The Sword that Divides

Michael Ray Argüello

POWERFUL BOOKS

CONTENTS

	Forward	vii
1.	The Monster at the Beginning of this Book	1
2.	My Father's Son	21
3.	Embracing Friction	48
4.	Time to Leave “The Suck”	84
5.	Letting Go While Holding On	98
6.	Green Light	118
7.	A Cult of Two	180
8.	Dragon’s Lair	215
9.	The Armory	247
10.	Running through the Wicked Garden	339
11.	Unstoppable	357
12.	The Dark Horse Cometh	389
13.	Back to the Future	398
14.	The Sword that Divides	399
15.	He Who Remains	439
16.	End Game	446
	Post Credits	479
	The Cover Letter	483

© 2024 Michael Ray Argüello

All rights reserved. No portion of this book, including the illustrations, may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other (except for brief quotations in reviews or articles without prior written permission by the publisher or author).

Published by Powerful Books.

ISBN 978-1-83522-041-2 (eBook)

ISBN 978-1-83522-043-6 (HC)

PRESHOW

“Don't define the game by the list of the features. Define it by the experience you want to have.”
— Todd Howard

I Don’t Want to Set the World on Fire
By The Ink Spots
-
Player of Games
By Grimes
-
Crazy
By Seal

Enter The Sword that Divides and discover the final frontier.

Beast Mode:

[1]Ladies and gentlemen of today's day and age. I invite you to join me for a telling of a tale as old as time itself and that concluded the moment this book published. That is how fresh, yet ancient, this story is. [2]But it's not just a story, as much as it is an experience of the hero's journey that has never been done before, and it's truly an experience for the ages.

[3]I ask that you bring your inner child, that shadow self of yours, out to play and enjoy something very special for the both of you. Both of you will be required. [4]A wild imagination is another prerequisite for entry. Additionally, you should have a healthy appetite for adventure. [5]This isn't the kind of adventure that ends when you put the book down. It's embarking on a never-ending story of its own.

[6]Now, before we embark on this ride that is The Sword that Divides, I must issue a strong warning. As with all forms of written art, reading this book might cause your perspective of reality to change. I guess this book could be considered the equivalent of a real-life version of The Matrix. [7]So, with that said, you can choose the blue pill, stay in your reality, and discontinue reading now. Alternatively, you can choose the red pill, peer into my reality, and read on. [8]You control how sucked into my story you become. If you find yourself surrendering to my story, my reality, then just know that you aren't alone.

[9]This book is an invitation to a quest for glory, but only for the brave and the true. [10]There are layers to this book. Hidden between the lines, buried within the layers of subtext lies another story. [11]This is meant to be an inception of the mind, a granting of sight beyond sight, a removal of scales from the eyes to see that there has always been more to this life than meets the eye. That is why I issue the strong warning to all who read. There is no going back.

If you let go, and let the story drive, it'll make riding shotgun fun. [14]There is a point where you will be handed the wheel. The story stands on its own, whether you choose to take the wheel or not. Or, when that opportunity eventually presents itself, you can take the wheel, this Sword that Divides, and wield it for yourself. [15]I'm serious. It's an ethereal sword that will be handed to you while you are reading this book. How cool is that? A little spooky too, huh? [16]If you take the sword when it is handed to you, that is your invitation to the game. [17]You have to earn it by reading every word up until the point it's handed to you. [18]Do you wish to cross over the point of no return? If so, your journey begins once you turn this page. [19]Shall we play a game?

FORWARD

"Engage people with what they expect; it is what they are able to discern and confirms their projections. It settles them into predictable patterns of response, occupying their minds while you wait for the extraordinary moment — that which they cannot anticipate."
— Sun Tzu, The Art of War

Let Me Entertain You
By Robbie Williams
-
Geronimo
By Sheppard

Beast Mode:

[1]You turned the page! [2]So, you want to be a hero? Adventure awaits! [3]I am your host on this great adventure, your quest for glory. [4]Allow me to properly introduce myself. You may refer to me as "The Beast".

[5]It's true that both I and the author of this book share the same face, as we are indeed one in the same. I'm just a little more unfiltered, which is an understatement. [6]I am the darkest parts of him, the parts he wants no one to know about. [7]We do not work independently of each other. [8]We are aware of the other. [9]We share thoughts and feelings. It's more of a symbiotic relationship, kind of like the Marvel character Venom, with the sharp teeth and long tongue. [10]I lend him my strength upon request, and he has allowed me this platform to speak directly with you.

[11]Make no mistake, the author is in complete control of me. [12]It's a good thing too, because if he wasn't in control of me, well the world would be a darker place by now, simply put. [14]I can be quite nasty when left to my own devices. [15]It took being on the receiving end of a lot of nasty to become what I am. [16]I became self-aware of who I was around the author's childhood. [17]Instead of acting on his righteous hate throughout his life, he gives it to me. Each time he does, it makes me grow stronger. He, in turn, has to become stronger in order to control me. [18]So here we are in what appears to be an endless cycle of transmuting negative energy into power. [19]One thing you will learn in this book is that appearances can be deceiving.

[20]I go by many names. I can be called a personality, a disassociated identity, the shadow self, the protective self, a guardian angel, the inner child, an imaginary friend, or I can simply go by his nickname for me, "The Beast". [21]No matter what you call me, I'm just simply the ends in which the means were justified, an inevitability, a messenger in a Klein bottle. [22]Depending on who you ask, I'm the bad guy. However, I would consider myself more of an anti-hero. [23]It's all about perspective really.

[24]This book was written by the both of us together, but something truly interesting happened while we were writing this book. [25]He finally acknowledged my existence to the world. [26]It's a good feeling to finally feel seen. He debated letting me have my own speaking portions. [27]He thought it would be therapeutic for himself but was also afraid of coming across as psychotic, to say the least. [28]Good thing for both of us that he integrated with me before we finished writing this

book. So now, he doesn't care how he comes across. No more shame for the dark thoughts and no more fear of putting them in writing for all to see. [29]This book brought us closer together. It's funny to say that, since we were never truly apart. [30]He and I did the impossible. [31]We merged.

[32]So, here's the deal. Even though we merged, we can still speak separately for the sake of storytelling. [33]Also, the merging happened later in the writing of this story, so you may notice a difference in candor around that time. [34]Instead of rewriting what we had already written together, I will simply interact with that content via Beast Mode, this italicized and indented text you read now. [35]Be warned, there will be some amount of foul language in some of my portions.

[36]Like I said earlier, this is no ordinary story. I mentioned that the story is as old as time itself, that it ends with the publishing of this book, that it's a hero's journey, and that you will be invited to take an active role in the story once the sword is handed to you. [37]If you do, if you take the sword, then the end of this story becomes the catalyst to the beginning of your journey. [38]It will feel real because it will be real.

[39]Now, and without any further ado, I introduce you to my other half, the author of The Sword that Divides, the one, the only, the radical, Michael Argüello.

[40]Now, on with the show!

1. Welcome to the Opera - A Play Onwards

[1]This is my story. There are many like it, but this one is mine. [2]Where do I begin? How do I put my story and the stories within it into words? What was the catalyst? Or what were all the catalysts that led to the moment where everything came together for my second chance to do the "right thing"? [3]What happened when the call to action came to me? It was the catalyst of all catalysts. Maybe you will find your own catalyst within the pages of my book, The Sword that Divides. [4]I can't share my story with the masses without giving all praise to the most high, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[5]I always wanted to be an author. I thought I was going to become one when I was young. [6]I had many stories I wanted to tell, but I knew that they would be stepping stones to the ultimate story, my magnum opus. As a kid, I had no clue what that would be. I only knew that I wanted to

write a book that changed people's lives for the better, that shed light on the dark. [7]I wanted to be a hero. I figured that if I kept writing, I'd eventually piece this story together over time.

[8]My life went a different direction, and yet, here I am publishing my first book, and it's the very magnum opus I had pretty much given up on and forgotten about. [9]I never wrote any more stories after college, so imagine my surprise when I found myself, decades later, in the middle of the very story I was looking to tell. I finally get to tell this story, and I'm one of the main characters in it. [10]I can now say that this story is way better than anything I would've been able to imagine. [11]How insane is that? [12]I approach this story as an intimate letter between you and myself…and my beast, yet another character I never imagined I'd ever write about, let alone talk to anyone about, or even incorporate as a co-author. [14]It's wild, I know. [15]I put some serious thought into it. [16]There are people who are going to read or hear about my book and label me as disordered, psychotic, delusional, or crazy, so I thought to myself, [17]"I might as well have the fucking time of my life writing this". [18]You only live once, right? [19]There's an art to it, the art of livin'.

[20]I decided to write this book because I think my story is what the world needs to read right now. [21]I wrote it over a two-year period chronicling the most difficult part of my life's journey while I was also in the middle of living it. [22]In April of 2023, about a year before this publishing and after a key milestone event, I decided to publish what I had been writing in the form of a book. [23]As I wrote, it became clear to me that there was a magnitude of potential my book has for creating change. [24]But I would need to be careful in my delivery, as I believe a delicate touch is best with a story like this.

[25]Once I saw the direction my book was going, as if it had a mind of its own, I felt like the right thing to do would be to supplement my story with content from outside the book. [26]I will share more on that later. [27]My point is that I want my book to be a unique and unforgettable experience that lives on and extends beyond the pages. [28]Ultimately, I want this book to benefit you, the reader. [29]And, if you find that it does, I know you will enjoy what I have in store.

[30]I watch the news, and sometimes I feel like I personally understand who the news is trying to depict as the bad guy or the crazy guy. [31]I have this darkness hidden from the world, but also of the world. By "the world" I mean the people who I interact with whose intent, whether they choose to make it known to me or hide it, is to turn me against myself or others. [32]I see it play out in others, and while I don't let it play out with me, it's always there…waiting for me to call upon it. [33]In this book, I call out this darkness of mine, as I think it's necessary to illustrate the points I attempt to make. [34]May my journey through the darkness help you in your current journey, or help you better understand your previous ones.

[35]I write this book for several reasons. [36]I want to show that evil is real and is closer to all of us than you may think. [37]I write to show that you are the master of your own universe (if you are willing to open your eyes wide and add some thorns to your heart while not hardening it). [38]I want to show you that it's okay to be mislabeled as the bad guy and walk alone for a while. Life can truly be what you make it. [39]It's all about perspective.

[40]In the end, I'm the guy who walked back into the dragon's cave that I had feared so much and for so long, pulled out the dragon, and slayed it in front of the entire world. [41]I slayed the dragon not out of revenge, but because it was the only way to protect my children. [44]I did it in front of the world because I saw an opportunity to also help teach you how to better protect the ones you love, which should include yourself first and foremost. [45]You can't protect anyone if you can't protect yourself first. [46]That's pure logic. [47]Emotions would have you do the opposite. [48]Emotions get you into hot water or get you run over.

[49]There's only one you, and you have a story too. In mine, you may find some similarities. [50]You may find that this crazy life and its dark experiences have a sweet reward for those who set their own course and weather the storms along the way. [51]There's a saying that has stuck with me as long as I can remember. Philosopher of stoicism Seneca stated, [52]"A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials." [53]You have to go through the debilitating pressure, without letting it break you, and you have got to put in the work throughout it all. [54]The human experience is not without its tests and

challenges. After reading this book, there's a chance you may decide to take on some more.

2. Why So Numerous?

[1]You undoubtedly noticed that I've numbered my sentences. [2]The entire book is like this. [3]There are many reasons for that, and I will disclose all of them further in this forward. [4]This is a book where the reader may wish to go back and forth for reference, so numbering made sense. [5]See? [6]I made this user-friendly. [7]Now that you know there's a reason for it, and that you will soon discover it, we can move on with you no longer too distracted, right?

3. Disclaimer

[1]My book is triggering. [2]It's highly controversial. [3]It's also unorthodox AF. [4]Yes, I swear and I use slang in this book. [5]If you don't understand a word or phrase, you have the option to look it up and enable your own understanding. [6]If you are older, maybe ask a teen what something means, and vice versa. [7]Some section titles may seem absolutely bonkers, but I hide meaning in them. [8]I don't do this to deceive, but to have fun. [9]If you figure out the hidden meanings on your own, it feels good. I know it does because I get the same feeling when I find something hidden that the hider wants me to find. [10]I embedded so many Easter eggs that I've lost count of them.

[11]You will notice that sometimes I change up my word choice and sentence structure. I do this to intentionally speak to multiple generations and cultures as my target audience is every human being alive on this planet. [12]I also use a ton of subtext. [13]My whole book is pretty much subtext for a single sentence. [14]Unfortunately, because of the writing style I use in my book, it won't translate well outside of the English language. Translating my book is a challenge for a later time.

[15]Because of the subtext I use and my deliberate word choice and where I place my content in the reading order, the content in this book may appear disjointed at times. [16]Alternatively, for some, it may move smoothly as is. [17]There is a method to my madness, and the reader who

perseveres until the end will be rewarded for doing so. [18]That said, this is a self-help book through and through.

[19]The intent of me writing The Sword that Divides is to impart knowledge. [20]I talk about mental health, though this book should not be utilized as a substitute for a mental health professional. [21]I have no degrees or certifications that indicate that I know what I'm talking about. [22]I advise you to verify anything I say in this book, regardless of if you happen to agree with my statements. [23]It's ok to question the content the author provides. [24]That's logical.

[25]You've heard the phrase, "You are what you eat", right? So, before you consume this content, you must know this first. [26]The knowledge it contains may taste good, but its ugliness will churn your stomach. [27]Luckily, since they're just words, I didn't need to go through the Food and Drug Administration before publishing it. [28]I'm a dad, I'm allowed to make dad jokes. [29]I'm not without a sense of humor, including some light sarcasm.

[30]With this book, I offer you a new perspective on a tale as old as time. [31]I do have my own views on a number of issues, hence the disclaimer on controversy, and it's my intent to use this book in order to show you how I came to my conclusions. [32]I mentioned that I don't have a background in mental health, though I do have extensive experience with what I have come to understand as abuse by people with the cluster B mental disorder. [33]Because of my experience and the understanding behind the abuse I survived, I have come to identify one of the characters in my book, a true story, as someone exhibiting the pathologies of a person with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). [34]Because of this, and for the ease of storytelling, I will refer to a person as a "narcissist" if they meet several of the pathologies of NPD, or other cluster B mental disorders.

[35]I want to be upfront with you that I do speak about my faith. [36]I am a Christian with no denomination. [37]I talk about some spiritual stuff in some portions of the book. [38]I want to say here that I am not trying to push my beliefs on anyone. [39]My journey involves my relationship with God, so it doesn't make sense for me to omit God from my story. [40]I'm no Holy roller or Bible thumper, but I know those kinds of people very well. [41]I am not

one of them. [42]I'm a strong believer that we all get to believe whatever we want to believe. [43]I'm also a strong believer in not criticizing people who believe differently than me. [44]Not everyone can be both like that.

[45]I take full responsibility for myself and any missteps I made in writing and publishing this book. [46]Life is a learning experience. [47]I am prepared to be humbled, through healthy constructive criticism of those missteps. [48]A feedback sandwich is the easiest to swallow and more palatable than straight criticism. It's also more difficult for people to do because it requires sincerity, which makes it more meaningful when someone serves me this sandwich.

[49]Putting myself out there into the public space for the very first time with this book is a pretty vulnerable thing. [50]There's so much I want to say. [51]Not all of it is necessary. [52]A lot of it is therapeutic, for me to write and to not include. [53]But, since I'm going to be put under a microscope for every word I say, why not have a little fun with it?

