

To all my Sisters scattered on the face of the earth:

Man's inhumanity to man has been since the beginning of time. However we, living in the last days are the final culmination of these atrocities. This brings among other things, man's inhumanity to women.

To be battered is to have everything out of focus. Your world, once so exciting, your courtship seemed so complete, so ecstatic, closed your eyes to the warning signs of possessiveness, jealousy, and disregard for your space or your dignity as a person, your individuality.

It is to this end that the story of all the Holly's and Brad's of this world is addressed. Once you find out just how serious your situation is, you need to find a way of escape for you and your children if you have them.

Compare the situation that Holly faced and see the similarities in your own life.

I too have been battered and went the entire gamut of emotions. I went through despair and hopelessness, sorrow and deep remorse. I know how your self-esteem can plummet to zero in the face of physical and emotional abuse. My heart goes out to you, my fellow sufferers. My only help came from the Lord God Almighty and not from human beings. I am the mother of 14 children, 7 boys and 7 girls. They too suffered and came through this life of heartache and many of them turned to God as their anchor as they grew up and left the home. It took me 34 years to leave. I am praying that you do not subject yourself to continue in the abuse, but with the help of God, you will flee for your sake and for the sake of the children!

To have the help of the Lord, it is necessary to surrender yourself to him, and ask him to be your Savior. He died on the cross such a cruel death, hands and feet nailed to it, bleeding and suffering for you, so that you and your family could have eternal life. Then you will have the help of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will give you the courage to make the necessary changes to your life.

Once you leave, let God deal with your spouse, or boyfriend. You can actually be a stumbling block in his life because you allow him to continue this behavior. He must learn there are consequences to his actions.

There is much hope and a life after separation from your abuser. You will come to know and love yourself and discover finding your lost identity. Because of the abuse, you could not be yourself and became someone you didn't recognize when you looked in the mirror. As you come out of this dark forest of confusion, you will find peace and tranquility. Through the help of Jesus, who loves you more than you can ever understand, you will be a successful and whole woman.

Call the abuse hotline in your area, for help to escape your present crisis. Accept the help offered. They can point you to a shelter near you. You need to take important papers with you, such as birth certificates, social security cards, proof of rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, proof of check amount on the job etc.

I would advise you to pack and go while your mate is at work or you know he will be away for an extended period of time. If you must flee in an emergency situation, do it. Then when you go back to get your belongings; have a policeman to escort you to watch over you until you pack and leave.

When you leave, you will have the temptation to go back out of pity for your mate, or because the children are unhappy with the arrangements. You will be glad you persevered once you are away for a few months.

You will see more clearly when you are not under all that pressure. If he has a change of heart, you need proof before you return (if ever), because many fake it just to have you return, and then the abuse starts all over again, and you become worse off than before.

Here are some statistics you need to consider:

\*Every 9 seconds a woman is physically abused by her husband.(The Commonwealth Fund, N.Y. 1991.

\*3.9 million women are physically abused by their partners, and 20.7 million are verbally or emotionally abused. (The Commonwealth Fund N.Y. 1991)

\*30 % of women presenting with injuries to the emergency department had injuries caused by battering.(American Journal of Public Health 1/89)

\*Approximately 17% to 26% of pregnant women are abused. (Public Health Nursing, 9/87)

\*42 % of murdered women are killed by their intimate partners.( FBI's 88-91 Uniform Crime reports)

Statistics taken from :

A Safe Place  
24 hour Help Line  
1-800-600-SAFE  
1-847-249-4450

As you can see, the current statistics must have accelerated since these reports were given! Call your local Abuse Hotline for help, or call A Safe Place-but in an emergency call 911.

My prayer for you is that you become the person that God intended, and that you and your children become safe and emotionally stable!

God Bless You,  
Clara Eggen

You know her—she is your office manager. She is the waitress in your favorite restaurant. She is the stewardess that tries to make you comfortable in your flight. She is the teacher of your child's first grade class. She is often very pretty, eager to please and solicitous. Yes you are well acquainted with her. She may even be your best friend!

Such is the case with Holly. She is going to work today with a heavy heart. What is she going to do? She cannot concentrate on work when there is such misery and chaos at home.

