



## If You Love Me: True love. True terror. True story.

*Alice Keale , Jane Smith (With)*

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## If You Love Me: True love. True terror. True story. Alice Keale , Jane Smith (With)

'You said I was the perfect boyfriend. If you can prove you really love me, perhaps I can be that way again.' This is the chilling true story of a woman trapped in a devastating relationship as she tries to prove her love – over and over again.

Within days of spending their first evening together, Alice and Joe were talking about getting married and spending the rest of their lives with each other. Everything about Joe seemed perfect, and Alice was the happiest she'd ever been.

Then one day Joe saw a message on her phone from an old love, and that changed everything. He ignored Alice's explanations and desperate pleas. And soon the violence and abuse began.

As she attempted to prove to Joe that he really was her world, Alice gave up everything that mattered to her, including her family, her friends and her job. But still it wasn't enough.

Then the 'challenges' started, and finally Alice dared to hope that this time, maybe this time, Joe might just believe she loved him ...

## If You Love Me: True love. True terror. True story. Details

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Author : Alice Keale , Jane Smith (With)

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## **From Reader Review If You Love Me: True love. True terror. True story. for online ebook**

### **Elaine says**

I read this book whilst on holiday, and couldn't put it down. It was certainly an eye-opener in regards to how a person can be manipulated mentally, and whilst the person who is going through it can't see the wood for the trees, everyone around them can see what's happening, and wants to help. Interesting read and a sad, true story.

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### **Marbeth Lynch says**

#### **Cautionary tale**

Harrowing read, frustrating at times as you will her to leave a horrific relationship, but she was in love and wanted things to turn around back to the idyllic early days. I truly understand, when you find your dream man you want him to remain the hero he is at the start of the relationship, but when he's a narcissist who love bombs at the beginning, then turns into a monster, its time to go. I was really frustrated when Alice had a couple of opportunities to escape but didn't. I was frustrated because I've been there and like Alice I stayed because I'd invested so much suffering I wanted the happy ending, I felt I'd earned it. I was afraid of what he'd do if I did leave. That life of fear became my normal until something switched in me and I was able to find the strength to escape. That was 15 years ago and I live a very different life today with a loving husband. Despite this hindsight and identification, I didn't enjoy reading this book. Maybe because it brought up long buried memories, but also because I wanted Alice to emerge victorious at the end. I won't spoil it but its a damning reflection of this country's justice system and how victims of domestic violence are failed. I also didn't like that the book had a ghostwriter. It explains the detachment. Alice's experiences are reported in the first person but I never felt connected to her voice, that explains why. I really hope she can box this experience in her past and move on. Someone once said 'the best revenge is a life well lived', and that's my incentive to make the most of my life, i let karma take care of the rest....

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### **Vikki says**

I found this book incredibly repetitive. I understand that Alice has dealt with a lot of pain and hardship, but I feel that a ghostwriter should have been able to present it with less repetition and maybe more feeling. It also felt odd that there was very little timeline to the story. Sometimes we were talking about weeks after the discovery, and then in the next sentence we were 9 months after. I feel bad critiquing a story based on someone's "abhorrent" abuse, but it was a bit of a struggle to get through because of the way it was written.

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### **Betty says**

What a horrific, hellish story. I read this in one go. I was morbidly fascinated by what this poor woman went through.....and it's a true story. Heartbreaking. I applaud her courage in writing this

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### **Danielle says**

This book was so well written. It's a true story but the way it's written flows so well.

The story itself broke my heart. This poor girl went thru so much and was so brain washed by her supposed boyfriend. Her family and friends kept trying to reach out, seeing what he was doing to her. The sad thing is they only saw the emotional and financial parts.

Great read, but if domestic abuse is a trigger for you, please don't read it.

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### **Nancy says**

3.5 stars

Spoilers!

I read this thinking it was "true crime", and I guess it technically was (if you consider brainwashing and domestic/physical abuse the crime here, which they are of course, but not usually the ultimate worst crimes in a "true crime" story), but instead of there being an actual crime (like murder) (spoiler alert!) involved, the worst part of it all is that Alice 1. gets involved with Joe and stays with him even though he flips out and abuses her and 2. SHE NEVER LEFT...HE BROKE UP WITH HER! Oh, Alice. That's terrible!! It's bad enough being in a bad relationship knowing she needs to leave, but then when JOE ends it...that is just so much sadder.