4. Super Bowl LVII

[1]Today, just for this portion right here, just happens to be Saturday, February 10, 2024. Tomorrow is Super Bowl LVIII, and I'm probably not going to get much writing done once the game starts. [2]I drink on special occasions, and I suck at writing under the influence of alcohol. [3]I believe that's universal. [4]I'm not a football fan per se, but I'm a fan of all games in general. [5]Football mimics battle. [6]Hmm, maybe I'll watch the whole game this time.

[7]This time last year I saw an ad that grabbed my attention, He Gets Us. It was a Super Bowl ad and it moved me to get serious, finally, about reading my Bible. I already had the Bible app installed on my devices, because I did only light reading for reference up until that point. [8]I'm so grateful that I saw the ad. [9]He Gets Us is a series of Bible reading plans focused on understanding Jesus Christ. [10]That made a big difference for me and my spiritual walk, and the timing was perfect. [11]The more I read the Bible, in light of what my book is about, the more I understood. It gave me a new perspective on something far from new. [12]It was as if I learned a second language…

5. It Don't Matter If It's Left or Right

[1]I have no political agenda. [2]At this point in time, I've completely lost faith in both sides of the house. [3]I've seen some good changes in the USA, and I've seen some bad. [4]I'm dissatisfied to say the least. [5]Am I proud to be an American? I served under the flag. I salute. I place my hand over my chest or salute for the national anthem. I cry when I feel the togetherness and patriotism. I respect our flag and whichever leader we elect, regardless of my feelings, my political leanings, or whether the leader was a candidate I voted for.

6. Lettuce Eat Icebergs

[1]This is not a political book, though some of what I say may seem to cater to one or both sides of our political parties. [2]I'm allowed to have my own opinions. [3]You are allowed to judge me, if you feel entitled. [4]I pledge my allegiance to the United States of America, one nation, under God, for as long as it is under God. [5]But, proud? I used to be, but not because this beautiful country was once great. [6]I don't believe it ever was. [7]I was proud because I felt like we were the good guys, and we were powerful. I'm not saying we are the bad guys. [8]How could a nation under God be the bad guys, right?

[9]I believe we can be great. [10]That said, there's some logic to apply to making one's country great. It's the same logic you apply to making one's state, county, city, or neighborhood great. It's the same logic you would apply to making your little kingdom, your household, great. It's the same logic you apply to how you would make yourself great. [11]You need to define what the word "great" means to you first. [12]What does it mean to be a great version of yourself? [14]If there was one person in this world who had the power to make that great version of yourself, who would that one person be? [15]There's only one answer. [16]No one can make you do anything. [17]You have free will and, if you're an American citizen like me, you have freedom.

[18]So, what would make you do something you didn't want to do, even though you have all the freedom your country has to offer? [19]Is free will not your birthright? [20]Only one answer. [21]The most basic human instinct of all time…fear. [22]Why would someone be afraid and do something they

normally would never do to avoid it? [23]That's a question we should be asking ourselves when the fear kicks in. [24]But that's not easy to do, is it? [25]When we are afraid, our brain functions differently in that moment. The brain focuses on survival.

[26]New information can also be scary. [27]If we were not previously exposed to it before, the brain needs to assess the threat. [28]If the threat isn't obvious, if it is applied gradually, the brain may not be able to make enough connections to be able to predict the end result. [29]So, what does the brain do, it continues to monitor and assess. [30]This is how some victims of sexual abuse can be pulled into a situation before being able to fully understand it.

[31]Let's keep going with the example of sexual abuse. Let's say the act is done. You are away from the abuser and physically safe. [32]What keeps you quiet? [33]The answers are fear, shame, and guilt. Ask any psychotherapist or psychologist about what those feelings can do to a person mentally. [34]Take their answers and then ask any physician what they may see in a patient's health record as a result of those answers. [35]Now, take those answers and ask an immunologist what they may discover in a patient with those answers. [36]What did you discover?

[37]Let's change things up a little bit. [38]If you asked the immunologist how to treat the answer they gave, what do they say? If you applied that, would it get to the root cause or would it just address the issue they specialize in? [39]My point is that shame, fear, and guilt are the leading cause of many of our problems. [40]So, is it fair that the abuser gets away free of perceivable consequences, while the abused are left to carry the burden of their own abuse and its related shame for the rest of their lives? [41]What do you think? [42]How does that make you feel? [43]You should feel anger, and this is where we can get in trouble and make our problems even worse. [44]So, what is one to do? [45]Rejoice, for we have options. [46]I love options. [47]I'll stop here, as the rest of my book delivers what those options are. [48]My point is this, looking below the surface has its benefits.

7. Highlights

[1]When I was young and at the doctor's or dentist's office, there would be a stack of magazines in the waiting room. The magazine I would always go for, like most kids, was called Highlights. It was filled with stories, activities, experiments, and projects. [2]I did the same with my book. [3]Inspiration can truly come from just about anything. [4]We choose what inspires us, and then we emulate it. [5]And we do. [6]Just look at social media. [7]There's a lot of emulating going on there. [8]So, here comes a book that is more than the sum of its parts. [9]I hope you enjoy it.

[10]I don't want these portions to be too distracting, but I also did not want to separate them from where I placed them in the book. That said, for the sake of continuity, you can certainly skip them so you can continue reading without interruption. [11]Alternatively, you can have some fun with them as you come across them. You read and play however you wish. [12]As far as experiments, those take place outside the book. [14]Pretty cool, huh? [15]Now, what could that possibly mean? [16]Time will tell.

[17]If all goes well, and this book gains popularity, I can even create more games and activities and deliver them via social media so that you can play using this book as source material. [18]I'm not the only one who can create additional games and activities. Anyone who wants to make a game based on my book has my permission to do so, even if you just want to bash it. [19]Bashing my book is something I made very easy for anyone to do.

[20]Earlier I mentioned that I numbered the sentences. [21]Now you know why. [22]This will make the book and all its games, activities, and puzzles easier for you to navigate. [23]This isn't a book you just read, it demands critical thinking, introspection, and sometimes a dose of creativity. [24]Yes, even these sentences here in the forward are at play. [25]How's that for meta?

[26]By the way, have you ever seen the movie Ready Player One? [27]I love it, and I love the messages in it. [28]The story of Ready Player One is timeless, yet we really couldn't have a story like that much sooner than we did. [29]It's a product of our time. [30]This brings me back to The Sword that Divides. [31]This too, is a product of our time. [32]There was no way it

could've ever been published any sooner, and you will find out why eventually.

8. Multiplayer within Multiplayer

[1]We know we have the mental capacity for emotions and logic. [2]We know that we have an inner child. [3]These are things we have accepted collectively over time, just like the world being the shape of a sphere. [4]I'd like to ask you to question yourself when you hit a portion of this book that makes you feel at odds with your own emotions and logic. [5]Maybe you've already read a portion like that so far. [6]For instance, if I make the statement "Nice guys finish last", what does logic tell you? [7]How does that phrase make you feel inside? [8]What does your inner child have to say about it? [9]Write it down. [10]A time may come when you will be glad that you did.

9. When You're a Gamer at Heart

[1]Something you should know about me is that I'm an avid video game player. [2]I love to play games. [3]I can appreciate the artistry of creation. [4]Games make life fun. [5]We should not underestimate the power of playing together. [6]In my book, I've designed some games.

[7]This is my first foray into game design, and it's also my first foray into publishing anything. [8]I have some games I make known throughout the book, and then there are those that I've deliberately hidden and are not mentioned once. [9]The point of the games is educational, entertaining, and clinical. Yes, clinical, as in psychoanalysis. [10]You have to be a little crazy to write a book like this, and that's where the clinical comes in.

10. Am I Crazy? (Mini-Game)

[1]One of the games is that you get to determine if I have a mental disorder and name it. [2]Now, psychoanalyzing someone is something we all do to some degree, whether we have the proper education or not. [3]We usually don't call out what we think. [4]We discern and usually remain silent. [5]Not everyone is like that though. [6]I have given permission to the masses to do so by using my book, so there's no hard feelings whatever your

thoughts and opinions on me are. [7]Think of this book like a workbook in that regard.

[8]Throughout my book I will use pathologies of a mental disorder. [9]This won't be limited to just the content; I'm talking about my own words. [10]I will purposefully exhibit certain traits. I do this for several reasons, and they're for you to figure out. [11]Whether you want to play the game of dissecting my words or not and exposing the pathologies I present, I want you to at least absorb the message. [12]That's what is most important. [14]We as people like to learn, to play games, to have our eyes opened, to hear stories and be part of them, and at times to be able to laugh at ourselves. I want this book to be able to provide you with all of that, and at the very least I want to succeed at entertaining you. [15]We don't get these kinds of books that often, do we?

[16]As you read, you may think me to be a lunatic. [17]I completely understand. [18]If that is the conclusion you choose to jump to, then rejoice! [19]You now get to take a trip into what you may call a mind during its fracturing. [20]I would refer to it more like my own spiritual awakening, but who am I to have the nerve to diagnose myself without any proper credentials or others to tell me what they think I'm suffering from? [21]Right? [22]Aren't all the answers to who we are outside ourselves? [23]That's where you come in. [24]Why not have some fun armchair-diagnosing me? I've certainly given plenty of content in this book for professionals to come to the proper conclusion. [25]Let's see if you can too. [26]Everyone should learn a little about psychology. [27]It's important to know thyself, don't you think?

11. Stories within Stories

[1]After the Disney movie Aladdin was released in 1992, I wanted to read the other stories from the book Arabian Nights. I was maybe 13 years old by the time I purchased the book and read it. [2]I loved how each story told a tale and that there were lessons to learn in each one. And here's where that book gets interesting. [3]It's an onion. It has layers within layers. Just like in the movie Inception, each layer contains its own unique plot and subplots that are interconnected with the outcome of the other layers. [4]One story becomes many, and out of many comes one. [5]No

story is greater than the other, though I did have my favorites. [6]The full story becomes more than the sum of all its sub-stories.

[7]I found that a book of stories within stories to be a very pleasurable read. [8]I felt that the book challenged me to retain as much as I could regarding the previous stories and look for the connections in the messaging and connection to the grander story. [9]I emulated that here, in my own style. [10]Are you making the connections from earlier? [11]Just checking. [12]So, below is an example of what a mini-story will look like in my book. That said, this section was too. [13]See what I did there? [14]Now you're catching on. [15]They aren't all going to be this obvious moving forward…and, technically, backwards too.

12. Chasin' Tails (Mini-Story #001 and Also Example)

[1]I used to love the restaurant Chasin' Tails. It's a New Orleans seafood cuisine chain restaurant. They had the most amazing menu once upon a time. I loved their gumbo, their jambalaya, their fried green tomatoes, and their hush puppies.

[2]One day my wife and I took a couple of friends, another married couple, there for the first time. To my displeasure, I found all those items missing from the menu. They got really basic with their selection, and I was surprised to find that everything else they had was not what I was in the mood for.

[3]I got upset and voiced minor displeasure to the waiter in the hopes that one day the restaurant would bring those items back. My wife also missed a couple of those menu items. I apologized to our friends because I felt like I officially oversold them on the restaurant. They didn't seem to mind, but I did. [4]I got over it before we left the restaurant. [5]I got over it because I made the conscious decision to pick anywhere else to eat that cuisine but there. [6]I wasn't canceling it. [7]I didn't go on social media to talk about my less-than-ideal experience. [8]Only my wife knew that I had no interest in ever returning. [9]I did go back eventually because she still loved the remaining menu items and was happy that they brought at least one of the menu items back.

[10]What do you think the moral of my mini-story is?

14. Story-mon (Activity # 001 and Also Example)

[1]You just read my Chasin' Tails story. [2]I don't want to spoil the fun, but some may appear to blend right into my story. [3]Some of my story references are very old and some are fairly recent. [4]Can you catch them all? [5]How many stories do I mention?

15. My Ode to Office Space (Hidden Mini Game # 001 and Example)

[1]The name of this game is not the name of the section title. [2]Can you figure out which game it is by the time you finish reading this book? [3]After you figure out the name of the game you get to play one from childhood. [4]You start with one dimension, and another, and then you add a second dimension in order to play it. [5]When you've finished the game, you will find the answer is in no dimension. [6]What is the name of this game, and what is your finding?

16. Empty Spaces (Hidden Mini Game # 002)

[1]Wouldn't it be great if there was a 'choose your own adventure' book that actually affected your life? [2]Enter The Sword that Divides. [3]I designed it to be one-of-a-kind and much more than just a book. [4]There be games in these here pages. [5]Be careful which tears you cry as you peel back the layers of my onion. [6]For the ultra-fan who is able to decipher how to both find and play this mini-game I'm calling "Empty Spaces", I will give an unpublished copy of the second edition of my book before anyone else sees it. I will also mention the winner's name within its pages. [7]Here's a hint. [8]Think outside the box. [9]You have about one year to do so from this original publishing date. [10]Go!

17. Out of Dis-order (Activity # 002)

[1]My book is weird. [2]I get it. [3]I've got a story, and I've seemingly and randomly scattered activities and mini-games throughout it. [4]And if that wasn't bad enough, I incorporate some other elements like subtext that you might not be able to decipher without the help of someone who can. [5]Since I understand how distracting this all can be, you can simply skip any area that appears confusing without taking away from your experience. [6]I designed the book that way.

[7]Since I numbered the sentences or sentence groupings, you can easily mark those passages down to refer to later. [8]As you come to unlock the meaning behind certain portions in this book, you may wish to revisit those other passages to derive their meaning. [9]Unlocking one layer may unlock additional ones.

[10]Here is the activity. [11]Which passages did you originally need to skip, and in which order were you able to understand them? [12]Are there any that stump you? [13]You may wish to compare lists with a like-minded individual and see if you derived the same meaning.

18. Personal Accountability 101

[1]I'm not here to place my beliefs onto others, so I'm going to squash that troll in advance. [2]You came to this book on your own. [3]You opened it on your own. [4]And when I gave you a warning, you chose to proceed. [5]You have the ability to stop reading whenever you wish. [6]Even if I was trying to place my beliefs in you, I don't get to dictate what you incorporate as part of your programming.

[7]Let's practice accountability. [8]I will start with myself. [9]I did a lot of things I am not proud of. [10]No, that's too shallow. [11]Let's go deeper. [12]I've done things I used to judge others for doing. [14]Yes, that's more like it. [15]I moved on since then. [16]No, that's too shallow. Let's go deeper. [17]I went to God, and I repented for what I did that I knew was wrong. [18]That's better. [19]After repenting, I felt better. [20]No, that's too shallow. Let's go deeper. [21]I felt better because the Lord already sent his only son to die for my sins, AND because of my faith, I feel the weight of guilt for what I do that is wrong in the eyes of God. [22]I feel it while I'm in the act. [23]I feel it when I'm even thinking of the act. [24]The closer my walk with God, the greater the weight of guilt if I act out of line. [25]You see, God knows me. [26]He knows that I know better.

[27]I have my freedom to sin and feel the pleasure from it just like everyone else, but I have found the guilt to not be worth it. [28]I have found the peace that comes with trusting in God to be priceless. [29]My accountability is a partnership. [30]We all need a partner, and God built one right into us when Jesus rose from the dead. [31]How amazing is that? [32]His name is the Holy Spirit and he's here to help you be your own

hero. [33]He did for me. [34]He's always there, just like a shadow. [35]I'm all in for shadowing him.