She recalls last night with Brad. He was in such a good mood when he got home. Homecoming was a frightening thing to Holly, she was always walking on eggshells, but maybe tonight she could live normally. Brad was in a good mood.

Her mind drifted back to their courtship. How they loved each other. Brad made her feel like a princess. His every gesture, his brown eyes filled with love and admiration, his warm embrace, how much they were so head over heels in love! He vowed he would always be faithful, and never do anything to hurt her.

"Holly! Holly, are you listening to me?" Brad shouted in a gruff demanding voice. "Oh. I'm sorry," Holly responded in her little girl voice. "Pay attention to me when I speak to you", he said in a most hateful manner. Holly hung her head over the potatoes she was peeling for their evening meal. "Look at me!" He shouted. "Why have you not had dinner on the table before now?" "But," answered Holly, "you came home early!" Brad ran across the kitchen and took his hold on the table and turned it upside down. Then he grabbed Holly by the shoulders and shook her violently!

The children, who had been eager to welcome Daddy, were frightened and ran to hide in the closet. 5-year-old Tommy, 4-year-old Marcy, and 2-year-old Johnny crammed themselves into Tommy's tiny closet and clung to each other, their tears falling on each other. They were accustomed to this kind of behavior with their Daddy. Daddy, how they loved him! Daddy, how they feared him! They did not understand, and in their little innocent minds thought somehow they were to blame!

The door slammed and soon the sound of the motor of Brad's car peeled out with a loud clattering of gravel against the side of the house. Holly sat down on the kitchen chair, her hands holding up her head, her golden curls awry with Brad's having shaken and pulled her hair. This latest escapade was whirling around her mind and feeling like a sharp knife in her heart. What could she do? She had no parents in which to take refuge. The outside world greatly admired Brad and had the utmost respect for him. She felt she would betray him if she left. No one knew about his abusive behavior with the exception of her friend and confidante, Shelby. It was the family secret.

Shhh! Don't tell anyone! It's a secret and with everything that happens we take a broom and sweep it under the proverbial rug. Oh that deceptive rug that hides the vilest of deeds! That rug that conceals the real truth, that rug that puts us in denial. We walk on it by day, and sweep the day's refuse under it by night. We get up in the morning, it's a new day, maybe it will be the day that the Brad's of this world will see the light, maybe they will stop drinking and using drugs, maybe they will stop being unfaithful and remember their wedding vows. Dear God, please help the Holly's of this world!

Holly greeted her friends at work with her usual smile and good nature. Her closest friend was Shelby Smith. They both worked in the company for 5 years. "How's it going Holly?" Shelby asked in her easy nonchalant way. Shelby was single. Her personality was laid back and confident. Her curly black hair was arranged beautifully. She was petite and well dressed in a navy blue suit. She sat down beside Holly and said, "Did you have a rough night?"

"Yes" Holly replied, but I don't want to talk about it now, let's have lunch in the cafeteria." "Okay, we'll talk then."

Holly thought to herself, "I want to immerse myself in work, and I don't want to think about last night." This had been going on for years, and there seemed to be no way out! Holly brushed her blonde curls back from her forehead, and tried to concentrate, and frowned at the pile of papers on her desk. Maybe a cup of coffee would help.

Holly was an intelligent young woman, at the head of her class in college. She was popular and pursued by many of the athletes and big men on campus. She was tall and majestic in her demeanor. Her face was animated and always interested in her friend's conversations. She was well versed in her subjects and excelled in many classes in business administration, and related subjects. Ah, but she only had eyes for Brad! Brad, who was so handsome and valiant! Brad who was so attentive and charming, who turned her days into times of wonder and unbelievable joy! Brad, whose behavior was so much like her own father.

Holly snapped back into the present. She was the office manager and had responsibilities to attend to. A conference was scheduled for 10:00 A.M.

Dear God, she pleaded, get me through this morning!

That's it Holly, pretend it didn't happen, not only for last night, but also for all the days and nights of abuse! Put on your face, that mask that pretends all is well! Smile Holly, smile! Turn that heartache around and you might even fool yourself, yes especially yourself!