It is fascinating and tragic, the way Alice is completely and utterly under Joe's spell. As at least one other reviewer pointed out, I would have loved to have known more about Alice, because there was something really deep-seated and flawed about her that let her put up with his treatment.

Also, anyone who still thinks socialized medicine is the way to go, there are several examples here of why it's a terrifying disaster. Alice desperately needs psychiatric help after she and Joe break up. She moves back home with her parents, she's totally having a nervous breakdown, can't work, can barely do anything but stay in bed, and she has to wait SIX MONTHS to see a doctor. And this kind of waiting for medical care happens more than once. No thank you!

I suppose that yes, I would recommend this, but it's sad and you will end up wanting to shake Alice as time and time again, she stays with Joe after he abuses her and seems to be driving them both completely insane. I'm really curious who this ghostwriter is, if it's anyone we have heard of.

So, to recap, it's not a bad read, just don't go into it thinking it's actually true crime, because it's not really. (It's compelling and hard to put down. You just cannot believe you are actually reading what you are reading, and it's true. It does read like a novel. It's that gripping and suspenseful. Plus, it's a TRUE STORY!) It's really more a memoir of a woman in one of the worst relationships you can imagine, who continues to stay in that relationship against all sense and logic. Alice!! I am so curious as to how she is now, and what her relationship status is. She really does need a lot of help. Sad!

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## **Amber says**

Whilst I sympathise for Alice and the torment she was put through, I can't help but feel that this book makes a mockery of domestic violence.

The constant pleading was tiring to read. Internally begging for someone to intervene and help her, and criticising the strangers who don't reach out. Yet when she has endless support and chances, she doesn't even attempt to try to get help.

It is extremely repetitive throughout the chapters and became dull and difficult to read. Was a struggle to finish.

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## **Mina Vijendran says**

I didn't finish the book. I couldn't get into it.

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## **Patti Heinzelmann says**

Terrible book... very depressing and the ending was awful. The guy never paid for his crimes!

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## **Laura Guilbault says**

This memoir has affected me quite a bit. About half-way through it I was feeling depressed and numb. It even kept me up a few nights. But I fought through it, telling myself that the whole novel couldn't be about abuse and helplessness...could it? Well it turned out that there were about 220 pages of that. Depression, guilt, abuse (physical, emotional and psychological), isolation and fear were stretched out to make out this terrible story. About a quarter in I thought that it may be a little dramatic and exaggerated, but then I realized that I'd heard this type of story a dozen times before, as I am a fan of the Dr Phil Show. It doesn't end well, either; the abuser gets away with it.

Alice nearly dies. A lot. She gets humiliated and bitten and struck and forced to spend hours on end writing page after page of detailed accounts about her relationship with this Anthony guy, a married man whom Alice was having an affair with. Plus she gets screamed at, is forced to spend her savings on gifts and trips for her abuser and is isolated from her friends and family...

I could go on forever! This is really a horrifying story that I've seen before, but never in this way. It was only near the end that I truly realized how dependant Alice had become, and I found it easier to understand her reasoning. I just wish that Alice could've seen what was happening sooner, before she had given up so much, and accepted her friend's help and her sister's pleas and a stranger's advise.

Heartbreaking, but important.

I only gave it 3 stars because reading this story has been emotionally exhausting for me. I definitely would not suggest reading this if you are sensitive to such matters as emotional abuse. Be careful in reading.

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### **Sheri Robinson says**

OMG, someone gets it!!!!!! I'm so in awe that someone actually wrote this, that means there are other people on this planet that might just understand this level of manipulation. I'm glad that Alice Keale had the courage to write about her experiences, as it could not have been easy. The book is sometimes repetitive but that's exactly how manipulators wear you down until you have no energy left to stand up for yourself. Koodos Alice Keale!

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### **Little Stella says**

I feel a bit bad leaving this a review as it's a true account of someone's domestic abuse story. Ammoral is said at least 4837293629 times in the book.

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### **Jenn says**

Sometimes I have a really hard time with domestic abuse stories as I just don't understand the brainwashing. I do know about true love and I do know it has nothing to do with physical or emotional abuse. The things this woman agrees to and let's happen are beyond me. I know they aren't an exaggeration but they are really hard to believe. Makes me believe I'm much stronger than I thought.

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### **Lesley says**

I'm not sure you would believe a lot of what this man put this woman through as regards the abuse...