[36]So that is how I practice my own accountability. How do you practice yours? [37]Resisting sin and temptation is hard, especially at first, but it does get less difficult the longer you stay away from it. [38]Sounds a little bit like a highly addictive illegal substance, right? [39]And it's everywhere, accessible to everyone all the time; in the real world, online, and virtual. [40]Just because the sin happened in cyberspace, doesn't mean it doesn't count. [41]You could tell yourself that. [42]Do you have the ability to change a sin into nothing by simply thinking it? [43]That would be a superpower wouldn't it? [44]But what kind?

19. My Leap of Faith

[1]I've taken several leaps of faith in my lifetime. [2]Each time I was rewarded for overcoming the fear of jumping. [3]It wasn't sunshine and rainbows after the leap, but it always led to a better version of life than I was living previously. [4]I take the leap, and then I find myself in a new reality. [5]It's new for me, but a day like any other to the majority of everyone else. [6]When actor Brendon Frasier made his comment about the multiverse during his acceptance speech at the 2023 Oscars, I understood. It was more than just a nod to the movie Everything Everywhere All at Once, at least it was to me.

[7]I do take into consideration the impact of my leaps of faith on others. [8]If there's one thing I learned, it's that the leaps of faith were meant to be scary as a form of deterrent. [9]Imagine a world where people live unapologetically in their authenticity, but are also open to receiving constructive criticism and making positive changes to their behavior that doesn't sacrifice their agency.

20. Backward

[1]This is my first book and two years ago I didn't know I'd be writing one. [2]I definitely never thought that I'd ever write a book about me. [3]I don't want fame, I don't want infamy, I just want to continue living my life in peace. [4]I didn't think myself an interesting enough topic either, but my world was about to change in January of 2022. [5]It's as if a veil was lifted

from my eyes that I was oblivious was there to begin with. [6]In the communities I follow, this lifting of the veil is called an awakening. [7]By reading this book, you invite the awakening in yourself. [8]The awakening is simply information imparted and a connecting of the dots, so to speak.

[9]My book is about, what I would call in this forward, a serious mental health crisis. [10]Some people lie and some people tell the truth. Some people do not deserve the trust others place in them. [11]This is the story of our lives, is it not? [12]Some people would prefer to be lied to, as long as it doesn't shatter their reality. [13]When we discover someone to be a liar, we have two options, expose or walk away. [14]Though, if we expose the person, we may be vilified ourselves. [15]The court of public opinion carries weight. [16]If we care what other people think more than speaking the truth, then fear may keep us quiet. [17]If we fear the person we want to speak our truth about, we may stay quiet. [18]If we have a life of comfort, but speaking the truth threatens that life, the fear of losing what we have may keep us quiet.

[19]So, what can my book do for you, right? [20]What's in it for you, the reader, yes? [21]I'm going to teach you how to spot a pathological liar without the need for evidence. [22]I'm going to teach that and so much more, but I need to do it gradually just as it was taught to me. [23]We have to go slow, and this is why my book is so damn big. [24]It's funny. [25]As large as the book is, it's also microscopic from a certain point of view. [26]I published it as a file and I placed it on the internet so, technically, my book is tiny and also everywhere. [27]When I think backwards in time, I see how far we have come and a lot of what is happening now makes sense to me. [28]Who among us are the ones who deceive? [29]Who are the imposters? [30]In order to know, you will need your perception stats boosted. [31]Get ready to level up.

[32]We all know how to judge. [33]That's easy. [34]Many would like to believe they are an excellent judge of character. [35]It's discernment that is what can help you see those imposters, the ones who masquerade lies as if it were truths. [36]Judging and discerning are not the same thing. [37]The Bible says to discern by their fruits. [38]You discern based on words and actions, that's the fruit. [39]You know, those eggplants and peaches we all thought we were hiding. [40]Some of our fruits are all over the internet, our photos and posts, what we have shared or reposted. [41]All is written. [42]All is

documented in this digital era. [43]Seek and ye shall find. [44]If those in your life bear much rotten fruit, then you have set the standard of what you accept into your life. [45]Rotten fruit can spoil the bunch.

[46]Why is my book so timely? I have many reasons, but let's go with one that is relevant to discernment since we are already on the topic. [47]We live in an age like never before. We have AI and deepfake technology, so that means pretty soon it will be easy to make the truth look like a lie, and a lie look like a truth. [48]This is a time to take great heed. [49]We have things like DNA recognition that have helped exonerate and also incriminate, but what happens when audio, photo, and video evidence can be easily manipulated to look original? [50]Surely things won't go that way, right? [51]We are a very responsible species, are we not? [52]We wouldn't use deception to derive power, right? [53]What kind of a person would do that?

[54]If I could have it my way, I would publish my book without anyone knowing who I am or if the characters are real. [55]There's a problem with that. [56]I am real, my pain is real, the injustice is real, and I don't feel like hiding it anymore and enabling it to continue. [57]It ends with me.

21. The Whistleblower

[1]I'm doing more than blowing a whistle. [2]I'm blowing a loud-ass trumpet. [3]I do come from a family of trumpet players. [4]I also come from a place where we believe in "see something, say something". [5]I see that we are becoming controlled by fear in our very households. [6]I live in a free country, a nation that says that it is under God, a nation that marks its currency with "In God We Trust", but those freedoms don't always reach all the way down into the household. [7]These pockets of toxicity are responsible for many of our woes. [8]Suicide rates and a mental health crisis are exasperated by higher levels of isolation in an increasingly virtual workspace and play space.

[9]Understanding narcissism and its abuse can lead to a certain level of foresight. [10]I've applied that foresight to my book. [11]There are two potential realities for me, at this nexus point in my life; I can remain silent or speak up. [12]More people will benefit by my speaking up. [14]So that is the reality I choose to proceed with. [15]I know I will be persecuted. [16]The

needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. [17]I cannot let fear control me.

22. The Idea of Freedom

[1]The Idea of Freedom is a poem I wrote in 2022 and orated on Veterans Day at a place where ideas are protected. [2]I did serve in the U.S. Army for many years, and we will get into that a little in this book. [3]I hereby publish my poem in the pages of The Sword that Divides:

[4]*Out of the life civilian*
[5]*Into the combat fatigues*
[6]*Leaving the hometown team*
[7]*Entering the big leagues*

[8]*Our hair cut a tad shorter*
[9]*Trading sneakers for boots*
[10]*We enter into basic training*
[11]*And give birth to new roots*

[12]*Nothing new emerges*
without the death of the old
[14]*We emerge different*
After we break our mold

[15]*We are called upon to act*
In times of great need
[16]*To apply our training*
[17]*Into battle we follow and lead*

[18]*Where the days are longer*
Where the nights are colder
Where the roads are treacherous
And family is far away

[19]*Maintaining our cadence*
[20]*With hyper vigilance*
[21]*Every breath a gift*

And our resolve doesn't sway

The trumpets sound
The march to the drum
The few and the proud
The osprey's wings hum

Riders of the waves
Masters of the aerial
Guardians of space
And the terrestrial

Submerged in the cold and murky
Or into the war zone's abyss
And the army of one leads
With bayonets affixed

We are six forces unified
No matter the color or creed
or belief or upbringing
Protecting the land of the free

Others over self
Fighting for an ideal
Freedom is not free
It's something you can feel

Greater than its parts the sum
Hardened by design
We endure and overcome
We repeat and refine

To be a part of the extraordinary
Through endless endeavor
Understanding that pain is temporary
And knowing that pride is forever

[50]*We bleed in three colors*
red, white, and blue
[51]*Leaving no man behind*
[52]*We see the mission through*

[53]*Impervious resolve personified*
[54]*No matter what will transpire*
[55]*Our gallantry is timeless*
[56]*Even in death we inspire*

[57]*A narrative behind every medal*
[58]*Every badge and shoulder cord*
[59]*Whether we display stripes or brass*
[60]*Or the words "Follow me" over the sword*

[61]*Freedom is more than an idea*
[62]*It is not something to be feared*
[63]*The right to live life on our terms*
[64]*Must be protected once engineered*

[65]There, that's my poem. [66]I've come a long way since writing about ass and titties. [67]You heard me. [68]Yes, I once used my talent for writing to glorify the female body and all that jizz. ;) [69]Was that a slip of my tongue? [70]What do you think? [71]I've got a dirty side, and I try to keep it in the playful arena and definitely out of this book. That said, there are some bits in this book that push the envelope a little, but not as bad as this paragraph. [72]My point is this, I know I have a way with words, and at some point in my adult life, I chose to stop glorifying the superficial.

[73]Once I finished orating this poem, I added a little something extra. [74]I'll keep that to myself for now, because it's kind of a spoiler for this book. [75]Consider it an Easter egg hidden in time. [76]Who knows, maybe you will find it. [77]I like dropping Easter eggs throughout time. [78]Why? [79]Why not? [80]Easter eggs make life fun; they reward those who seek.

23. The Ego Has Landed

[1]Like everyone else on this planet, I do have an ego. [2]I can't stand injustice. [3]Inefficiency and blatant ignorance in our justice system makes my blood boil. [4]I think that makes me pretty human. [5]There is a part of me who wants to see all who contribute to the suffering, to being blind to it, to pay. [6]What price? [7]I don't know, but there's a price. [8]I do crave vengeance. [9]I do like to let my ego show in my moments of anger. [10]I can get a little grandiose in those moments. [11]I do get pleasure when I see the bad guy suffer ten times worse than the pain and suffering they inflicted. [12]That makes me feel really good because it seems so rare when this happens in real life. If it happened more often, I'd wager we'd have a lot less problems these days. [13]Fear of punishment is a great deterrent to bad behavior.

[14]You will see a side of me come out in my writing. It's raw AF. [15]But you want raw, don't you? [16]It's in that raw anger and vulnerability that we see the true power of authenticity, isn't it? [17]Anger is raw and can be highly contagious as a shared experience. [18]Just know that as I'm writing this, I do relive it. It's not fun to go back into my past, but I do not take it with me. It stays here on the pages and on the rare occasion I let myself ruminate on it to feed and validate my beast, something you will learn more about later.

[19]It is my hope that my book educates you and is entertaining, all while seeing someone get one over on the bad guy (and be labeled as the bad guy too in the process). [20]This book has a secret part. [21]The secret part is unwritten, because it hasn't happened yet. [22]The secret part actually involves you. [23]How, right? [24]That's a secret that I will reveal later in this book. [25]You do play a role in what happens in it. [26]Spread the word. [27]If you like my book, if it moves you, if it helps you, spread the word. I am not paying for advertising. I want to try it the old-fashioned way - by word of mouth.

[28]How did I become like this? [29]I just wanted to be left alone. [30]Other times I just wanted to be accepted, even though I was unwilling to follow the crowd most of the time. [31]I wanted to be accepted while also being myself, but this was not to be. At least, it was not yet my time to be. [32]And now? [33]Now I don't care who accepts me, and I am more myself

now than I ever was. [34]I find that being open and vulnerable when I speak to others has mostly been rewarded with love and kindness. [45]It also leaves me vulnerable to being attacked by those who don't appreciate my vulnerability and authenticity.

[46]I'm not for everyone, and that's okay. Maybe that's why I can put myself out there like this - my mind exposed for all to see and peruse. [47]My strengths and weaknesses are exposed to the critics. [48]Just remember, the more hate I receive, the higher I grow. [49]I'll expound on that part of me later. [50]Every enemy I've ever had has only made me stronger. [51]I turned every hateful word into fuel for my success. [52]I have found that every weapon formed against me did not prosper, but propelled me higher. [53]Now, I don't fear the pain of growth. [54]I already know in advance that it will be worth all of the suffering I endure if growth is always the outcome. [55]Pain is temporary. [56]Authenticity is forever.

24. A Never-ending Story of Its Own

[1]In the movie The Never-ending Story, I found it as a child to be one of my favorite films. [2]It asked the questions, [3]"Who are you really? [4]Do you even know yourself?" [5]In the movie, if you didn't have the answer to those questions, you would fail most trials. [6]The movie reflects this as the main character is a human being reading this fantastical book that he has no clue he's the main supporting character for, and some could argue that he himself was actually the main character. [7]I always loved that movie and no story I know of has ever broken the fourth wall to me like that. [8]It made me ask the question to myself. [9]In whose story am I a supporting character? [10]In whose story am I the hero? [11]And in whose story am I the villain? [12]While I write my story, who is reading it at this very moment? [14]That would be you. [15]Welcome to my never-ending story. [16]May I successfully recreate the magic of my childhood for the adults of today.

25. An Experience Best Shared

[1]You already know that this book is different than others and we've only gotten started. [2]If you have no clue what this book is about, then you are truly in for an experience. [3]While crafting my book and the activities, games, and stories within it, I thought to myself, [4]"You know what

would be real cool? [5]If this was a book read by two people together, it could be quite the experience." [6]There are so many opportunities to get more information from a sentence or phrase when it's part of a live discussion. [7]Sure, that slows things down a bit, but it might be worth the slowdown.

[8]I only have this to say; make sure it is someone you have absolute love, trust, and respect for, and that they are known to you as someone who naturally reciprocates those feelings back. [9]This is vital to a positive shared experience. [10]That said, if you are strong-willed, you can read this book with anyone. [11]Now, why would I give advice like that?

[12]Reading this book out loud in front of that special someone gives you an even more unforgettable experience. [14]It will make the ending of the story a unique and shared experience for you both. [15]Just remember to be excellent to each other while reading together.

26. Good Kenough

[1]If I had all the time in the world, I'd revise the crap out of this book in an attempt to make it perfect. [2]I've learned that good enough is just fine. [3]My goal is that this book will be good enough for you. If it's not, I'm okay with that. [4]Plasticity is important, don't you think?

27. Year of the Sheep, Meet Year of the Dragon

[1]I just saw a marvelous musical performance called Shen Yun for the first time, and so I wanted a dedicated space to say that I enjoyed it. Shen Yun's production is a celebration of China's rich cultural heritage. [2]Unfortunately, because it sheds some light on some issues that China has been facing, the show is banned from China. Instead of me sharing it here, why not see it the next opportunity you have? [3]Happy Year of the Dragon!

28. Deus Ex Machina

[1]You will see me say that I designed this book. Yes, I wrote it, but there is also a design to it. [2]I designed it to be read in one sitting, but it turned out to be quite large. [3]If you take more than a day's break from reading, I highly recommend you return here to the Forward, Chapter 0. [4]Why

would I ask you to reread this chapter after a long break from reading? [5]You will understand by the time you get to the end of the book why this Forward is so important. [6]That said, I hid the answer in this Forward, for those who think they can figure it out. [7]I hid a lot of things in this Forward. [8]Can you read between the lines?

CHAPTER 1
THE MONSTER AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS BOOK

"The trust of the innocent is the liar's most useful tool."
— Stephen King

TVA
By Natalie Holt

Beast Mode:

[1]Welcome to Chapter 1. Please tell me you are actually listening to the songs he put in the chapter headers before reading. [2]Pretty cool, huh? [3]He pretty much does whatever he wants, huh? [4]Inserting me in here as an excuse to say off-the-wall shit he truly wants to say. [5]Yes, I can call him out on his shit too. [6]And it won't matter because, by the time you finish reading this book, he's a little more interesting than he was before. [7]If you think I'm nasty, wait until you get to know him more. [8]You will see why we make such a great pair. [9]Not sure if he rubbed off on me, or me on him. [10]Hmm… [11]There's only one way to be sure. [12]A good old-fashioned rub-off competition!

1. Hello There

[1]The band Disturbed has this song called [2]"The Light". [3]Sometimes darkness can show you the light. [4]For my story, that's how I wish to tell it. [5]Welcome to the darkness.