Holly got through the conference and made a beeline for the cafeteria. She brought her lunch; she had to brownbag it every day to make up for Brad's drinking habits, and his lavish lifestyle. But when it came to her, hers was the full responsibility to pay for all their bills. Brad's charm also was coupled with extravagance, well beyond their means. The creditor's called continuously! More and more was placed on her shoulders! What started out, as a molehill was now a gigantic mountain!!

Shelby was waiting for her. "Wow Holly, you look incredibly tired!" she blurted out. Holly retorted, "I am at the end of my rope Shelby." "You've said that how many times, Holly, how many times?" I know, replied Holly as she fidgeted with her lunch bag. "If only I could get away permanently", Holly said, her lips quivering and tears forming in her blue eyes. Those lovely eyes that held Brad captive in their courtship, now many times were black and blue, by his once tender hands!

"You can stay with me, Holly, and get your life together!" "We tried that and he begged me and promised he would be good to me." "Yes, but this time don't listen to him, Holly." For just a moment she contemplated the prospect, but Holly felt trapped. She

had no savings and no real plan to find something on her own, a place for her and the children. Her name was on every transaction, every debt, how could she do it all? Her strength was depleted she was emotionally exhausted! How tired she felt, how utterly worn out and completely burned out!

“I’ll give it some thought Shelby”, Holly said. Not only was she exhausted, but also she was frustrated with herself. By the time she got home that day, Holly had decided to try to be a better wife and mother. She prepared dinner early and made Brad’s favorite- Lasagna. This should make him happy, she mused. 5 o’clock was his usual time to come home. But the clock struck 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and still no Brad. She did the dishes and went to bed and tried to sleep.

The children were already put to bed at 8 o’clock and were fast asleep.

Holly knew that Brad would come stumbling in at any time now. A few minutes later she heard his car come to a screeching halt. Her heart sank and pounded so hard she could hear it. She braced herself for what was about to take place.

“Holly where are you?” came the sound from Brad’s voice that was slurred and surly. She threw on her robe and bounced down the stairs. “I’m here Brad, what is it?” Holly replied. She looked at him- hair all awry and eyes blurred and dull. “I need to throw up; he said and immediately threw up on the couch. It was an unsightly mess! Holly tried so hard to keep things neat and tidy. It was a ghastly picture, and there seemed to be evil permeating the whole house. She was gripped with fear because of the evil presence. Dear God, please let it leave our house! However it seemed to be with Brad when he came in.

Holly had heard about demons and felt they congregated around drunks and drug addicts. Satan rears his ugly head, just as he did in the Garden of Eden, to the first woman.

Oh Eve did you ever dream in your wildest imagination that your divine paradise was to be snatched away by your own doing? Did you get up that selfsame day, kiss Adam good morning, bathe in the waterfall by your abode, dry yourself, eat breakfast and converse with Adam about your days work? Did you talk about the Lord your God and his marvelous love for you both? Did you wonder how you both became a part of his marvelous plan? His instructions were perfect, righteous and holy!

The paradise you lived in was beautiful beyond description, wasn’t it? Eve, you weren’t on your guard as you went out that day. Did you even have an inkling that the being you walked up on was going to launch mankind into a history of calamity, misery and holocaust? And you, Eve were his ticket to reign on this earth! Eve, you should have run to Adam, and the Holly’s and Brad’s of this world would have been spared the agony. But no, the hissing of the serpent, his sly, slithering approach took you by surprise and off guard. You believed the big lie!

Satan hated you Eve, and he brought about the hideous evil that has kept women under men’s foot for millennia! Man is still abusing his precious women, and it is true, women retaliated, and so the war rages on!

Holly got a bucket of sudsy water and began the cleanup. Brad lay down on the floor, passed out, which was a relief for Holly.

Holly did not realize that this same scenario was repeated -perhaps billions affected -by drunkenness and drug addiction, gambling, unfaithfulness, abuse, and on and on it goes. The offender produces a ripple effect that affects their family, church, community, and country!

It is snowballing in this country and around the world! Oh dear God, "Thy Kingdom Come!"