...unless you have either lived similar yourself, or had to sit and watch a daughter go through it.

I totally accept everything Alice says about staying, and whilst I can't understand why these women think the way they do, I am very well aware that it goes on, not always with good endings.

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### **Kensi99 says**

This is some of the darkest, sickest, most twisted crap I've ever read - and I've read a book about a cannibal. Alice Keale seems a fairly normal Londoner who has a good job, money in the bank, friends... but apparently a crippling and dangerous sense of low self esteem. She doesn't explain this. What was her upbringing like? We don't know. So it's fairly baffling when Alice starts off a whirlwind relationship with a superior at work that within weeks descends into horrific abuse and she simply refuses to see it as abuse. The abuser, Joe, starts off in the usual way: love bombing and mirroring the target. He tells Alice they are soul mates, made for each other, he wants to die in her arms, blah blah, all this on the first date, mind you. Every book, movie, or piece of music Alice loves, surprise, he loves it too. Within weeks, she abandons her plan to buy her own

flat, and moves in with him.

The next step in the psychopath's tool box is devalue and Alice unwittingly gives him a doozy of an excuse - when he insists that she give him the passwords to her email accounts, she does it, apparently unconcerned that she's been flirting with an ex-boyfriend, who happens to be married. This is what her psychotic boyfriend, Joe, will use to hold over her head for the brutal devalue phase. It starts with him demanding every last detail of her affair with the married man, calling her mother and friends to tell them about it, and insisting she check into a psychiatric clinic. He makes her write out long lists of why he is so special, buy him 'unique' gifts that prove she loves him, take him on expensive vacations, quit her job, stop seeing her friends, and - just when you thought you've heard it all - she repeatedly has to run naked through the streets of London, all to 'prove' that she's sorry for once having been involved with a married man and lying about it. I'll admit I began to wonder if Alice was exaggerating some of his demands for the sake of a more dramatic book, that's how crazy this stuff was and even crazier that she doesn't seem to find it that much of a big deal.

Joe repeatedly slams her head against the floor, tries to strangle her, again makes her take him on trips she pays for, refuses to allow her to sleep, forces her to get drunk, encourages her to commit suicide, gives her an hour to 'buy special gifts' for him, depletes all of her savings, cuts off all her hair, makes her take a lie detector test, slams her head against the floor some more.... and several times bites her all over her body. **BITES HER.**

The pair have no children, and Alice has friends she could have turned to for help. But she keeps thinking she can turn the clock back to the time when Joe was nice to her. She even admits that Joe could have picked out a news story of some natural disaster and blamed her for it and she would have agreed. How does a person get like this? She has no theories except that Joe must have managed to brainwash her somehow. No doubt he did on some level, but after yet another horrific beating where almost kills her (again), and bites her all over her arms, stomach and breasts, and then a couple of days later asks her to marry him .... is she uncertain? wary? trepidatious? Does she think to herself, for even a split second, "Maybe I don't want to be with a man who bites me, who won't let me work or see my friends, who won't let me sleep, and makes me run naked through the streets, etc etc etc...." No.... she's ecstatic! Yep, somehow, after being bitten all over - let alone everything else - Alice still can't wait to be Mrs. Joe.

Joe will beat her to a pulp and bite her like a rabid dog and then she will say something like "I began to suspect he was a little dangerous" or "I started to feel maybe this was serious." **WHAT?!** Did she grow up in a concentration camp that she saw this behavior as only little bit of a problem?!

The big problem with the book is the lack of psychoanalysis and lack of detail about Alice's childhood. Something, somewhere, went very wrong that Alice had no internal alarm bells screaming at her to run from this lunatic.

Eventually, she doesn't leave - Joe leaves her. No doubt he'd found new supply and didn't need Alice anymore, especially since she'd run out of money.

None of this was her fault, it was just very hard for me, an outsider, to understand her thought processes. If she was scared to leave him because he might kill her, I could understand this better. But she doesn't **WANT** to leave him. Through it all, she only discusses her continued love for him. I just don't know how you can love a man who bites into you like a donut. Maybe, as she says a couple of times, at this point she had no thoughts, they had all been beaten out of her. I imagine cults and terrorists groups do something similar. I hope Alice has gotten lots of professional help or she is likely to fall back into a similar relationship again.

And I really hope she has found some peace. And I hope this madman Joe dies somehow because you know absolutely he's going to put more women through the same thing and maybe kill one or more.

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