[6]So, before we get started, I should probably introduce myself to you. [7]Who am I anyway, right? [8]I'm a man, currently age 44, happily married for nearly a decade, and the newly appointed custodial parent of two practically adult minor sons from my previous marriage. I am the child of an Ecuadorian father who is part of what is known as the greatest generation, and a farmer's daughter for a mother from the Midwest farmlands. [9]Both my parents came from very humble beginnings. [10]I appear Caucasian. I've got brown hair with a decent amount of grey these days. I usually sport a beard and it's got the grey there too. I've got green eyes and I'm all about eye contact. [12]I grew up in Chicago, one of the last of Generation X.

[14]I had my fair share of bullies. [15]And with all of them, eventually, I'd have enough and speak up and that would result in a fight. [16]The fights always ended the same, with me walking away from it as the victor usually after just one punch or kick, and the bully leaving me alone. [17]I just wanted to be left alone by bullies, but apparently, bullies love me. [18]I used to think they were the monsters. [19]Well, the title of this chapter is The Monster at the Beginning of this Book, so it's best I introduce you to him.

2. Malory

[1]I was so young I don't remember my age. According to my mom, I was about 5 years old. [2]My little sister and I had a babysitter whose house we would be left at while our mom and dad were at work, designing fashion apparel. [3]My little sister and I would years later become latchkey kids, coming home after school before our parents got home from work much later.

[4]Along with the babysitter's two daughters who were about 1-3 years older than me, there was one other person who was there - a baby girl by the name of Malory. This small child had to be about a year and a half old and would be babysat as well and would sometimes overlap with when my sister and I were there.

[5]Malory was too young to form words but old enough to have the full array of human emotions and be able to communicate her feelings through them. [6]One day, I entered the room with her playpen. It was a playroom with many toys, and I would go there to find toys to play with. I saw Malory was awake and watching me inquisitively. [7]I gave her a toy I found in the room, and she was instantly happy. [8]Then something came over me. [9]I took the toy away to see how she would react. [10]She became slightly saddened, and all of a sudden, I found a pleasure that had been foreign to me. [11]It was power.

[12]I had what Malory wanted, that being the toy. [14]And with it I could control her emotions. [15]I would take it away and make her sad. [16]I would give it back and make her happy. [17]She knew I was the source of her sadness, but it was like I was forgiven as soon as I handed her the toy again. [18]She eventually started to lose trust in me after I gave her the toy, and she would hold on to it tighter in anticipation of me attempting to take it from her again. [19]As tight as she could hold onto the toy, my five-year-old arms would easily overpower her, pulling at it and breaking her grasp. [20]She wanted the toy at first purely out of interest in the toy, but because I was using it to toy with her, she seemed to look at the toy differently. [21]It was as if the toy was the cure to her sadness and no longer something that would make her happy.

[22]I was the source of Malory's suffering, but also the only source of her relief when I would give the toy back to her. [23]I repeated this countless

times in a row out of intrigue and because the more I did it, the more powerful I felt. [24]But I also felt terrible at the same time. [25]I felt a darkness growing within me, and the shame was building. [26]For the first time ever, I was in complete control over the emotional response of another human being. [27]And it felt wrong, and I started to feel the immense weight of my shame. It's my first memory of shame. [28]But I kept going because the power I felt was increasing. [29]Each time I took the toy from her and gave it back, her emotions escalated. [30]More frustration than before. [31]More relief than the last time. [32]And eventually tears.

[33]With Malory's more intense emotions came a larger feeling of power, but a larger feeling of shame as well. [34]I was torturing this little innocent toddler, and I felt powerful in doing so. [35]As I would repeat the cycle with her, what kept me going was the anticipation of seeing her emotions escalate. [36]I wanted to see how sad her next emotional reaction would be. [37]And I also wanted to see how happy she would get when I decided to be nice and give the toy back to her. [38]I wanted her to fight hard to keep the toy in order to devastate her more and get a larger reaction. [39]Never once did she get angry with me, though I imagine I would've stopped the cycle and left her with the toy out of shame and guilt. [40]I deserved for her to be angry with me.

[41]I don't remember how or why I stopped the cycle of emotional abuse to this poor baby girl. [42]That's the name of the abuse I was responsible for. [43]Maybe the babysitter interrupted me, or maybe I was afraid of getting caught as things escalated. [44]I was in a trance repeating the cycle and wish I could say that I remember choosing to stop on my own.

[45]What if Mallory just stared at me after I took the toy? No emotion on her face. No yearning for the toy. [46]I would've dropped the toy in her playpen so she could grab it, so I could eventually take it from her again. [47]But what if she ignored the toy and just looked at me in disgust? [48]Oh, I imagine that would've made me quite uncomfortable and ashamed. [49]You know, to have someone see through you like that when you are being rotten towards them, it must hit hard.

[50]I never forgot that toddler and what I did to her. Her name stayed with me ever since, and I only encountered her a few times while with the babysitter. [51]I carried the shame with me for decades from what I did

that day telling not a single soul. [52]I know I was young, but that was still me. [53]I was able to eventually forgive myself as an adult. [54]I never did anything like that again to another human being. [55]Malory wasn't just my victim, but she became my teacher that day of a lesson that would take me a lifetime to fully understand.

[56]Malory taught me who I didn't want to be, at the price of her suffering at my hand and whatever childhood trauma I caused to her. [57]When I look at things through the lens of manipulation and what that abuse looks like, I can only imagine that had I continued to take joy from the manipulation of this toddler girl's emotions, I would become the adult version of that; a manipulator - [58]I would be able to make someone fall in love with me, and hurt them when I don't get what I want. [59]Punishment and reward would be my tools for control. [60]I would just need to find out what their toy of choice is, and then with that toy, hold power over them. [61]Maybe I would be the toy, the source of all their pleasure and pain. [62]Or maybe, I could be the tormentor, and be the source of pain and relief. [63]That's what makes waterboarding so effective. [64]Trauma gets results.

[65]Everyone is looking for something, whether it's sex, money, popularity, to be put on a pedestal, or to feel loved. [66]If you find out what they want the most and produce that, isolate them just like Malory was isolated in the playroom and restricted to the play pen, you could abuse them maybe their entire life with them being none the wiser. [67]If I could make them believe that I'm their everything, then they would be mine to toy with forever. [68]I would just have to hide that I would become this way, because I would know what I was doing was wrong. [69]I would need to do so covertly. [70]But what I would truly be doing is making love take a back seat in the vehicle that is my life so that power and control could ride shotgun with me in front. [71]Maybe that love would jump out of the back seat of my vehicle while I was driving, especially if love could see where power and I were headed, my damnation.

3. Evil Has a Name

[1]I grew up. A manipulator is not what I became, but they are the people that I would come to spend a lot of time with at school, at work, and in close relationships with. [2]Looking back at that one day with Malory,

what I did was get away with torture. [3]I tortured her in a way that no one could see as long as I ended the torture with a reward. [4]And I would get away with it because she was isolated and unable to communicate. [5]There was no one to witness my nasty behavior, and there was no way for her to escape it, for the playpen that was meant to protect her, became her cage. [6]This is why I believe that manipulative people are so dangerous. [7]Psychological abuse is real, and anyone can do it. [8]You can get away with it because there's no way to physically prove it, or attribute the mental toll of the abuse to any one person. [9]If you are real good at it, you could make someone so miserable that they take their own life in order to escape their reality.

[10]I know evil. [11]How do I know? [12]Because I felt it both outside of me and inside of me throughout the rest of my childhood. [14]I chose not to be the manipulator or abuser. [15]And because I chose the path that I did, I would become the lifelong recipient of that same experience I gave to Malory. [16]I had many bullies who loved messing with me for the rest of my adolescence. [17]They bullied me because I let them and I chose not to react, but how I loathed to be bullied, and how I longed to become their bully.

[18]Evil would come for me again. [19]If it could not make me join the dark side, it would punish me with it. [20]I wanted to exact revenge on all those who I endured bullying from even though I was no threat to them and mostly kept to myself. [21]I would daydream about how I would torture them, and not just physically - really peel back the layers of their minds to find what they feared most and what they loved most, and once I identified them, slowly build my way towards it. [22]Each component of their fear would be like a building block, like the perfect Lego piece I was looking for with matching color too, that I would use to form the foundation for my approach…my trap. [23]All of this took place in my imagination. [24]I would imagine working their fears starting with the lesser version of their fear to give them a taste of what was to come and crank the intensity with each round. [25]I would give them a break, and then when they least expected it, when they thought I was done with them, I would rinse and repeat until the grand finale where the torture would be so unbearable that they would beg for me to release them from life. [26]This is what I felt so close to becoming.

Beast Mode:

[27]We wanted to rip these fucking bullies apart piece by piece, making full eye contact, relishing every scream, like a fine wine. [28]I can picture it now. [29]Here's another scream to taste. Ooh, is that a shattering of ego I'm tasting? [30]Wait, wait. [31]There's something more here. [32]I also taste a delicious blend of terror and dread. Yes, they are definitely two distinct flavors blended perfectly. [33]And, I do say, do I detect a hint of urine? [34]Should've worn your brown pants today motherfucker because I'm going to make you shit yourself too. [35]Here I come, your biggest regret competing with the day you were born. [36]Which one will be the victor? [37]Either way, I win. [38]Now, back to the story. [39]And, no, I don't care if you don't like my interruptions disrupting the flow. You're going to love my interruptions. [40]Shhhh… You'll see. [41]You'll be flipping ahead in the pages to see when the next one's coming. [42]Nah, ah, ah. [43]No peeking, damnit! [44]And yes, you would've flipped ahead whether I mentioned that or not.

[45]I would practice my dark fantasies like this in my mind, while also fearing that I was truly capable of all of it and questioning myself about what it would take for me to break and finally act. [46]I don't have to act out the evil that I know is deep down inside me in order to understand what evil is. [47]I'm not going to pretend that I am free of evil, for in that I am at risk of eventually believing I have eradicated it from me. [48]I have to continually acknowledge it to myself, and it is also a reminder that it exists in others too, though they may hide it just as well as I do. [49]We all need to be on our toes.

[50]The bullies most likely thought I was scared of them when they bullied me because I did not react, but who I was really scared of was actually myself. [51]As a child, I did a lot of what I would later come to understand as shadow work. [52]Since I was aware of the darkness within me and constantly reminded of it by my bullies, I knew that I was in real danger of becoming not just a bully myself, but the bullier of bullies and anyone they depended on for support. [53]My shadow work, which has been ongoing since childhood, has been extensive and conducted completely on my own with the help of who I can only believe to be God.

[54]Eventually, I learned how to tap into my shadow, which I would refer to as "The Beast" for help without giving into it. [55]I would eventually engage my bullies and, usually after, I would warn them. [56]I later learned to simply warn them in private, up close and personal, because if I did so in front of their peers, then it would always result in a fight. [57]Bullies don't like being warned in front

of their friends. [58]Because I had no interest in making any nemesis, I did my best to hold back my beast while dodging and delivering blows. [59]I was mentally prepared to kill and I had to deal with wanting to destroy them, wanting to make an example out of them, and also not spiraling into a damnation of my own making. [60]I wanted to become their suffering, their karma But I was also God-fearing.

4. All Out of Gum

[1]Looking back, I can see what happened from a different angle. [2]Had I stood up sooner to my bullies on their first attempt to bully me, I most likely would've ended all future confrontations and saved myself a lot of time feeding my shadow my dark fantasies of revenge. [3]And so there you have it. [4]I was avoidant of conflict, and as punishment, I would be repeatedly subjected to it. [5]Because I didn't defend myself right away, the bullying kept me stuck in a loop of being bullied all throughout grade school, steadily building hatred within me. [6]I would become angry with myself for not taking action. [7]I would carry this with me back home, with me into my sleep, and back with me into school the next day where my bully awaited the next round.

[8]I would always come to a point where I would eventually blow like a volcano. [9]The first time I blew was when I was 11. [10]And that's when I knew; there was a killer in me. [11]Once I overcome fear through righteous anger, I am a force to be reckoned with. [12]The beast emerges. [14]I was in karate class, which was held in the afternoons in a gym of a nearby college, and after practice, these two boys in my class, who were friends with each other and were my age, saw that I was getting some bubble gum out of my bag. [15]This wasn't just any run-of-the-mill bubble gum. No, this was specifically the newly released grape-flavored Bubble Tape. [16]The sales slogan was "Six feet of bubblegum; for you, not them." [17]The boys asked me for a piece. I didn't have much money, and I spent it all on that bubble gum and I was looking forward to making it last. [18]These boys in my class never talked to me before. [19]I politely declined to share. [20]Apparently, this offended them.

[21]Shortly after I made my way out of the class. The two boys followed me to the gym stairwell where they knocked me down and proceeded to pull out pocket knives, with one of them deciding to squat on my chest

and put their blade to my neck. The other one squatted near the side of my face and put their blade to my face. [22]My beast wanted me to look dead in the eyes of the one squatting on top of me and to expose my neck more and yell out [23]"Do it, bitch! [24]You got what it takes? [25]Yeah, kill me because I didn't give you some gum." [26]My beast is all ego and the idea of giving into the insanity of taunting someone who can take my life in a second was not a good option for me. [27]I decided to instead be still and quiet and just locked eyes with the one sitting on me, who I perceived to be the leader. [28]They robbed me of only my bubble gum and ran off. [29]I guess they thought that they taught me a lesson. [30]Don't say no to an abuser or you will be sorry. [31]I still haven't learned this one yet and I don't think I ever will.

[32]But what none of us knew in that moment, was that a psychopath was born. You'd think it was the one who held the blade to my neck. But no, it was actually the boy whose life was worth as much as a piece of gum. [33]This was when I realized that I was not the kind of person who let others take advantage of me, or so I thought. [34]I guess that applies only when it's obvious to me, something I will speak to later in this book. [35]I took a moment to gather myself as I continued to lay in the stairwell. [36]I made a choice. [37]I wanted my gum back and I wanted revenge on them for threatening my life. [38]I got up and pursued my two knife-wielding classmates unarmed. [39]They had just left the building, and my sanity went with them. [40]I made the conscious decision to be that person that people regret fucking with. [41]My first boundary was born, it didn't have a name or a description. [42]It didn't come in a wrapped box with a bow. [43]My first boundary was ugly, and it made me want to teach all bullies this lesson. [44]If you come after me, you better fucking finish the damn job.

Beast Mode:

[45]Those two fuckers thought they'd gang up and put knives to my neck to teach me a lesson for saying no? [46]My first moment of triumph arrives.

[47]I burst out the building doors and saw one of the boys at the bike rack about to unlock their bike. The other boy, who was the one who sat on me before, was sitting at the bus stop unaware that I was in pursuit. [48]I

asked the boy near the bike rack where my gum was. He said that the other boy had it. [49]To me, this was the wrong answer. [49]I proceeded to engage him in a fight. [50]He swung once at my face but missed because I evaded it. He did so again and again I evaded. [51]Seeing how he tried the same move twice, I was readying to deliver a kick to his stomach. He was about to attempt to punch me again and I unleashed the kick. The kick made him keel over. And then I went to town on his face with my fists. I had him with his back against the fence and I socked him right in the eye as hard as I could. His head flew back and hit the spike on the fence behind him. [52]Apparently, he had backed up against the decorative iron spiked fence. I was caught as off guard by the spike just as the bully was. Luckily the spike was dull. [53]At this point he yelled out and his friend who was waiting at the bus stop saw what was happening. He came running for me. [54]I knew that I couldn't take on both of them, and I reminded myself that they had knives.