Holly left Brad on the floor and went to bed. In the wee hours of the morning, he joined her. She must get up and tend to the children. Little Tommy asked where Daddy was, and Marcy was hungry and tugged on Holly's skirt. Johnny was playing with his toys in the middle of the kitchen floor. How dependent they were on her! She felt so inadequate this morning. However she must feed and clothe them to take to the sitter's. Carolyn was a middle-aged lady, her children were grown, and she gave plenty of her time and attention to her three charges. Holly was blessed to have her, and thanked God for Carolyn in her prayers.

She was caught up in the office routine this morning and pushed her problems to the back of her mind. She needed to concentrate on her job, she thought. Today was a new day and she purposed to make the best of it. She was even cheerful, and hummed a tune.

Later that day, it hit her-she must put an end to this farce that was called a marriage. Brad was only interested in himself and his gratification. He did not consider her feelings and furthermore he could care less about the children. She must plan her escape. She would have to be very subtle. Putting away a nest egg for an apartment must be the first step. Oh but how would she be able to do that? Brad's lifestyle even cut into the grocery money! A ripple of fear went down her spine as she planned her getaway. My tax check! That's the answer! She would receive several thousand dollars in one month or at least in six weeks.

She felt more confident, on one hand, and anxious on the other. Must she always be this unbalanced in her mind and heart, she thought. A barrage of memories came rushing in, Brad's seeming love, and his hatred. She read of a love-hate relationship and wondered if there was any solution. She tried counseling, but Brad refused to cooperate, and for several weeks she went alone. After that she felt that the counselor was not fair in his observations, and she quit going.

Holly knew that things had to change for her sake and the children's. Taking their Daddy away from them struck a dreadful chord in the pit of her stomach. Even though he could be ruthless, he was charming in other parts of his character! Oh why must he be like a Jekyll and Hyde?

She felt pulled this way and that, as if they were playing cat and mouse.

And the monster of fear began to grip her like a vise! Her dreams of a happy marriage had fallen and crashed like a beautiful porcelain vase.

Her hopes were crushed and she was a delicate flower that was bruised and trampled upon!

It was time to go home and she had to concentrate on her driving the 20-minute commute. She picked the children up from the baby sitter's house. Tommy seemed to sense his mother's distress and his reaction was to misbehave. He tugged on Marcy's ponytail and Marcy shrieked like a wounded cat. "Stop it this instant!" shouted Holly. However, being in the back seat and out of range gave him the confidence to pull her ponytail even harder. This time Marcy yelled again, and a retaliating slap across the face was her defense. They were pulling into the driveway and Holly got out of the car. "Alright young man, march up to your room and stay there!" Holly's face became livid as she spoke to her little boy. Rushing out of the house came Brad. He was early. "What's going on?" he asked. When Holly explained the situation, he defended Tommy, saying, "boys will be boys" and refused to let him be punished. Tommy turned his face to his Mommy with a look of triumph. He had won again! "What's the use?" Holly was grossly irritated because Brad didn't back her up. But she kept a poker face not wanting Brad to start conflict between them.

As she entered the house, she saw a dozen roses on the dining room table! It was Brad's peace offering. In addition she knew it was leading up to time in the bedroom for his gratification. She would have to fake her ardor, for she had gone through this many times. She was on a merry-go-round; the calliope played that old familiar tune, "You can't be true dear!"

Holly was dragging her feet, trying to prolong the trek to the bedroom. She bathed the children and put them in their Mickey Mouse pajamas. She kissed them all good night and turned out the light.

Holly did not want to make love with unresolved conflict in her heart and soul, but because she did not want to rock the boat, she submitted to his embrace and went through the motions. Brad rolled over afterwards and went to sleep. Holly lay awake and wondered what it would be like to make love to someone who really loved her, would be her protector and not her abuser. She thought about tomorrow and all the tomorrows after that. That trapped feeling engulfed her until she felt smothered.

In the morning she cooked breakfast for the family. Brad was in a good mood and wanted to tease her with his charming side showing. Holly played along and they bantered back and forth. If only... it would always be like this! Brad left for work saying he would come home right after his day was finished, "Whatever that meant." Holly said, under her breath.

