

Dr. Angela®

Short Case Stories #IPV-54

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Fiduciary Story

Unbeknownst to her, this now paralyzing predicament evolved overtime. She had spent years attempting to hold together their relatively public work life (as they were in the television news business, he as a reporter and she as a news commentator and writer)—juggling colleagues, media people, and others in effort to help Bill deal with the discrepancies between his public professional image and his private self.

This world began with the almost storybook success of their early years together, yet it was, more with each year, caving inside as it disintegrated around Bill's psychological problems, impulsive rages, uncontrolled aggression, and alcohol consumption in the form of binge drinking.

By the time Bill filed for divorce, Sally was quite enmeshed in her role as the one who would protect him from public criticism—and herself from the professional damages that Bill's downfall might cause her. She was unable to adjust to—in any way manifest the role of the one who would now actually be involved in the public naming of his serious problems.

And, she had, for so many years, been the most adamant member of Bill's informal but nevertheless cult-like following. This was so much so that she would need far more than the duration of the separation and day of the divorce to break out of her deep-rooted loyalty, or habit of loyalty—fostered by the brainwashing and threats she had lived with for so long—the pressure to always say wonderful things about him no matter who she was talking to, and to never (as he called it) “negate”—in any way disagree with or seem to disagree with—him in public. In fact, her coming to terms with this situation only served to remind her in a deep way of Bill's power over her, and to throw her deeper into her submission to this man who was ready and willing to destroy her along with himself.

The separation was hell. She was many times literally afraid for her safety as he grew increasingly violent and his threats more and more serious as the divorce approached. But he only did this behind closed doors, secretly, thus entirely deniably.

And now, with the divorce approaching, when information about and access to their money was going to be important, Bill sealed all doors to the information and literally held her prisoner in that she had no real funds which would allow her to leave at will.

She had seen him take revenge before—both in fits of rage and in states of cold and calculated masterminding. She knew he was capable of this sort of thing again. And indeed she realized that he was now stalking her, following her, collecting information on men he thought she might date (although she was not dating) and the names of those men's children, somehow hearing her

telephone conversations and knowing the content of them and telling her so.

Amidst the chaos, turmoil, and trepidation she was now living in, she was entirely unable to see what Bill was doing. Looking back much later, she realized that he had purposely made their lives such hell so that no one, including she, would spot his elaborate, long planned, and skillfully hidden process of robbing her.

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