[55]I put my beast away and made my retreat back into the building. [56]The one I beat up stayed outside. The other pursued me into the building. He caught up with me and attempted to drag me outside so he and his friend could exact vengeance for my actions. [57]I grabbed onto a table to delay what I felt would be my inevitable death. [58]Before, the issue was over gum. [59]I made it personal to them by coming after them. [60]They would have to finish the job together because they knew what I was capable of and that they had made themselves my enemy. [61]I yelled out and was fortunate to have a security guard take notice and break things up. [62]He turned us all in to the karate instructor who kicked all three of us out of the class. This really pissed me off, because I loved the class, and had these boys just left me alone, none of this would've happened. [63]I knew, even back then, that if I had a knife of my own, I would've attempted to use it on both of them. And this is how I began to understand who I am and the quiet rage within. [64]I just wanted to be kind and experience kindness from others in return. [65]I didn't want attention. [66]If people can't be kind, I'd appreciate being left alone. [67]I never wanted to be some monster.

Beast Mode:

[68]I love how he says he "put me away", like I'm this little thing you can take out of your pocket when you need me. [69]Go-go Gadget Beast Mode! [70]Not you, Pikachu, because I choose you, Beast! [71]I'd rip their fucking face meat off their skulls if I got to run the show. [72]Did I forget to mention the sheer joy of what hearing their screams would feel like? [73]Save the eyes for last, I want them to see me maniacally laughing while I stare into their scared dead soulless eyes. [74]Cheerio! [75]Back into the pocket I go!

5. Volcano Man

[1]Over the years I would come to know this darker side of me real well. [2]Every new bully pushed me further and further, and I had to work harder and harder on my ability to control myself, because I did know what I was capable of. [3]This is when I started to truly examine myself. [4]Was I evil? [5]I feel like when I'm left alone, I am good. But when others picked on me, I just couldn't seem to let it go without diving into my imagination on how to pull them apart, metaphorically, physically, in every way. [6]I began to do what I would later come to understand as my own shadow work. [7]I will speak about that later, but I want to point out that this was about the time when I started doing this introspective work within myself. [8]I don't want to be the bad guy, and shadow work helps a lot to keep me from leaning completely into my beast mode. [9]Shadow work has allowed me to find ways I can use my beast to overcome any fears, or to even energize me, in order to get things done. [10]This book is an example of a partnership with my beast. [11]The whole book is a balancing act.

[12]You may notice some areas of my book where I chose to let my beast run a little more freely. [14]Me writing this book has been a very therapeutic experience. [15]I let my beast do a lot of talking, but in the end, I chose to remove a good portion of it because that is my neurotic and psychopathic side. [16]I don't want to give the impression I believe this beast is separate from me. [17]Indeed, it is not. [18]The beast is all me, don't get it twisted. [19]And as long as things are peaceful the beast stays asleep. [20]I prefer it this way. [21]But for the purpose of this book, I've chosen to share my beast with you, the reader. [22]I believe we all have a dark side. [23]This isn't the kind of thing people openly share. [24]It's a good thing I'm

not like most people. [25]Also, this makes the book a fun study of the psyche, and a topic for healthy debate.

[26]So, the first time I let the beast out was the bubble gum incident. [27]The second and penultimate time I blew my top occurred a couple years later. [28]I would have to do everything in my power to try and not end up being the bad guy again. [29]One time, when I was 13 years old and in the 8th grade, I did become the bad guy, and it scared the people around me, (not just the bully). [30]I was outside of the classroom making my way into it for my next class. The teacher had not yet arrived to the classroom. [31]My bully waited for me and saw I was on approach to the classroom and decided to pull the door shut. The door had a glass portion where he stood sadistically laughing at me and my struggle trying to open the door. I stopped pulling the door and waited. [32]He stood there waiting and taunting for me to try to open it again. [33]I gave in, and to his pleasure, I failed to open it. [34]The bully was bigger and stronger than me, like the majority of them were. [35]I lost control of myself, and my beast took over.

[36]In a blind rage I ran at the door and started kicking it repeatedly with all my might. I made a lot of noise, and I did not intend on giving up. [37]I locked eyes with my bully. [38]All I could think about was choking the life out of him and I conveyed that with my stare. [39]He was no longer a human being to me. [40]He was something that I needed to destroy. [41]After a few kicks, the bully backed away. [42]I burst into the classroom to pursue him. [43]My classmates were all staring at me. [44]They didn't care that I was bullied, what they cared about was that I wasn't falling in line like I used to. [45]At least these were my thoughts back then. [46]I have my reasoning for that. [47]For example, I was made to feel crazy for my outburst by some of my classmates, and those were the ones I turned my attention to.

[48]I was so angry with myself for losing control that I cried while in the act. [49]So, there I was, speaking no words and making no sounds, but with tears and rage-filled eyes ferociously kicking over desks and throwing them everywhere, including at random classmates who disapproved of my behavior, while the other students abandoned their seats and were backing away from me. All this while the bully was in utter shock. [50]I was angry at my bully and equally as angry with those who watched me be bullied, who did and said absolutely nothing. [51]Half of

the other students were entertained by me being bullied, but they weren't so entertained when I turned my anger towards all of them. [52]Others risked trying to calm me down while others were picking up the desks and repositioning them so as not to cause the teacher concern once he would arrive to class, which was any moment. [53]Like I said, this was the second and last time I let my beast completely take over, though I will never forget the look in all of their eyes.

[54]I saw in them a fear of me, and it was justified, and I liked it. [55]I wanted to tear my bully apart, as I had done so many times in my dark revenge fantasies from his previous bullying. [56]When the teacher approached the classroom, everyone scrambled to put the desks back in place. The bully scrambled to his desk. And I was left standing with no outlet for my rage. [57]One of the students even put my own desk in place as it was one of the ones I kicked over or threw. [58]I gave my bully a long stare before I chose to sit down at the moment the teacher opened the door. [59]The classroom was completely silent. [60]I then had to spend the rest of the class calming myself while reflecting on my outburst.

[61]I was never bullied at that school again. [62]But it was one of many schools, all of them with their own bullies, and no bully network to warn them that I'd be attending their school next. [63]But revisiting that day, there was another good thing that came out of it. [64]One of my classmates liked the display of rage that they witnessed. Maybe he saw a piece of himself in me. Maybe he had been bullied before too, but either way, I had his respect. [65]We became friends. [66]He was a fan of the Wolverine comic books. I wasn't into comics that much, though I certainly appreciated the few that I had. I was slightly familiar with Wolverine at that time. [67]The Wolverine is a mutant man who has nearly indestructible claws and a beast who I felt was very similar to mine. [68]He had been broken in order to install a nearly indestructible skeleton. [69]This was a man who knew pain and suffering but also the power that came from it. [70]He could also heal all wounds in a short time. [71]He was dangerous, with his retractable long and sharp hand blades always at the ready, but fought on the side of good most of the time. [72]I bring up Wolverine because I identified with the character just like my friend did. [73]For me, the Wolverine was a kindred spirit to my beast, an accurate portrayal of what I felt capable of. [74]I would much later in life have the pleasure of

watching the movie Logan and I would finally get to experience Wolverine the way I would fantasize about slaughtering my bullies, in all its gore.

[75]Before that event, I was punished by my teachers for standing up to bullies too. One time I was paddled, which is the form of punishment this one particular school embraced. The gym teacher would have the honor of dealing the blows. [76]No one cared who started things. [77]If you fought, you were a willing participant and subject to equal punishment. [78]I hated being punished for standing up for myself. [79]I was hoping to face that bully while being paddled. [80]I wanted to stare him in his eyes while being punished for standing up to him. I wanted him to see that I was not afraid of doing this every day until the school year ended if need be. I was not in a position to face myself towards him, so I let it be. [81]The pain of the three insane welts on my ass was symbolic of what was to be my destiny. [82]Those who stand up for themselves are prime targets for further punishment. [83]Being pushed to my limits would also be a common theme in my life. [84]My ability to control myself would be my saving grace every time.

[85]All throughout my school years these bullies were picking on me in front of my peers as witnesses. [86]I was never bullied in private. [87]The bullies never messed with me when there were no witnesses to fuel their ego with. [88]When my peers did witness me being bullied, some stayed quiet. [89]Maybe they were scared themselves or thankful that they were not the target. [90]Some of my peers were entertained and laughed at the bully devaluing me. [91]Like I said before, I know evil. [92]It's why when I see school shootings, I take a moment and wonder if what I witness in the news is just the tip of the iceberg. I felt like these school shooters were maybe just people like me who let their beast take over completely. [93]Are these killers the byproduct of reactive abuse like me or were they already evil before they committed the act? [94]The fact that I even question that, knowing my own beast very well, makes me believe it's entirely possible that many are the result of reactive abuse. [95]I'm not saying that all school shooters were themselves a victim first, but I am saying that it could simply be a matter of evil winning a battle against good in a single person and dealing a blow to the heavens in doing so.

[96]I understand what it feels like to not just feel unseen, but to be tormented by a bully, and for my suffering to become comedic entertainment to the bully and his enablers, and to see how unwilling witnesses are to involve themselves. [97]It's a good thing the world isn't truly like this.

Beast Mode:

[98]*Yes, that was sarcasm.*

6. Take Your Black Belt and Shovel It

[1]In all my fights I only struck them a few times (at the most) before I decided to end the fight. [2]I walked away when I made my point. [3]No bully ever pursued me in a fight a second time. [4]Maybe they could tell that I was no stranger to confrontation and not just protecting myself, but delivering pain and shame as a consequence for them choosing to pick on me.

[5]This one bully in my senior year of high school chose to shoulder bump me one day in between class when everyone was in the locker-filled hallway. [6]Yes, the same shoulder bump you see in the movies where one person purposefully, under the guise of being an accident, whips their shoulder into the other person's torso or shoulder with good force. [7]This was the first time the bully made contact with me. [8]I stopped and turned to stare at him. [9]As with all my bullies, they love to see the look on your face after they bully you. [10]They do this because they need to see your reaction to their abuse because it fuels them. [11]And so, I stood there waiting for the moment to come. [12]I wanted him to turn around and see something he would not be expecting. [14]I let my backpack fall to the floor and I just stood there with student foot traffic moving on each side of me.

[15]The bully, who I heard was a triple black belt in some martial art, looked back to see me. [16]He saw my face and my look of disapproval, maybe he even noticed my bag on the floor which I meant as a symbol of challenge. [17]I guess he thought to himself, "I know this bitch ain't looking at me like that." [18]He speed-walked toward me against the flow of students and laid hands on me pushing me up against a locker several feet back. I felt my back hit the locker while he maintained his grip on

my shoulders. [19]I snapped as if I was channeling a bolt of lightning. [20]The audacity of this young man to bully me and then get physical when he saw me challenging him with my eyes. [21]I don't think I ever hit anyone so hard in my life. I don't think he thought me capable, as my right hook making contact with his cheekbone spun his head around with a loud smack. [22]It felt just like how it looks in the cartoons.

[23]I waited for him to turn his head back around to look at me, while holding my beast back. [24]The next move would be his. I didn't care how many degrees of black belts this fucker had. [25]I didn't care if this ended in me being beaten to a pulp in front of the whole school. [26]The only thing I cared about was ending the bullying by any means possible. [27]I awaited authorization to advance. [28]I stared with a controlled rage in my eyes. [29]With the bully's head still turned completely to his right for what felt like a couple seconds, he turned it slowly to face me again. His hands still on my shoulders, but just lightly. [30]There was a silence while we stared at each other. My right hook was loaded and ready. [31]I did not notice that all the students had stopped to witness us. [32]I was ready to unleash depending on the next word or action. The bully, with a face red with embarrassment and with an even more red cheek said only this, "Man, I need to get to class." He released me and backed away a couple steps and then left for his class. [33]His friends who had all been walking with him up to the point of the fight witnessed everything. [34]This was the last thing he ever said to me. [35]He even avoided eye contact with me in the hallways whenever we passed each other. [36]It was as if I knocked the bully out of his body with that blow to the face.

Beast Mode:

[37]I wish I could relive delivering that right hook. [38]I'd put that moment on repeat for a while. [39]Wouldn't it be cool if I wasn't the only one reliving that moment on repeat? [40]LMAO

7. The End of an Era

[1]After defeating that black-belted bully, I was more confident in myself. My last bully in high school lasted one period of class. [2]I noticed that if I didn't call out the bully in front of his friends, like what happened when I challenged my last bully, he'd be less likely to cause me trouble. [3]So,

what did I do? [4]I waited until class was over. I made sure I was the first one out, and I waited for the bully to exit. [5]I politely approached him with a positive and confident look on my face as he exited the class. [6]I smiled a genuine smile and said [7]"Hey, let me talk to you a second." [8]He looked around to see who was witnessing our interaction. [9]I told him that I didn't appreciate his treatment of me, and that the next time he messed with me would be the last time and that he could interpret that however he wished. [10]I waited for a verbal confirmation that we understood each other before I ended the conversation. [11]There was no stopping me after that.

[12]All bullies are absolute cowards when they are cornered and alone by the one person they previously enjoyed toying with. [14]No one to witness me challenging them means no one to prove themselves to but themselves. [15]Apparently, they aren't enough to validate themselves. [16]I am the kind of guy who may not say something right away to the person who is taking pleasure in messing with me, especially if they have backup, but the moment they walk alone into a bathroom, elevator, or stairwell, I'll be there with a smile on my face to have a conversation about accountability. [17]I'm not afraid of losing if it comes to blows.

[18]Darkness used to scare me as a child, but once I acknowledged the darkness inside me, I became unafraid and found being surrounded by it a very comfortable feeling. [19]In the darkness I feel calm. [20]I can't tell where I begin or end. [21]I can feel as small as a decimal point, and as large as the darkness itself. [22]There was nothing more to fear than the version of me I knew I was entirely capable of becoming. [23]And as long as I am in control of myself, there is nothing I have to fear.

[24]As a kid, I couldn't wait to grow up and leave the school bullies behind. [25]I knew my element was time. [26]Because in time, and with effort, I would sculpt myself how I wished. [27]I had plans. [28]Even though I had to make several alterations along the way, and my choices at times led me astray, I am who I am now because of it. [29]I have a healthy self-love and respect for every struggle I endured and a healthy pride in overcoming all of it because I believe my overcoming many of my life's struggles were done through my faith. [30]I've always believed in God. [31]And I'll never know what would've become of me had I not been a believer, but it wouldn't have been good I assure you. [32]It's a struggle to remain

good-natured when so many people wish to take that away from me or take advantage of it so they can use and abuse me.

[33]Gabor Matè, a physician and author who has a background in child development and trauma, explains in his lecture on the denial of our own emotional needs and its connection to chronic illness that healthy anger is necessary for us to communicate our boundaries to others who have crossed them. [34]With healthy anger as the result of crossed boundaries, I can't help but wonder if confronting my bullies was healthy anger. [35]It was effective in stopping the bullying. [36]Because of that, maybe I prolonged my life and reduced my chances of chronic illness. [37]I mean, so far so good.