You are on a merry-go-round, Holly, you and all the Holly's of this world are headed for a breakdown. You cannot go forward as long as you procrastinate! It is affecting you and your children. Do you think the children do not hear the loud slaps and your being knocked against the wall? The cursing shouts and accusations are ringing in their ears as they cover their heads and cry. They have no one to console them or even give them a lame explanation. You would only be masking the real problem even if you tried. They will carry these scars, and may even emulate their father as they grow up. What innocence that turns into cold, bitter hearts! Save yourself and save the children!

Another night and another heartache! Brad isn't coming home at all! He must be spending the night with some "lady" of the night, Holly thought, and the knife was plunged into her heart further. She could not sleep and she tossed and turned watching for headlights, and it was almost dawn. Dawn, another day of misery and conflict! No matter how she tried, Brad would accuse her to salve his evil conscience! She decided to take the children to the park. It was Saturday and Brad was sure to sleep most of the day. Breakfast with the children gave her some time to try to reach a normal stance.

The park was exhilarating, and the sun was shining, the daffodils were in bloom, and the earth was coming alive with birds singing, and nests being built. All things continue as they have for millennia. And all things are deteriorating in my life, thought Holly.

"Look at me," Marcy shouted, "Look at me when I go down the slide!" Holly shouted back, "Go!" Marcy was a mommy's girl and tried to follow in her footsteps all the time Holly was at home. She felt her Mother's insecurity, even at her young age, but couldn't understand the dilemma. Why did Daddy hit her Mommy and why was he so mean and cruel? She felt she had done something bad and took on guilt that was not hers.

What are the Holly's doing to their children? Do they realize, or are they wrapped up in a cocoon of denial? Why don't they think of protecting their children from such chaos and confusion? Is it because they cannot think beyond the day-to-day heartaches? Are they so beaten down that they begin to think they don't deserve humane treatment?

The Brad's of this world speak kindly to their animals and shout blasphemous words to their spouses! Is their mind so mixed up and confused that they think forward is to go in reverse? Or are they shrewd manipulators coldly calculating their next move? And the Holly's are they going to continue playing this deadly game until they are beyond redemption? The headlines scream every day, "Wife Killed by Raging Husband!"

Think about it, the woman of that headline gambled her life away, never thinking she would be the victim! Run Holly, run! Take your children far from the abuse! Don't delay another minute! Your life is too precious to waste!

Holly watched her children at play. If only she could drop all her cares as they seemed to do. Little Johnny was playing in the sandbox with his trucks. He made sounds like a motor as he pushed them along. Tommy was swinging high into the air, while Marcy was hanging on the monkey bars. Holly was glad she brought them out and it gave her the time to sort things out. A gentle breeze was kissing her face as though it were an old friend. The trail for hiking beckoned her to come and walk into forever! If only she didn't have to face Brad for just a few days! If she could run and hide anywhere, anyplace, anyhow!

"But I have responsibilities," Holly thought. "My job, my children, my finances." She thought about her friend Shelby. How she envied her! She wasn't in a relationship now. She broke up with her fiancé 2 years ago and was enjoying the peace and tranquility that she so wanted to have for Holly. Shelby was her confidante, her support and severest critic! Shelby took the children overnight when stress was the heaviest in Holly's world.

Back to a reality check, Marcy fell down and skinned her knee, so she had to go back home to dress it. The children piled into the car and into their car seats; all the while Marcy was moaning and crying.

As Holly pulled up in the driveway, sure enough, there was Brad's truck!

"Oh no!" Holly thought, with mixed feelings. She was glad he wasn't hurt, but now that he was back, she was also infuriated. She tried to hide her anger as she entered the living room, with Marcy still sniffing from her crying jag. Brad came down from the upstairs bedroom "What's the matter with Marcy?" Brad snarled. Holly became indignant, she retorted, "What's the matter with you Brad?" "Where were you last night?"

"When I ask you a question, I demand an answer", Brad was shouting now. The children scattered to their rooms, and hid under the covers.

