

Surviving A House Full of Whispers

Sharon Wallace

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (4/09)

The author, Sharon Wallace, was the victim of both physical and sexual abuse of her stepfather while her mother was in denial and contributed emotional abuse as well. No one would believe her story. Tired of being treated like an outcast by her family and friends, she goes to Social Services for assistance. Feeling totally frustrated because they also don't believe her story, she presents herself as a very angry, volatile teenager. Inside, she is a child screaming for someone to rescue her and to believe her story.

To escape, Sharon takes on several jobs; most of them involve being a nanny. Not all of her experiences are positive; however, she is relieved to be out of her house. Not knowing how to recover from being abused, she takes on some negative behaviors such as cutting herself and eating disorders. Sharon also learns that she can defend herself. This makes her stronger, however, the intensity of anger that she feels when she is attacked, also scares her.

Down the road, Sharon finds a wonderful, patient man that loves her. He believes her story. His love and support help her on her path to healing and finding herself. When she becomes a mother, she is fearful for her children and initially finds herself being overprotective. Learning to trust her own judgment, she learns who she can trust to be around her and her family. Along the way, Sharon continues to try to salvage her relationships with her family. She realizes that her mother is a very sick woman. Her stepfather is still around, which is horrible for Sharon. This man, whom she refers to as "The Night Devil" delights in the fact that he got away with his abuse.

When Sharon's husband develops a disabling health issue, the family is rocked by having to watch him decline and their financial situation becomes dire. Still Sharon is able to hold them together. When she experiences her own health crises she suffers greatly. Still Sharon stays strong.

I found Sharon's story painful to read. It is horrible that both the family and the whole system would fail to protect an innocent child from abuse.. It was heart wrenching to feel the pain that she was experiencing. I was so happy when she found a wonderful man to love her. I truly feel that people experiencing abuse, survivors of abuse, abusers and people who work with these people, should read "Surviving a House Full of Whispers." Sharon's story needs to be read, so that people learn from it.

Upon realizing that history does not have to be repeated, Sharon says, "...we don't have to own the misery of our childhoods. We can refuse it and return it to its rightful owner, the abuser." I am thankful that Sharon Wallace is willing to share her story in "Surviving a House Full of Whispers."