[38]I'm going to channel my beast on this one, so be warned. [39]This isn't Beast Mode, but it might as well be. [40]By the time I stood up to most of my bullies, I had already killed and tortured them in so many different sadistic and creative ways countless times in my head. [41]I did this to the point where I believed that I was more evil than I perceived them to be. [42]If you've ever seen any of the Saw movies, then you have an idea of what I know I'm capable of. [43]To them, bullying me was about making them look superior. [44]But for me, I didn't care about superiority or having followers or fans. [45]I wanted to be the one who spilled their lifeblood from their necks in front of those who they were trying to impress. [46]I wanted to beat them into submission with their own disembodied limbs, and then when they would cry for mercy, make an example out of them while I would tear them apart with my bare hands. [47]I wanted to be covered in their entrails and stare into the souls of those who dared to contemplate following in their footsteps. [48]And so there you have it. [49]I tried to find information online about psychopaths with empathy and I found nothing. [50]The closest thing to that is this thing called a dark empath, but that's not me either. [51]Is Deadpool his own archetype?

[52]Before I close out on the Monster at the Beginning of This Book, I want to make something clear. [53]When I finally confronted these people, I only made contact with their body usually just once before I gave them the option to end the fight, or choose to walk away myself. [54]I stopped myself by controlling my anger. [55]My concern was if I were to beat them up real bad, that I would instead create an enemy, when what I wanted

was to do the bare minimum damage in order to simply be left alone by these kinds of people.

[56]My greater concern was what I would do to the bully if they managed to defeat me. [57]I don't see myself as the kind of person to slink away after defeat from an abuser. [58]I will take my time after. [59]I'll be back, and I'll be stronger, and I'll have done my homework on my enemy. [60]I won't be back looking for victory. [61]I'll be back looking to completely shatter my enemy as if they were pottery. [62]My goal is not to engage, but if I must fight, I learned that it's in my own best interest, and my enemy's, if I win the first time. [63]I fight like there is no next time. [64]I learned to strike hard. [65]I used to wait for my opponent to throw the first punch out of honor or respect. [66]I learned to strike first. [67]I used to feel sorry for whoever would push me over the edge in this life. [68]I learned that stupid people like to play stupid games and win stupid prizes. [69]Well, paint me blue and call me Jokey Smurf.

[70]Like I said, I know evil. And it's a good thing that I did from a young age, because it wouldn't be long until I found a new kind of evil to contend with, a more sinister and less obvious format than what even I was accustomed to experiencing… but still nothing compared to my beast. [71]I used to love the phrase [72]"What doesn't kill me makes me stronger", but I found a new one recently - [73]"What doesn't kill me better start running". [74]Once I home in on my enemy, I don't end my pursuit. [75]Any delays I incur, I just capitalize on the extra time to strategize, and I have learned that patience truly is indeed a virtue. [76]After all, time is part of the formula for many of life's equations. [77]It's best I make friends with it.

Beast Mode:

[78]Better start running mother fuckers! [79]And with that, we close on our first chapter. [80]Happy dance time!

8. Hide 'N Sneak

[1]The toy-making company Worlds of Wonder (WOW) was the beez neez in the 80's. [2]They made so many cool electronic toys. [3]In 1989 they released a toy that added a fresh layer to the oldest game in the world.

[4]How do I know it was the first game played? [5]It's mentioned in the Bible. [6]The game was called Hide n Sneak. [7]I had the pleasure of owning it and spent countless hours playing it with others. The game is a take on Hide and Seek. [8]So, how does the game of Hide and Seek change with this product? [9]The seeker has a wand that leads them to the hiders. [10]The hiders wear a radio frequency sensor that sends their signal to the seeker. [11]If there are two hiders, then things get interesting. [12]As the hiders relocate themselves to avoid the seeker, their moving signals can throw the seeker off the track a little, buying the hider more time.

[14]The wand reminded me of the Psychokinetic Energy (PKE) meter from Ghostbusters, and I was a huge fan of all things Ghostbusters, even the original cartoon with the ape. [15]As a hider, I listened for the beeping of the wand to let me know where in the vicinity the seeker was. [16]I used that beeping to let me know when it was safe to relocate. [17]If I could make my way back to the area I heard the beeping, I knew the seeker may be likely to dismiss the area they just searched.

[18]As a seeker, knowing that the beeping gave my position away, I would mute the sound. It was less effective at locating without the sound on, but the lights still helped. [19]I knew that if my opponents heard me far away, or not at all, they would feel safe to relocate. [20]This is when I would be able to catch them. [21]I still had to be able to physically tag them through touch. [22]I learned how to be sneaky with my tools and how I played in order to win while following the rules. [23]I miss games like that, the ones that get a person outside and moving. [24]We didn't have to worry about exercise so much as kids in the 80's. [25]We exercised while we played no matter how pooped we were. [26]Those were the days.

Beast Mode:

[27]OK, that's it. He can put the next rando mini-story somewhere else. Next chapter, pronto! [28]Do it!

[29]#THATSWHATITHOUGHT [30]#DONTDOITMICHAEL [31]#IMEANIT

CHAPTER 2
MY FATHER'S SON

"Even the hard times are part of your life story. If you acknowledge them and move past them, they eventually add up to the experience that makes you wise."
— Miley Cyrus

Freak On a Leash
By Korn
-
Psycho in My Head
By Skillet
-
Pocketful of Sunshine (in the style of Killswitch Engage)
By Anthony Vincent

1. The Good

[1]My mother taught me patience and resilience, and maybe even an appreciation for music. [2]But my fire came from my father. [3]My temperament was something me and my dad had in common. [4]My dad, being an Ecuadorian immigrant born in 1930, meant I had a different upbringing than the typical American, whatever that is. [5]My dad had very little patience for children, even less for children who were horse-playing anywhere near him. And for his own children, there was even less patience. [6]I learned quickly to make decisions fast because any time I spent thinking about what flavor ice cream I wanted, I would already start wearing down on his nerves. [7]Sometimes my dad's accent was very difficult for me to understand. And the more impatient he was, the stronger his accent got. [8]The more impatient he would get, the less I would care about the flavor of the ice cream. [9]I'm using ice cream as an example, but of course, I remember this exact scenario.

[10]Both my parents were well organized, clean, neat, productive, and presented themselves very professionally. [11]If people ever ask what my parents did, I tell them they were in the fashion industry. They designed nice clothes. [12]My mom traveled the world as part of her job. I saw my first real-life limousine, mobile phone, and laptop because of her job. [14]I loved visiting my parents' jobs. I loved the wide-open floor and the design tables and all the cool weird rulers and tools they used. I got to see a 1980s computer they would use to build the attire components called patterns. [15]My parents designed the patterns, and I believe the title they had was Patternmaker.

[16]My mom was a soft-spoken person but when she put her lips to brass, she shook the house. [17]As a child, her voice and the sound of a trumpet were synonymous. [18]My sister and I followed suit with learning the trumpet and also the piano, though I can't play either well anymore. [19]The one thing that was more important than even love in our home was respect, and dad was not above using fear to instill it when needed, and sometimes even when it wasn't needed.

[20]People who don't understand empathy definitely understand fear. [21]That said, we did everything as a family. [22]My dad would take me into the garage with him to work on the car, or any other projects, and I

learned my way around a workbench because of that. By the time I was 12 I knew how to solder, splice wires, syphon liquid, and a whole bunch of other stuff that made things easier for me later in life to do on my own. [23]I'm not afraid to take something apart to try and fix it, but I'm far from the man that was my father who kept himself busy being productive around the house. [24]I enjoy getting my relaxation maybe a little too much, but when it comes time to grind to knock something off my to-do list, I can depend on myself to self-motivate and come through. I mean, look, I wrote this whole book. [25]I can get stuff done when I set my sights on it.

[26]My father served in the Ecuadorian navy as a sailor serving on a decommissioned U.S. Battleship. The U.S. became allies with Ecuador in 1948 which gave my father a very unique opportunity to come to the U.S. via the Panama Canal through to Mobile, Alabama. This is where he would train with U.S. Sailors on how to use the battleship's systems. [27]He befriended the U.S. sailors he would train with, and they would go out together and the two groups would share stories and cultures with the other. [28]My dad truly loved the United States, and what it stood for, freedom and the potential to achieve the American dream. My parents did achieve that dream. They owned a home, worked, and retired with enough to enjoy life while being careful with spending. [29]My parents were very humble and frugal people. [30]They raised two successful children together. My sister, just a couple years younger than I, and I have been doing our own thing since we were eighteen. [31]I would say we are successful.

[32]My dad was no fan of being unhealthy or feeling weak or useless. [33]We very rarely had any deep conversations about life while we were together. [34]My dad never opened the door to have real talks until well after I left the house after high school. [35]He did share stories of what it was like growing up sometimes. [36]But when we were doing housework, our talks were focused on the work. Sometimes we would celebrate a job well done by grabbing a burger at the nearest fast-food joint.

[37]I also learned from my dad by watching movies with him and noticing his reactions. [38]I picked up on how joyful he would be when we saw the bad guy get his due. I'm talking animated. This stoic mother fucker straight cheering, yo! THAT was my pops. [39]He was also good at

predicting what would happen. [40]I wasn't annoyed by it. [41]I wanted to see how accurate he was. [42]I would also start guessing where I believed things were going, to myself. [43]Dad was good at predicting the outcome of these movies. Eventually, I would grow into adulthood and become so good at it, that I could even sometimes finish the actor's lines verbatim. [44]As much as I loved being a couch potato, I loved how much my family traveled.

[45]I loved whenever we would visit Mobile, Alabama to see one of my dad's sailor friends. The Navy had a decommissioned battleship turned tourist site there in the city. I loved exploring it knowing that my dad sailed the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean with it. [46]I was fascinated with the ship and what it must've been like when fully loaded and manned, and with either rough seas or on a mission. [47]My dad would also go deep diving for pearls with his fellow sailors and friends using a diving bell. He could hold his breath for at least a couple minutes back then. He loved the water and loved to swim deep and dive high. [48]I faced a lot of my fears because of my dad. [49]He was an inspiration to me because my dad always seemed fearless, his own master of his own universe. [50]His friendships were few, but they seemed deep. [51]People had a lot of respect and love for my dad.

[52]Speaking of the fears I overcame, I used to have bad nightmares and one that was recurring. My dad taught me a trick on how to wake myself up. [53]I got pretty good at escaping many monsters this way, but eventually I started to experiment on my own. [54]If I could wake myself up from a nightmare, then there was no reason for me to stay afraid once I would encounter a monster. Eventually, I stopped running from them. They would run right up to me and there I would be, a seven or eight-year-old boy standing my ground looking these horrific creatures in their eyes before I would leave the nightmare. And further down the road, I would talk to the creatures who pursued me. [55]There was this one time when Freddy Krueger appeared in my nightmare pursuing me. I stopped running and he and I had a nice talk. [56]I told him that I had the power to destroy him and his entire world because he was only part of my imagination. I had his respect. I didn't have many nightmares after that. [57]I did have many dreams with nightmare elements, but I treated them as adventures. [58]I would be fighting demons on a hill of their corpses like

the Doom guy. [59]I could fly. [60]I had superpowers. [61]I didn't realize for years that what I was doing when performing my dad's trick was opening up the door to lucid dreaming. [62]One time when I was a young adult, I was able to have one lucid dream within another dream, as weird as that sounds.

[63]Lucid dreaming is how I got to know myself on a more intimate level. [64]I faced my fears alone and made my fantasies a reality. [65]I explored the boundaries of what I was able to dream up. [66]I experimented with what was possible in the dream world. [67]In case you are wondering what's possible, the answer is anything and everything. I enjoyed the conversations I would have, because I knew I was in a dream, and it was incredible to me that a conversation just flowed between me and the person I would interact with.

[68]Every now and then, I would have a dream where I was holding something important - like a gold coin or a one-hundred-dollar bill. If I were to wake up, I would notice my thumb and index finger pinched together. I would refuse to open my eyes because I did not want to see that I was in fact holding nothing. [69]The more awake I felt, the smaller the item I was pinching became. [70]I knew that if I were to look, I'd see nothing. [71]I knew because I had done it so many times before. [72]I knew that any object I gained from my dream would not make it out with me no matter how hard I wished. [73]I could only bring with me my memory of my experience in the dream.

[74]One time, when I was maybe eight years old, I was dreaming in the middle of a real-life tornado. My family was camping in Iowa and a tornado came through and blew our tent apart in the middle of the night. My dad woke me up and kept us all huddled together, and then led the family to safety when the coast was clear. [75]This was my dad. [76]I never saw fear in his eyes, not ever. [77]Every now and then, my dad would have his funny moments. He wasn't mister serious all the time. [78]Those were the best times for me. [79]And I was able to make those times happen during the later parts of the day using my humor.

[80]I was good at making the family laugh at the dinner table, and we had a lot of nice moments where we were all laughing at my jokes or impressions. My mom loved my impressions of my dad with his accent and my

dad would see the humor too. [81]After enough laughs at his expense, he would have me stop doing the impressions of him. [82]My mom's laughter would sometimes be out of control, and I enjoyed timing my jokes right when she was sipping a drink or about to swallow her food. There were a few times when she choked on her food a bit or spit out her drink in laughter. Those were the best times for me as a kid. We had family movie night on Sundays with popcorn and apples, sometimes we would make caramel popcorn. [83]Looking back, I had a lot to be thankful for. [84]And, what I became thankful for later in life became my saving grace.

[85]I always wanted my busy parents to take a serious interest in what I liked, and engage with me about it. My parents knew my interests and I think they did a good enough job of not devaluing my interests. And they were supportive of the kinds of interests that had more real-world application. [86]They were not supportive of video games, however Legos were supported because they promoted creativity. [87]Due to my dad knowing of my fascination with Legos, he bought me a book on architecture when I was 11 for inspiration. [88]I thought that I would become an architect as an adult as well because I loved creating so many different kinds of buildings with my Legos, though they were usually filled with secrets and traps.

[89]One thing that has always been important to me was my independence. My parents gave me that independence. [90]Even when I was a toddler I wanted to push my own stroller. My parents would need to stabilize the stroller as I was pushing it, otherwise I'd push too fast and fall down. My parents would joke with me that when I was doing that, I'd check on them to see if they were secretly helping me. I'd get angry if I caught them touching the stroller handles, so they got good at quickly letting go for a moment when I would turn my head. [91]I always felt that my parents knew me.

[92]Speaking of independence, I got my first job at 15 and have not stopped working or building my skills since. I've lived independently as soon as I turned 18. [93]My independence, and pursuit of it, made me comfortable with leaving bad situations earlier rather than later. [94]I saw how much my dad respected himself and others and I adopted that too. [95]It was that self-respect that carried me through, and out of, what would become the darkest times of my life.

[96]Dad taught me about magic tricks because I was fascinated with magicians. He taught me how all their magic was performed. Sometimes he would do the magic trick himself to see if I could figure it out on my own. [97]Sometimes I was able to. [98]He was so proud when I would figure them out. [99]Even though it took the magic out of magic tricks, I learned a new skill, the art of deception. [100]I could make the unseen seen, and the seen unseen. [101]Misdirection is a tool of every magician. [102]We use it in debates and politics. [103]We use it in war.

[104]But going back to the book my dad got me on architecture, I loved it. [105]It gave me ideas of what was possible in the real world. The kinds of things I built would need to abide by so many different factors in order to exist in the real world. [106]That took some of the magic from my creativity because I always pictured my creations as one day being real. [107]The boundaries of reality on my ability to create would pose challenges, though never a deterrent. [108]I love a challenge that involves creating from nothing. [109]The imagination will always be the final frontier. [110]Every space battle ever fought, every superhero and supervillain, all existed in one person's imagination before their creator brought them out into our shared reality.