"And when I ask you where you were last night, I want an answer!" Holly lost all restraint, and stood up to him defiantly! He rushed at her and screamed, "You don't ever talk to me like that, do you hear me?" Brad grabbed Holly by the throat and began to choke her until she couldn't breathe. Then Brad released her and slammed her up against the wall. She didn't know how long she was passed out, but she woke up with Brad wiping her face with a cold cloth. She saw the look on his face -frightened, panicky and anxious. "My God, what have I done?" he said over and over again.

Holly knew she had to get out now; there was no other way. But she had to plan carefully and make her getaway when Brad went to work on Monday. She couldn't pack while he was there, he might do something worse.

That night Brad was all tenderness and loving. She shrank from his embrace in bed, but thought it would not serve any purpose to start another fight. She came near to a real threat to her life, but this time I'm leaving, she thought to herself. She was so mixed up emotionally, that she thought she might be losing her mind. To make love after being beaten was the worst form of torture for Holly. She cried silently and her heart was broken in two.

In the other two bedrooms lay the children. Suddenly Marcy screamed at the top of her lungs! Both Brad and Holly rushed to Marcy's room. "What is it, honey Holly said as she cradled her little daughter in her arms! "A big lion with big teeth was chasing me!" Marcy cried as she shook uncontrollably. "You had a nightmare," replied Holly. "Mommy, will you sleep with me?" Marcy said in a pitiful voice. Holly looked at Brad. "Go ahead, Holly-she is terrified. You can calm her down"

Holly climbed into bed with Marcy and snuggled with her. She was glad to get away from Brad. What kind of man was this that could almost kill his wife by choking her, and on the other hand have compassion for his child? Holly was truly alarmed and scared so much so that she felt a sharp pain at the pit of her stomach. At times she was hyperventilating and she tried to hold it down for Marcy's sake. She needn't have worried; Marcy was fast asleep cuddled in her safe haven.

Sunday was torture as Holly counted the hours. Soon she would be away from Brad for good. The years of abuse had taken its toll. She thought back to their first encounter.

Their first year of marriage was a rocky one. One night they had a violent argument. Brad wanted to buy an expensive car. It was out of the budget and it was Brad's increasingly lavish appetite that frightened Holly. She maintained her ground and insisted that their old car served them well. "Well", shouted Brad, "I'm tired of pinching pennies" and with his hands flailing in the air, he ran and grabbed her like madman and twisted her arm behind her back, the pain was excruciating and she remembered screaming "all right, just let me go!" Brad released her arm, and shouted, "I'm going out and getting the car, and you are co-signing for me!"

Such was the beginning of many days and nights of abuse, with intermittent periods of love making to smooth things over. However he never apologized for any of these abuses, and blamed her for making him lose "his cool." If she were more understanding and compliant, he told her, all would be well. There were times that she felt she really was the problem. She became docile in nature and began to hide her true feelings with a poker face. All the while her true self became someone that she could not recognize when she looked in the mirror. She was changing into a cringing weak woman.

It was high time to make her escape! Her mind was in a tailspin as she thought of what it all entailed.

Run, Holly run, quickly! Leave as soon as Brad clears out of the house!

Don't delay, pack and go! She felt her heart beating wildly and it seemed to be in her throat! "My you are jumpy tonight" Brad said as he prepared to go to bed. He had a bottle he kept in the basement it was Vodka. She knew he would be going straight to sleep and heaved a sigh of relief.

As the sun peeped over the horizon, and streamed into her kitchen, Holly planned her last day with Brad. Hadn't she tried every avenue to help their marriage? He refused to go back to counseling and continued his infidelity. His drinking was totally out of hand, and his abuse was accelerating. Her life was on the line and she did not want to be another vital statistic. She waited with baited breath until Brad kissed her goodbye before he went out the door to work. Wasn't this a kiss from Judas? Hadn't Brad betrayed her confidence time after time? She walked to the mailbox. She had forgotten Saturday's mail. Inside was the tax check! It had come earlier than she had expected! It was a gift from God!

