



# The Loving Dad

By Kayla Shoecraft

**M**Y PARENTS got divorced when I was seven. My older sister and I lived with my mom and my dad got us every other weekend and paid our mom child support. Even when I was young, I noticed that my dad acted a little weird most of the time. He would stay up really late at night and stay in his garage, or play video games until two in the morning, go to the gym for long hours at a time, or stay up late at night plucking hairs from his ears. When he did sleep, it was at the weirdest times of the day—he would fall asleep right before dinner, in the middle of the afternoon, or right when you are supposed to normally wake up. And the thing was that when my dad crashed, he crashed hard.

For the most part though, my dad was always on the go, always working, hunting, playing. It wasn't until I turned thirteen that I realized he was a meth addict. I was at church one morning and they showed us a PowerPoint of people who had used meth and how their faces sunk in and scabbed, and how users lost weight. That wasn't the case for my dad though; he didn't pick at his skin or have rapid weight loss. But then the guest talked about behavioral habits of meth users. Staying up and crashing hard, fidgeting, etc. My dad fit all of the above. For twelve years I lived in the dark about my dad, not knowing why he was acting so strange all the time. For another two, I knew. I knew every day when he was sleeping on the couch why he was there. I knew full well every time he went into the garage what he was doing.

Then one summer day, things got out of hand. The day started out sort of tense, my dad and I had gotten into a fight that morning. One of his friends called him and asked if we wanted to come over and

spend Father's Day with him and his kids, my dad accepted. On the car ride there, my dad and I started to fight again because I had forgotten to do the dishes before we left the house. I started to ignore him, and when I stopped talking to him all together, he reached over and punched me in the leg. I started to yell and swear at him, telling him to take me back to my mom's.

He turned the car around in the middle of the street and started to drive back towards his house. He proceeded to tell me I was grounded for the rest of the time I was at his house and started to name a list of chores he wanted me to do. I refused and told him the minute we got home I was going to call my mom and have her come take me home. From there it got even worse.

We pulled up to his house and I raced inside to get the phone so I could call my mom and get out of there as soon as possible. But before I could get to the phone, his hand was around my arm and he was dragging me into my bedroom, and taking his belt off. I stumbled into my room and turned to look at my dad, but he grabbed me by my shoulder and put my face down in my bed and began to hit me with his belt. I was struggling against him so he kept missing his intended target. When he finally stopped, I bolted out of my room in an attempt to get out of the house, but I was too slow. He grabbed me again and tried to put me over his knee, but I was struggling too much for him to be successful. So he resorted to just hitting me wherever he could land his belt.

He hit me on my legs and cut me through the jeans I was wearing. He hit me on my arms and left bruises that wrapped all the way around them. He also hit my torso,

leaving bruises that wrapped all the way around me. He beat me for a total of four hours.

At one point I just wanted it all to end, to be done and be killed, so I grabbed a light bulb and smashed it to try to cut myself but he stopped me before I could. I went for knives too, but yet again he got a hold of me before I could do anything. Every time he stopped me he would beat me again, as if that would make me stop.

Finally, it did stop. He dropped his belt and looked at me crying on my bed, curled up and hugging my knees. He told me to pack my stuff that he was done with me. I packed my stuff as quickly as I could manage and put it into the car. I called my mom to tell her I was coming home and I never wanted to see my dad again, and that I would explain to her what had happened. But my mom wasn't home; she was at my uncle's for a barbecue.

When my dad took me to my uncle's, he pushed me out of my side of the car and into the street, then threw my bags at me. My mom walked out to get me and help me inside. My dad turned to her and said that I was no longer his daughter, that he disowned me, and that I was a selfish, mouthy teenager that had no respect. When I got inside my step dad looked at me and asked why I was crying and why there was blood on the knee of my pants. I put a pair of shorts on and showed them all the bruises that were now beginning to shadow.

My mom called the cops, but they didn't arrest my dad. I was interviewed by cops, doctors, and other officers. I had pictures taken of me and my bruises, and I had to see therapists. The doctors said that what he had done caused severe bodily harm to me. Yet nothing was done to him. He managed to slip by the judge with probation, a slap on the hand compared to what he had done to me and he had even admitted to being high when the incident occurred. He cried and said he was sorry, but I knew his games. I didn't believe a word of his apology. So much for dad loving his little girl and being the one to protect her from harm. 🙄

## ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Kayla Shoecraft is a recent high school graduate from Idaho. **Alert Magazine** congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We also encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.