet but quiet young man. She knew that my father would not allow her to go out on her own so she would suggest that I go along (with Vernon's friend), hoping that my dad would agree. After stubbornly refusing and Catharine begging me over and over and promising she would not leave me alone with

Errol, I reluctantly agreed. She asked my father if they could go ice skating saying that I agreed to go with, my dad gave his permission.

At about 6pm Errol (who turned out to be in his early 20's) and Vernon arrived to pick us up. Vernon came in, spoke to my parents and promised to have us home by 11pm. I had never skated before but Errol seemed a perfect gentleman and offered to teach me. After a few disastrous rounds we went and sat down, he spoke a lot but being so shy I was very quiet. Finally Errol decided that he had enough and suggest that I walk to the car with him to put his skates away then we could go and have something to eat. I agreed.

When we got to the car Errol took my hand, pulled me towards him and kissed me, pushing me back against his car. I started panicking and tried to pull away but the more I tried to escape the harder he kissed and the tighter he held me. Finally, I managed to break away and walked back into the ice rink. Catharine must have noticed something because she asked if I was okay. I said yes but squeezed in next to her so that Errol would have to sit next to Vernon. Finally it was time to leave and I was just happy to be going home.

As we neared our house, Vernon asked Errol to pull over, across from a park as he and Catharine had something they wanted to talk about privately. When we stopped Vernon and Catharine got out and wandered away hand in hand.

I don't know what got into Errol but he leaned over and started kissing me. I pushed hard against his chest, trying to pull away then he put his arm around me pinning me to the seat and tried to slip his hand between my legs. I fought with all my might but could not get him off me. Finally I managed to reach the door handle and yanked it to try and escape, but to no avail, I pulled and pulled but the door would not open. He had locked it and I was trapped. I just gritted my teeth and fought, kicking and biting and lashing out as hard as I could but it was useless. I was much too small and thin compared to him.

Then I heard knocking on the window but Errol just kept on coming at me. Again I heard knocking on the window. Finally Errol jerked away and just yelled "What?"

It was Vernon and Catharine, they had, had their talk and it was time to go home. Errol was furious for being interrupted and raced the last few blocks home. When Errol had jerked away from me, I had immediately unlocked the door and as he rolled to a stop in front of our house I jumped out, slammed the door behind me and ran around the house toward the back door.

There I came to a stop and waited for Catharine to catch up to me. When she got to me she said "Bethie is he a pig?"

"No", I said, "He isn't a pig, he's a fucking bastard..." and walked into the house.

Catharine was shocked. I had never cursed before and the worst that would come out of my mouth was the word "damn".



The following day, Catharine asked me what had happened, she had seen Vernon and apparently he had told her that Errol's car interior was wrecked. The radio had been broken, the car seat had been torn and I had broken the console in my mad fight for self preservation. Without telling her anything, I asked what Errol had said.

"Oh," she said "He says you're a stuck up bitch."

"Is that so? Well better a stuck up bitch than a rapist!" I answered.

I never told her exactly what had happened but my inner thighs, breasts and stomach wore the bruises for a long time.

I had to walk past Errol's house to and from school on a daily basis. If I saw his car in the driveway, I would turn and walk a long, long way around, I was going to avoid any contact with him for as long as I live.

A week or so later Vernon was killed in a car accident.

It wasn't long before Catharine met someone else. Bernie became a regular visitor to our house and we became regular visitors to theirs.

I dated but the relationships I had were platonic. Nothing lasted more than two months.

There was a very dark and brooding atmosphere when I returned from my part time job one evening. After a few carefully directed questions Theresa and I were told that Catharine was pregnant. That evening Bernie came to ask permission for them to be married. As they were both underage (18) they had to obtain written permission from their respective parents.

My parents agreed and signed the documents. Bernie's parents said they would have to think about it and told Bernie to accompany them on a trip over the weekend, which he did. The following Monday evening Bernie came to see Catharine and told her that he would not marry her as the child wasn't his. This was devastating to both Catharine and my parents. Being an unmarried mother, then, was shameful.

I was seventeen and still working part-time when I met Raymond. A colleague and friend asked if I would join her fiancé and herself on a night out. A friend of her fiancé would be visiting and they wanted me to keep him company, I agreed. We ended up going to a drive-in theatre where within less than an hour of meeting Raymond he asked me to marry him.

I was flabbergasted and burst out laughing. Nevertheless, Raymond became a regular visitor but he very soon started showing a possessiveness that was frightening. He started pressuring me into leaving school to marry him and generally making a pest of himself. He would spend two to three hours a night talking to me on the phone and when I saw

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