She packed her things and the children's into the car. She did not look back! No, Holly, she said to herself, this time it is for good! As she shifted into drive, and turned out of the driveway with a determination that this time she would be free, even if she had to file bankruptcy, she was leaving a bankrupt marriage. She could start over again, and this time she was much wiser. Never again would she lose herself and her dignity, her self worth! It would be a long road ahead, but she was going one mile at a time! Her faith in God would sustain her. She felt as if she had stepped out of a dark forest into the light of a new day! Yes she was beginning! She hummed a merry tune as she blazed into her future. Yes, it will be good, and she would find herself again. She would laugh again and have peace again." Again", it was a beautiful word!

Holly now had the tax check for her escape! Stopping at her local bank, she took the sum of \$3500.00 in cash, so that Brad would not have access to that money in their account.

She would eventually get her own apartment with that money, and Shelby had some furniture in storage that she promised Holly, if she would leave Brad.

But, she had taken the day off from work, and decided to call Shelby at the office.” I finally have made up my mind

Shelby”, she said choking back the tears. May I stay with you for a few days?” I have the money to look for an apartment, she continued. “You know you can Holly” Shelby answered with a sigh of relief. Only this time don’t listen to him and his bold faced lies!” “Oh! Holly replied. “He almost choked the life right out of me; I’m leaving before my children are left without a mother!” She began to sob violently and put down the phone to wipe her eyes. Shelby made arrangements with Holly to meet her in the parking lot to give her the keys to her apartment. It was a spacious 3-bedroom condo, and the children would be safe for a while at least.

As Holly closed the door behind her, the wheels turned in her head and began to spin out of focus. What if Brad began to stalk her? What if she went to work and Brad went to the sitters and picked up the children? She must find a new sitter until this was settled in court! Immediately, she called Carolyn to see if she could recommend someone else. She explained the situation with Brad. “I knew something was wrong, Holly, I just didn’t know what it was!” “Yes, Carolyn continued, there is someone, Mrs. Fletcher, I will call and make arrangements for you.”

Holly knew she must get a restraining order, but it was so painful.

The whispers of the enemy: “Shame on you Holly, separating yourself and your children from Brad after all you have meant to each other. Deep down he really loves you and he is sick! You are leaving a sick man! Shame on you!” Holly put both hands on her head and shouted: “Lies, lies! I gave him many chances, now I have to flee for my life!

Even if he is sick, I cannot cure him! I must protect myself and my children!” Holly remembered the scripture in the bible in the book of James: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you!” She must not listen; the enemy of all mankind must be dealt with, for he is seeking to destroy body and soul of all his victims. “Oh Lord, please help me in this vortex of confusion, bring me clarity of thought and peace of mind!” Suddenly, she felt a peaceful calm, as a warm blanket descending on her entire body! Holly sat down in an overstuffed chair and simply gave in to the warmth and loving feeling. She was experiencing peace in the midst of a storm! She closed her eyes and drifted into sleep. The children were taking a nap as well.

Holly heard the key turn the lock and for a moment she was startled, thinking it was Brad. Shelby entered and a look of relief was on her face. “I’m so glad you’re here Holly!” Shelby exclaimed. With that being said, she ran to Holly and gave her a hug. “Do you really have your mind made up this time?” “Oh yes!” Holly replied as she straightened herself and sat up in the chair, “Brad has finally killed my love for him, by trying to kill me! He is a total stranger to me now! I simply cannot live like this, and I’m not going to!” Holly began to sob uncontrollably.

Shelby held Holly’s hand in hers and let her cry for a good while, handing her several tissues. “What’s wrong Mommy?” Tommy appeared in the doorway to the living room with a scared look on his face. He had heard his Mommy cry many times. “Did Daddy

hurt you “he asked timidly as his lips began to tremble. Shelby took command of the situation, and scooped Tommy up in her arms. “Mommy is having a bad day and we are going to help her get better, let’s go into the kitchen and get some cookies and milk. That will make us all feel better.” Tommy was still apprehensive, but soon he began to chew on a chocolate chip cookie and sip his milk. Now the other children were awake and quickly joined Tommy and Shelby in the kitchen and began their snack as well.

Meanwhile, Holly retreated to the bathroom, splashing cold water on her face, at the sink. She didn’t want to break down like this. She wanted to be strong for her children. She felt weak as a day old kitten, and just as blind. What would the future hold? How was she going to get past this breakup? The heartache was unbearable! “Oh dear Father in heaven, send the Comforter to me, I need him more than ever!” Again, a warm feeling descended on her and she just stood there. “Holly! The Holy Spirit whispered, you will grow strong with my power working in you! Do not be afraid, only trust me.”