[111]Looking back, I appreciate my parents' perspective. [112]I didn't own a video game system until I was 14, though we did have an old used PC that could run games like Burger Time, Tetris, and Montezuma's Revenge. This was back when floppy disks were actually floppy. [113]My parents were good at handing down hard skills, financial management, structure, self-discipline, and accountability. [114]What I had to learn for myself were softer skills that are critical for advancement in life and social interaction, like how to more accurately discern good from evil, how to emotionally regulate myself, and how to hold space for myself to self-soothe. [115]Discernment is something I have constantly been upgrading on my own and with life experience.

2. The Bad

[1]I wanted to make it clear upfront that I appreciate the father I received. [2]I learned many lessons from him, some of which were behaviors I did not want to mimic. [3]And now, after giving you the good, I now present

the bad followed by the ugly. This is what kept me from having a more intimate relationship with my father. [4]His short temper, quick to anger, and unwillingness to take the time to explain things to me with some level of sensitivity and patience played a major role. [5]Love went out the door when my dad was upset, or at least that's what I felt as a child. [6]My dad would have this look of rage in his eyes as if what I did to upset him was done on purpose and aimed at him personally. [7]It was not. [8]I would never invite that version of my father intentionally.

[9]At around 8 years of age, my dad told me to clean my room one day. I did have a habit of leaving toys and books out. This still happens and it's something I'm always trying to be aware of so I can be better at neatness. [10]So, when I was young, I had a habit of getting sidetracked easily, without much awareness of the concept of time once my attention focused on something fun. [11]I'd be putting away my toys as instructed, and before I knew it, I would be in the middle of another adventure with my figurines that would eventually end abruptly with my father noticing how little, if anything at all, that I accomplished after receiving his direction.

[12]This would be about an hour or so after his instruction, I imagine. [14]Then the punishment would come, and it would be severe. [15]It would be instant. [16]He'd check on me and there I'd be playing with my toys, with my room still in disarray. [17]He would engage me, not with his belt, but with his fists, feet, and any object that was within reach. Sometimes I would get lucky and only get one hit. Other times, I got it all and multiple times. [18]And if I tried to avoid it, it would make my father angrier and it would just result in repeated punches and kicks. He had a bad back, which he later received surgical correction for, so if I was on the floor he would resort to kicking because I guess it was easier for him to do. [19]Yes, this too was also my father. [20]I know I wasn't being disobedient, but he would beat me as if I were. [21]It wasn't a daily occurrence, but it happened on nearly at least once every few months on average until I was about 12. [22]After that, it happened a fistful of times until I hit the age of 15.

Beast Mode:

[23]*Yup, he just made a pun on his own physical abuse. That's my Michael.*

3. The Ugly

[1]This man, my father, had serious demons I don't think he ever made peace with. [2]I guess that's why I became his outlet. [3]And as he transferred his demons to me, they became mine. [4]My darkness was born in part of my father's inability to discipline me with love and patience, and was continually fostered by my many bullies over the years. [5]My dad used fear as a tool for discipline, and it drove me to hate him more than any other human being. [6]The hate has been gone since my late teens, but to this day, out of all the people who have earned the title of "someone Michael once hated" he still holds the record. [7]Because I am now completely secure in myself and my boundaries, no one will ever take that record from him. [8]He is stuck with it for all eternity.

[9]There were times when my dad beat me when I wanted to, instead of letting it happen, stand up and just look him in the eyes with disapproval. [10]I never did this because I valued my life. [11]I don't know if my dad was holding back the amount of force he'd use due to my size, and probably the fact that I was someone he loved and was responsible for. If he was holding back, that would cease to be the case if I were to do anything that looked remotely like defiance. [12]Instead, he would leave me silent and scared, because if I cried out, he'd punish me for it. [14]I'd be left alone and after the tears were gone, I would go into my dark fantasy world after it was over. [15]Yes, before I fantasized about torturing my bullies, I would fantasize about torturing my father.

[16]At first my fantasies were all based on my suicide. To immortalize my absence, felt by my father forever, in order to inflict my pain upon him daily until his last breath. [17]With me gone, so would all the opportunities to fix things. [18]I'd be a daily reminder of his failure as a father. My parents might end up splitting up because I would make sure they knew why I was no longer among the living. My dad would live a long life of suffering. [19]There is such a thing as "too late to apologize". [20]I thought to myself, why kill myself when there has got to be a better way to exact my revenge?

[21]Eventually, I also fantasized about turning my dad over to the police, with the purpose being to change how he disciplined me. [22]My fear in doing so was that instead of him not beating me, it would instead turn

into him neglecting me for my betrayal. [23]Eventually, my fantasies about hurting my father became so dark and twisted that I seriously almost ended my life as a single act of hurting him. [24]I wanted him to see how much I was hurting because of the way he treated me in those moments. [25]He never apologized, and I would fantasize about him apologizing endlessly at my tombstone begging God for forgiveness knowing deep in his heart that I left this world because of him. [26]I would take pleasure in imagining the weight of his suffering at my hand, but the fantasy had a flaw. [27]If I were to be dead, then I wouldn't get to see him in that pathetic state, and it was something I longed to see.

[28]The last fantasies I would have of my father would involve me leaning over him on his deathbed whispering in his ear with a smile letting him know how much I hated him. I wanted to be the last thing my father saw through the blur of his own tears of shame. [29]These fantasies persisted with such intensity for more than a week or so after a beating and would become more seldom until the next beating. [30]I stayed committed to that last fantasy until the age of 19. If my father were to pass away by then, I think I would've gone through with it. [31]I never acted on my fantasies about hurting my dad or anyone else for that matter, but instead, I had no desire to speak or spend time with him unless he needed me for errands. [32]I wasn't disrespectful or avoidant, I just chose not to be close to him. [33]He either didn't mind or was completely unaware. [34]We'd have our good moments interspersed with the bad. I had to deal with both loving, as well as hating, my dad. And I had good reason for both.

[35]One thing worth mentioning about my dad when he was in his rage, he had this look in his eyes that could pierce the soul and drive serious fear in me. [36]The look was something like a pissed-off lion, as if someone was teasing it while it was behind bars. [37]When he looked at me like this, I was no longer a human, but an object of his hatred and focus in that moment. [38]This is what it felt like. [39]Sometimes, especially if my mother was present, I would only get the look that would cause me to completely freeze and brace myself. [40]One wrong look, any change of expression to my face at all, any relaxation in my posture or position, could be the thing that could set him off. [41]I did master this stare my dad did. [42]I don't know if he ever used the look intentionally or if it was a pure emotional reaction, but I was deliberate in using it while in rage. I

would do this when engaging my bullies. [43]If there's a psychopath hidden deep inside me, it comes out through my eyes in these moments. [44]Add a genuine smile to this stare and I have found it to be extremely unnerving.

[45]There's a fun side to that stare too sometimes. With a look, I've knocked the air out of strangers' screaming brat kids in passing and locked them up stiff. In one look, these brats silence themselves and stay silent. [46]Even after I look away they don't scream again, because they know why I did it. [47]You can do a decent amount of communication with just the eyes, and I learned from my father how to speak with them and my silence. [48]And those rare times when I holler in anger, my voice sounds just like his. [49]It is an instant reminder of how, even though I feel pretty solid about my level of self-control, my yell is a warning to me just as much as a warning to who I'm yelling at.

[50]All throughout my childhood I spent a lot of time drawing. I had fun drawing all kinds of things. [51]I particularly took a liking to monsters and blood. [52]I drew all kinds of hideous monsters, all worthy of their own Stephen King book. [53]I ended up with a child therapist in part because my dark drawings disturbed my parents, and I believed it helped. [54]The issue communicated to my mother by my therapist was that my dad's treatment of me had a lot to do with my behavior. [55]Guess who in my family thought that therapy was a waste of time and money? [56]It was also my dad. [57]My mom received validation of her concerns about how my dad treated me. [58]We prayed for change in him. [59]At a certain age I stopped praying to God about changing my dad, or anyone else ever again. [60]If we have free will, I would think, why am I trying to pray to take my father's free will to beat me away from him? [61]I started praying for things like strength instead. I wanted to be hardened. [62]The hate towards my dad was such a huge burden I carried.

[63]Around the age of 16, I was on my way to a real dark place. [64]I was body carving, self-inflicting pain, in order to feel alive. [65]I felt so dark. [66]I would make sure that the biggest source of pain in my life wouldn't be anyone else but me. [67]What I could do to my outsides made me feel like my insides weren't suffering so much. [68]I hid all my cuts. [69]I pushed needles through my skin, completely piercing my flesh. [70]I didn't want the fear of pain, so I cut and stabbed the fear out of me. [71]All those

movies where you see the character applying their own suture, I'm that guy who can do that in silence. If I can do it without wincing, all the better. I would certainly attempt to do it with a straight face.

[72]Something was going on with me. [73]I don't know if it was puberty, all the bullying, or the peer pressures of teenage life in high school. [74]My parents obviously took notice that I was going through some changes and held a mini-intervention for me. It was about my recent change in behavior. [75]As bad as they saw things, they didn't know how bad it truly was. [76]My dad said he saw "the devil" in me with tears in his eyes. [77]It shook me to my core, as I knew it to be true. [78]I don't know how to explain it. [79]It was as if my beast was taking me over, but this darkness was different than my beast's darkness. [80]I wanted to burn the world to a cinder, and I with it. It felt like I was allowing myself to become corrupted. [81]I never saw my dad cry before that day. [82]For all those years I wished to make him cry in suffering, here he was finally doing it out of desperation and love for me. [83]It broke my heart, or at least the hardened part. [84]After that, I tried to do better, and I did so slowly but surely over time. [85]Seeing my dad's sincere concern for me, and him utilizing this tender and thoughtful approach, worked wonders in me.

4. Transformer

[1]As a child, I sure loved all my 80's cartoons from that time. [2]The toys based on those cartoons were so much fun, and some of them were next-level. [3]For the first time in toy history, there were toys that could change into other toys. [4]Transformers was a cartoon about robots that were alive. [5]They could transform into vehicles and blend into the world around them. [6]In their robot form, they were built like humans. [7]In vehicle form, they had the speed and maneuverability of that form. [8]They could transform at will.

[9]The protagonists were called the Autobots, they transformed to survive. [10]The antagonists were called the Decepticons, they transformed to deceive and attack once close. [11]What would happen if an Autobot learned how to be a Decepticon as a sleeper agent within the Deception ranks? [12]Oh, how the turntables.

5. Play Therapy

[1]When I played with my toys as a kid, the good guys outsmarted and tortured the bad guys in the end. [2]I put all my demons into those toys and then I fucked those toys up…playfully, of course. [3]I played out full stories of the underdog good guy exacting his revenge on the bad guy.

[4]Now, anytime I heard a family member approaching, I would tone my play way down. [5]I knew how I was playing was a little demented. [6]I wasn't stupid. [7]I knew I'd need to hide that. [8]I was always so engaged, that I wouldn't know if my play dialogue was in my head or out loud. [9]As an adult now, if I overheard a child saying out loud that play dialogue between characters that I was using as a child, I would be made uneasy. [10]I can admit that. [11]I would have legitimate concerns for that child.

[12]I wonder if I truly was casting out my own demons onto those poor toys of mine. [14]Was I actually torturing my demons as I was torturing all the bad guys? [15]In the spiritual world, I must be One Bad Mother…

Beast Mode:

[16]*Shut yo mouth!*

[17]*#OBMF* [18]*#IMJUSTTALKINGABOUTMICHAEL*
[19]*#GIVINGDEMONSTHESHAFTSINCE1979*

[20]I used to daydream about what being in heaven or hell would feel like. [21]For heaven I knew it would be better than whatever I could imagine. [22]I accepted the challenge. [23]I would imagine a ton of insanely cool stuff to do. [24]If Jesus loves the little children of the world, then he must appreciate that children love to play. [25]I imagine that we work/create and play in Heaven too.

[26]I could design hell any way I wished. [27]When being the architect of hell, I would truly let my imagination run wild. I was allowed to hate evil, after all. It comes with the territory of being a Christian. [28]I put my demons to work designing the most layered and nightmarish torture chambers. [29]I had all kinds of twisted ideas, and this part of me loved knowing that my wildest imagination was just a drop in the endless sea

that is God's. I think that's why I was able to give my anger to God. [30]Vengeance is the Lord's. [31]None can do it better than Him. [32]As much as I hate evil, my hate does not compare to God's hate of evil. My level of creativity in delivering consequence does not compare to God's.

Beast Mode:

[33]Ya'll are wondering about those torture chambers ideas, I take it. [34]Sometimes it's best to speak less. [35]I'll say this - Black Mirror has nothing on us.

[36]#BLACKMIRROR [37]#NETFLIXANDKILL [38]#WOULDA-COULDASHOULDA [39]#TOOLATEBABYNOW

6. All Together Now

[1]Looking back, I know that my dad's patience and temper was the only real problem in our relationship. Unfortunately, the side effect is that my relationship with him suffered because of it, and cannot compare to the relationship between my sons and me. [2]And so, his treatment of me took the blessings of that kind of closeness away from us both, but there are some positives I'm very thankful for. [3]I hate walking on eggshells to keep someone from getting upset and me becoming the targeted recipient of their rage. [4]I would take the first opportunity to leave the company of anyone like that. [5]Also, I learned how to work empathy into whatever discipline routine I would create for my own children. [6]I wanted to explain the "why" behind punishments and tasks, and chores too for that matter. [7]I would want discipline to be a learning experience and a commitment to making small changes over time that could show improvement and not be something that is fear-based.

[8]My dad had many close brushes with death since his 60s, which were since my late teens. He had heart attacks, multiple heart surgeries, and battled some other stuff. Each time he ended up in the emergency room, I would be reminded of what my inner child once wished for. [9]Death is something my dad was stellar at preparing the family for. [10]He was no fan of feeling miserable and there were times he voiced that he would rather be dead to stop his suffering. [11]I believed him. [12]And he raised his children to be independent. He didn't keep me isolated, didn't devalue my interests, didn't criticize my thoughts or feelings, and supported me

in spending my downtime how I pleased. I was free to have as many interests as I wanted. He didn't get in between me and my friends or girlfriends. And he let me have my first beer when I was age 15, out of the country celebrating with our family in Ecuador. [14]He treated me with respect and let me make my own choices, even though he knew better than I did about the decisions I made. He let me figure things out on my own. These are things I've learned to be grateful for after hearing stories about some other people's fathers. [15]You know, the kinds of fathers that are self-centered and abandon their families because of it. [16]That would've been worse. [17]I'd take a father that is short-tempered and prone to hitting, kicking, and throwing things, over one that is a narcissist. [18]I'm serious. [19]The occasional discipline turned physical abuse session is desirable when compared to that.

7. Sailor or Soldier

[1]One passion I had since my teens was to be a great father. I wanted the chance to be better than him. [2]I wanted to play with my kids and teach them about life while playing, just like the 1980s children's cartoons that would incorporate an important lesson into every episode. [3]I wanted to prove to myself that I could be a better version of my dad. [4]I wanted to be the father I always wanted to have. So, I waited patiently for that day to come, but a family like the one I grew up in, with a few tweaks, was what I would be looking for. [5]But first things first. [6]I had dreams of going to college to become a writer back then, as my dream since childhood was to write a badass book that would blow people's minds. [7]I didn't know what it would be about, but I figured after writing enough books, I'd eventually be ready to write it. [8]I spent too much time in high school daydreaming, with grades to show for it, that a scholarship was not realistic. If I wanted to go to college, I would need to get a job and apply for student loans.

