


Tales From The Narc Side: ...

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The Abuser Wears a Halo: The Final Act of Manipulation


From confusion to clarity: the journey of trusting your truth again


 Elena Byron


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4 min read · Mar 6, 2025

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It takes an immense amount of strength to leave a toxic relationship.

A force of will you can barely muster, because by the time you realise what's happening, you've been worn down to nothing. The person who claimed to love you has chipped away at your self-worth, relentlessly, a little more each

day. And when you finally see it for what it is, when you understand that you are drowning, you find yourself asking: *Do I even have the strength to swim to shore?*

For me — and for so many others who have survived narcissistic abuse — there was one crucial element that delayed my decision to leave: **confusion**.

Is he really doing this?

Why is he treating me this way?

Did he really mean it?

And then, the self-doubt creeps in — *self-gaslighting*, I would say.

He says he wants a life with me. He can't possibly be treating me this badly.

We had such a nice time yesterday. This must not be happening.

There must be another explanation — he must be stressed, had a bad day, I must have triggered him...

You can fill in the blanks with whatever justification you like. We all did, unfortunately. We all made excuses, trying to silence the cognitive dissonance. The impossible task of reconciling the man who said he loved me with the one who treated me like I was disposable.

Subtle acts of manipulation were scattered between moments of supposed intimacy.

A diminishing comment: *“You’re too sensitive.”*

An offensive joke: *“No one else would get offended by that. You’re too touchy!”*

A backhanded compliment — he loved negging me: *“You misunderstood me.”*

His endless stonewalling became a legitimate way to express his emotions. My discomfort with it? My encouragement to communicate in a healthier way? This was twisted into me preventing him from *expressing himself* — labelled as manipulation and abuse on my part.

Even the smallest requests for connection were met with condescension.

“It would be nice to talk more often.” (We were in a long-distance relationship.) His response was always the same: *“Did you talk about this need with your therapist?”*

He never questioned himself. He was always right.

So between the two of us, I was the one constantly adjusting, constantly carrying the blame. Trying to become someone who wouldn’t *provoke* him.

And then, when I finally left, it continued.

He couldn’t bear to be left and launched a smear campaign, weaponising every tool he had perfected. Projection. Twisting reality. Gaslighting.

Over the years, he had gathered an army of ‘flying monkeys’ — people eager to believe his version of events, eager to shield him from accountability. It

was almost cult-like, a shared paranoia, a mass delusion. In their eyes, I wasn't allowed to call it what it was: *abuse*.

One and a half years together.

Around 115 days spent in the same place.

More than 120 documented instances of emotional abuse, most of them repeated over time. A pattern that never changed.

And even in the end, he followed the narcissist's playbook to the letter: rewriting history, playing the victim, attacking my credibility. A final act of manipulation. A desperate need to control the narrative, to erase me and my pain entirely.

It's difficult to digest. After surviving the abuse, it is devastating to watch your abuser paint themselves as the victim — and to see others believe it.

Gaslighting makes you feel that truth is relative. And in many situations, perspectives do differ. Our experiences, our pasts, and our beliefs shape the way we interpret events.

But abuse is different. **Abuse is not a perspective. Abuse is not a subjective feeling.** If both versions were equally valid, he would acknowledge my pain. Instead, he denied its existence entirely.

In the end, what gives me peace is knowing that his lies will never save him from himself.

And the truth? The truth will always be stronger.

So if you have survived something like this, hold onto that.

Truth will set you free. Always.

If this resonated with you, *follow me* for more raw and honest stories on healing from narcissistic abuse. *I'd love to hear your thoughts in the comments.*

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What are your thoughts?



Michael Phillips he/him
Mar 11



If both versions were equally valid, he would acknowledge my pain.

And there lies the difference between an abuser and a victim. As victims, we acknowledge their pain. As you said, we make adjustments. We make suggestions to improve the relationship. The abuser doesn't acknowledge anything you say. They ignore your pain. They don't take any responsibility.




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1 reply

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Naomi Shippen 
Mar 26



He never questioned himself. He was always right.

Yep.



8



1 reply

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Myla Morningstar she/her
Mar 6



you have a detailed mindset that allows you to really capture the subtle nature of the abuse, and to recall it rather than it being wiped from your memory. Another outstanding piece!



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1 reply

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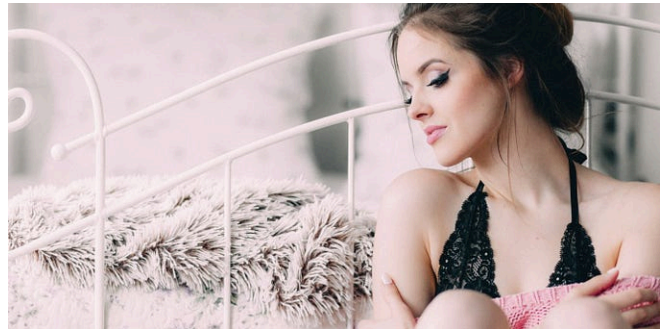
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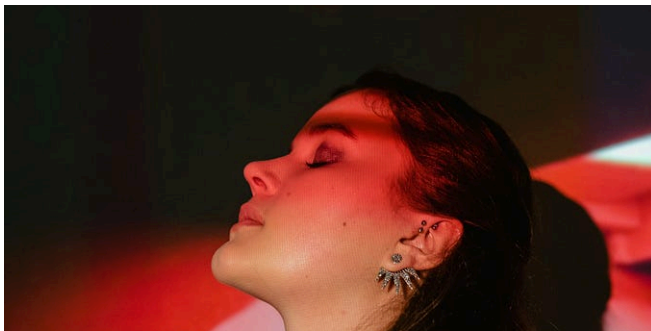
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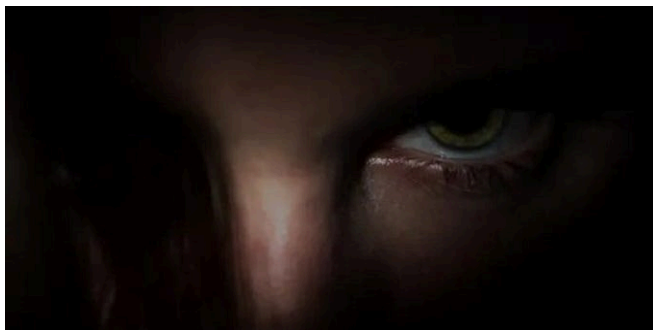


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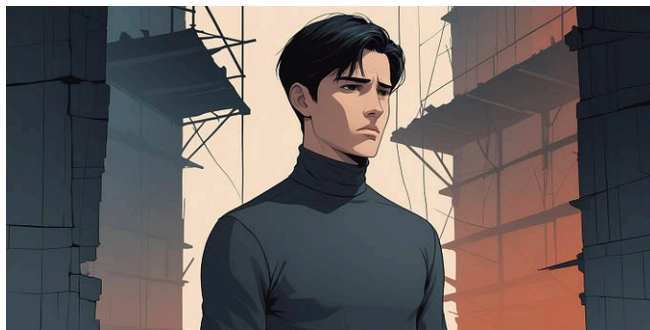
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