Holly did not understand why things were spinning around in her mind, spiraling downward and how she would maintain her composure at work, or anywhere for that matter. She simply must trust the Lord! Let him lead her out of this conglomeration of emotions! “But Lord, she prayed, I must feel these emotions; I can’t deny how I feel!” She bowed her head and asked for strength for today. She needed it now, and tomorrow, she would ask for strength for that day. Minute by minute, hour by hour, she must walk through it.

“Holly, are you all right?” Shelby asked outside the bathroom door. “Yes, Shelby, she answered.” “I’m coming.” Shelby gave Holly a big hug, and told her it would be better as time went by. “Anyway Holly, I’ll be here for you.” “Oh Shelby, I am so blessed to have a friend like you, Holly blurted out.” “What would I do without you?”

In the morning, Holly got out of bed and it struck her once again that her life was in turmoil. She kneeled by the foot of the bed and humbly asked her Father to strengthen her for the day she was facing. She asked his help in finding an apartment for her little family, and protection from Brad.

After finding the home of Mrs. Fletcher, and leaving the children with her, she proceeded to go to work. There she immersed herself in paperwork and phone calls. She met Shelby for lunch in the cafeteria as usual. As they were chatting, someone tapped her on the shoulder. She turned to face Brad! “Well now Holly”, Brad said sarcastically, “What are you trying to pull this time?” “You know very well Brad, it’s over!”

“Stay away from me, or I’ll call the police!” “Oh yeah, Brad replied, and do you think you can keep my children away from me too?” Where have you stowed them away, they are not at Carolyn’s, I just came from there!” Holly was so relieved that she made the arrangements as quickly as possible to keep the children safe. “And if you are with Shelby, I’ll come and get them there!” Brad stormed off in a huff. Shelby said, “We’ll fool him, that arrogant hothead!”

Holly knew that she must not return to Shelby’s and she made arrangements to go to a shelter for abused women under great mental anguish! Oh how she hated to have to join those women and admit her plight! She had Shelby to pick up the children, and her belongings and bring them to her. The children were perplexed and Marcy started

to cry. "Why are we here, Mommy?" Aren't we going to be with Shelby?" "I don't like it here," retorted Tommy. Johnny headed straight for some toys on a shelf, and began to play. Holly felt so inadequate and bit the corner of her lip and managed to keep the tears back.

"Come with me," a dignified woman about 50 years of age said to Holly. I'll take you to your quarters, and let you lie down. The children will have a snack, and the activities director Karen will take charge of them until you have a little time to yourself." By the way Holly, my name is Kate." "Hello Kate, I'm sorry I'm not feeling very sociable right now." "Dear, Kate replied, I was a victim myself, and when you feel like talking, I'll be your confidante."

That night as Holly laid her head on the pillow of a different bed, and living in a shelter for battered women, she looked back over her life. "I'm doing this for my children and myself", she thought. I have started down the path to a new life. I do not know what the future holds, but I knew the one who holds the future." She breathed a prayer to her Savior and drifted off to sleep.

Note to all readers: this is a fictitious story and the characters portrayed are not anyone I know. However, the story is true of many women in the United States, and indeed, the whole world! Women finding themselves in this position must save themselves and their children. Many are so beaten down; they cannot even make a plan for an escape. This is also because of being isolated from friends and family, since the abuser wants to control every aspect of their lives. Many are extremely jealous and will stalk these women at work. Many women are afraid if they leave the abuser will hunt them down and kill them. They need to find a battered women's shelter for refuge.

Google: "Battered Women" for more information. Do not become a vital statistic!

Call the Abuse Hotline in your local phonebook.

No one should live in fear! You are a precious woman and worthy of being treated as special. God did not create you to be a punching bag for a man! Leave and let God deal with him. You will get your identity back, your self-respect, and love for yourself that was stolen from you, and your children! I did and you can too!

My prayers are with you!

Sincerely, Clara Eggen