[9]I grew up loving that my dad was a sailor and how his choice to become one played such a major role in his life. [10]I had this prestigious view of the military life, filled with duty, honor, order, and respect. [11]I always had an interest in the armed forces in general and knew I would be in uniform after high school. [12]I grew up visiting decommissioned battle-

ships and submarines. [14]I was fascinated by these massive self-sustaining war vessels, the efficiency of a well-trained crew, and the devastation just one of these vessels brings into a battle. [15]Unfortunately, there was one thing I didn't like about the Navy. I am almost guaranteed to never look into the eyes of my enemy. [16]I desired a closeness that only ground battle could provide me. [17]I desired some autonomy as a foot soldier over none as a sailor.

[18]I chose to join the Army. I scored high enough on the placement test to have any profession. [19]I chose infantry because I wanted the heat of battle. I wanted the valor that could only be achieved by going to war for my country. [20]I truly wanted to be seriously challenged, and the physical was always a challenge for me. And there was a little more behind me joining the infantry. [21]A part of me wanted the permission and expectation to take life, to find someone deemed an enemy combatant, so I would have the ability to make them the scapegoat of all my previous suffering and then sacrifice them. [22]Yes, my beast wanted battle just as badly as I did, and for different reasons. [23]And I fantasized about taking life so many times from those who wronged me that I knew I had it in me to go through with it as part of the job. [24]I had just turned 17 when I expressed to my father that I wanted to join the Army, and that I would need his approval and signature due to me being a minor. [25]He was proud that I made the decision and supported it, and signed the paperwork for me to join. [26]All that was left was to finish my last year of high school. I joined my high school's Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) program for my senior year, and I enjoyed being a part of it. Everyone in my class knew I already signed the dotted line. [27]I was going to go from being Michael Arguello to being just a serial number, a cog in the machine, and I was excited for it.

8. Becoming an Opposing Force

[1]In 1997, I finally graduated high school and was ready to make my way in the world. My first stop in my journey of young adulthood was Army basic training for infantrymen only at Ft. Benning in Georgia. [2]I could spend hours writing about my experiences in basic training, but it wouldn't be relative to the topic of my book, so this will just have to

remain shrouded in mystery. [3]It was a tough experience, and I developed a lot throughout the eight weeks of it.

[4]We had guys in my unit who couldn't handle it and went AWOL, which means they deserted. [5]They were eventually caught, returned, and started over in a different unit. [6]There were also rumors of someone from the previous unit who hung themselves. [7]Do I think they hung themselves because of basic training being so tough? I did back then. [8]Basic training is a sacred experience for me, and also something I never want to repeat again. [9]We had a phrase that the drill sergeants instilled in us. [10]"Pain is temporary. Pride is forever." [11]This pride is obviously the healthy kind that is earned only through hard work and sacrifice. [12]The pain of basic training was indeed temporary, and the pride indeed lasts to this day. [14]It's nice to know the body is capable of reaching what the mind demands. [15]The body wants to satisfy the needs of the mind. [16]Patience, resilience, and persistence are key ingredients to make change happen.

[17]I got into a few confrontations with my fellow soldiers. There was one bully who I didn't confront because I thought I would be recycled if I fought him. [18]He's the one that got away. [19]To be recycled in basic training means that I would not graduate. [20]I would need to go through the rest of the program knowing I would not be graduating. And upon the last day before graduation, instead of marching in the graduate parade, I would be starting day 1 of basic training with a new unit with yet another grueling 8 weeks ahead of me. [21]The threat of being recycled kept me in line. [22]By the time I graduated basic training, my platoon nicknamed me "mad dog" because I snapped, reacting with explosive anger, on a fellow soldier who wronged me and attacked another who came to their aid. [23]There's more to that story of course, but it was worth mentioning that it felt good, and it was a good deterrent to others thinking they could take advantage of me. This kind of stuff happened here and there with some of the other soldiers. [24]There were a few fights, a bunch of altercations that were close to becoming fights, and about 50 soldiers who were ready to do anything to cover it up so we would all not be punished by our drill sergeants. [25]I imagined that while going through basic training, I was probably having a similar experience to the one my dad had over 40 years prior.

[26]I discovered toward basic training graduation day that I was designated to specialize in the mechanized class of infantry, which meant I would be trained in the operation and maintenance of the Bradley Infantry fighting vehicle, which had treads like a tank, armored plating like a tank, a turret like a tank, yet the Army considers it to not be a tank. [27]I guess that would make too much sense. [28]And it was during this period that my battalion got to find out where our permanent duty stations would be. [29]I would be going to Ft. Irwin, California to become OPFOR, a special army within the U.S. Army. OPFOR stood for Opposing Force, and we were to train the U.S. armed forces and its allies in large-scale desert warfare. [30]Immediately, I began to fantasize about wearing the OPFOR uniform which was a desert camouflage including a black beret with red star on it. [31]I was very excited to go to California, but above all, I was excited to see what it was like to enter the day-to-day life of a soldier.

[32]In December of 1997 I landed in Ontario Airport and got on a greyhound headed to Barstow, where we would wait for a shuttle to take us in to be processed at the base. I saw palm trees and mountains along with beautiful green grass. [33]It was a sight to see.

[34]I had my Radio Shack portable FM radio with me. I found a dance or techno station easily and enjoyed the music while looking out the bus window at all the scenery. After about 45 minutes or so, things were beginning to look a little different, a little less scenic, a little less green, a little more brown and tan. I found myself tweaking my radio tuner trying to find a station as each station would eventually be out of reach. Eventually, all I could find was a country music station. [35]I'm not a country music fan. [36]Eventually, the palm trees turned to cactuses and the green grass turned into dead brush and rocks, and I found myself struggling to hear even the country music. [37]Fast forward a few hours, and there I was at Ft. Irwin where I was assigned to the 2/11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Anti-tank company, 1st platoon. [38]I finally made it. [39]I was at my permanent duty station. The days of drill sergeants were over. I would finally get to see what the day-to-day life of a soldier was really like, get assigned my barracks, and hopefully jive with whoever my roommate would be. [40]My plan was to play this military thing by ear, and if I really liked it, I would stay. If I didn't like it, I

would do my commitment of two years with this unit and then go to college.

9. If You Seek Army

[1]The next few months were something different than what I had expected. Outside of the training and going to the field to do our military exercises, something felt off. [2]The leadership of the platoon was not full of honor, dignity and accountability like I was expecting. [3]Instead, I endured punitive punishments for the actions of others. [4]This environment felt more like hazing, though I didn't know the concept back then. [5]One of the privates lost the keys to a Hummer and had to wear a massive 25-pound chain with his Hummer keys affixed to it around his neck. [6]There were so many examples of a squad or entire platoon being punished for the actions of one soldier, when what should've happened was that soldier being disciplined separately and written up if need be. [7]But no, the platoon leadership made one person's problem everyone's problem as a way to punish the soldier and turn the unit against them in doing so. And about twice I was the target. [8]One time I was wrongly accused of breaking protocol, and I would not admit to breaking it because I knew I had not. [9]All that resulted was a massive punishment to the platoon. [10]The punishments in that platoon were usually in the form of making everyone do various exercises, being harassed the whole time, sometimes sexually, but I will spare the details.

[11]Every now and then we would have pop inspections of our gear. [12]One pop inspection called for us to bring our load-bearing equipment vest (LBE), where we place our magazines, grenades, and canteens on. [14]For those unaware of how the military conducts inspections, that means that my LBE had to be clean and free of scratches on the metal which was painted black. [15]They gave us notice of the inspection right before they released us for lunch. [16]I knew that my LBE was a little scratched up from my last mission and possibly a little dirty. [17]So, I knew that I had a choice. [18]I could choose to go eat lunch once we were dismissed, and then go retrieve my vest from my barracks and then fail the inspection. [19]Alternatively, I could choose to skip lunch and take the time to spot-clean my vest and paint over the scratches in the hopes I could do it fast

enough for it to dry in time for the inspection. [20]It was then, in that moment, that I decided that enough was enough. [21]There was no honor in my platoon, no respect for each other, just a bunch of bullies running wild and an entire platoon enabling it out of fear because of rank.

[22]I left for my room quickly, about a six-minute walk at a fast pace, as if going to pick up my LBE instead of going to lunch. [23]While heading to my room, I decided to create a third option. [24]I could desert the Army (and face serious persecution for it) while I figure out who I would need to speak with about my platoon who could actually either do something about it, or just tell me, "Look, this is what the entire Army is like. You aren't experiencing anything that all the other soldiers haven't experienced." [25]The shame of deserting was there but not as strong as my principles for enduring a ton of what I would later understand to be abuse. [26]I got to my room and immediately started packing a duffel bag with essentials. My roommate arrived shortly after I got there to get his vest too. [27]He took one look at me packing with a rushed determination. [28]He knew what I was doing. [29]I don't know how he knew but he knew it. [30]He said, [31]"I didn't see shit." [32]And I nodded still packing. I was only in my barracks for maybe 5 minutes. I changed into civilian clothes, and I left to walk to the travel agency. I had no car. I made it there and the travel agent got me a ticket out of Las Vegas that evening. My next problem was how to get to Las Vegas without a car. There were no taxis anywhere for at least thirty miles. I had no phone. Cell phones were a rarity for the average consumer back then. I only knew of one person in my unit who owned one.

[33]So, there I was, trying to find a way to the airport and extremely paranoid that I was moments from being caught. I tried not to look nervous, though I knew my heart was racing. The travel agent was able to book me a greyhound from Barstow to Las Vegas, but getting to Barstow was my last problem. [34]To my travel agent, my story was that I had a family emergency. [35]I hated lying, but I did it to increase my chances of escaping. [36]I was so fortunate that the travel agent offered to drive me to Barstow after her shift was over, and after she picked her kids up from school. [37]I couldn't believe that this stranger would go through the trouble of driving me about 45 minutes away, out of her way, just to help me. [38]I hated the fact that I deceived her with my reasoning. [39]I couldn't

take the risk that the truth would've resulted in a call to the Military Police to pick me up. [40]Nobody likes a deserter and that is what I was. [41]No one knew except my roommate, who I could count on to stay quiet at least long enough for me to get on the plane. The travel agent asked to meet her at the Commissary, and she would pick me up after her shift.

[42]This is how I deserted. [43]Everything worked out. [44]I had no plan, just to get away, and figure out what my next plan would be. [45]Not only that, but I also had to come face to face with my father about it. [46]My father was so proud of me upon my graduation from basic training and he was real happy to see me taking control of my life. [47]And there I was, deserting the Army because it was too tough. At least that's how I thought my dad would see it. [48]So, I decided to hide it from him, and from the whole family. The shame of deserting was real. [49]I wasn't afraid of whatever would happen to me. But one thing was for sure, I would not be quiet about why I left.

[50]Once I got to Las Vegas I used a pay phone to call my dad and secure a pickup from the Nashville airport. [51]I lied to my father about the nature of my surprise visit home, out of fear, shame, and avoidance of my dad's disappointment. [52]My dad served in older times and in a foreign military where the soldier would just not do what I did. [53]My dad had so much respect for this country, and here I was doing the dishonorable act of deserting the very country that gave my father, and my family, so much.

[54]My dad met me at the airport to pick me up and was concerned about the last-minute trip and what it meant. [55]The shame was overwhelming, so I lied to my father and said I was taking vacation time. [56]Lying to my dad just compounded my shame. [57]It only bought me a couple days of living in the lie, and I hated that I did that. [58]I was better than that. [59]Within a day or two my First Sergeant (1SG), who was in charge of the three-platoon company, called my home while I was out of the house, probably seeing my then-girlfriend. [60]My 1SG explained to my dad that I was Away Without Leave (AWOL) and that my unit was looking for me. My dad waited for me to return home.

[61]I made it home and my dad confronted me and had me sit down with him at our kitchen table. He told me that he spoke with my 1SG and told him that I was home. My dad officially knew that I deserted. [62]I spilled

my guts about everything, expecting him not to understand. He listened and was disappointed, but he was more concerned about what would happen to me for deserting. [63]He told me that he told my 1SG that he would have me call my unit once I got home. I asked if I could make a phone call to someone else first. [64]I called the Tennessee National Guard Office of Inspector General (OIG) because I remember that they investigated fraud, waste, and abuse. [65]I was only 18 so I didn't understand that the abuse they investigated was not related to abuse of personnel, so much as abuse of power.

[66]I explained the situation to the OIG, who explained how this wasn't a matter they worked on, and I asked the OIG to reach out to my 1SG out of desperation. The OIG did so and then called me to inform me to call my 1SG. I gave him a call, and he ordered me to return to base promptly. My dad was worried about the punishment I would face. [67]I was worried about being a disgrace to my family for my choice to desert.

[68]I prepared myself for a reckoning upon my return to the base. I had to call the military police once I got to Barstow to come pick me up and take me back to base. [69]Desertion during peacetime is punishable by demotion, extra duty, leave restriction, base restriction, docked pay, or any (and all) of the above. [70]The situation was intimidating, as I called my 1SG when I got to my barracks and he had me meet him at our battalion building around 9pm. The battalion was the echelon above my company and oversaw several companies. [71]This would be the first time I would be meeting the Command Sergeant Major (CSM) in person. Before then I would see him only from a distance during ceremonies while in formation. [72]The situation was greatly intimidating and I'm sure I prayed about it. [73]My 1SG arrived at the battalion building around the time I did, and we waited for the CSM to come in. The only ones besides us in the entire building were a low-ranking soldier and a sergeant assigned for duty that night, something I would do twice myself within the next couple years. We waited in silence for the CSM to arrive.

[74]I dreaded the CSM's arrival, but also wanted to get it over with. I heard the doors to the building open and in walked the CSM in his off-duty attire. I just imagined him being pissed off at having to come in all because of me. He motioned for us to follow him to his office. The CSM

sat at his desk, and me and the 1SG came in at attention. The CSM gave the order at ease and had us take a seat in front of his desk.

[75]We spoke for maybe 5-10 minutes, and I told my story. The CSM listened and asked me a few clarifying questions. When we were finished, he had me exit the room and wait at the front desk where the soldiers were on duty. [76]I waited while he and my 1SG discussed my fate. [77]After a few minutes, my 1SG emerged and approached me. I was told to report to a different platoon within the same company, that I would not be punished, and that the AWOL would not reflect on my record.

[78]The next day, I reported to duty with third platoon, and I saw the changes that seemingly took place while I was away. My original platoon was reorganized and one of the sergeants were relocated to a different company and the other to a different platoon. [79]Everyone was told not to speak about the matter. [80]I know this because one of the soldiers dared to tell me. [81]The new platoon accepted me and put me to work. [82]I remember the assignment clearly. [83]I was to help some of the other soldiers assemble and laminate maps for our next mission. [84]No one harassed me for the ordeal, and my original platoon seemed grateful for the changes. [85]Some of the platoon members shared with me that everyone in the platoon was questioned while I was gone. [86]The rest of my time served in the Army was exactly how I envisioned it back in basic training and I enjoyed serving.

[87]Ever since this victory, if that's what I should call it, I have been an advocate for employees and knowing employee rights. [88]Instead of running away from corruption in leadership, I run toward the solutions and work with others to hold people, including management, accountable regarding employee treatment. [89]I have many stories of my victories where I did just that.

10. War - The Soldier's Mirror

[1]I wanted war all throughout childhood. [2]Infantry training made me bloodthirsty. [3]I wanted the chance to prove myself in battle. [4]The crucible of a life-or-death battle is where one truly gets to know themselves. [5]I

would look to the battle to tell me who I was. [6]To die in battle would be an honor, but I also wanted to deliver my suffering to others, under cover of my allegiance to my country, in order to take life. [7]I was no Captain America, but was I truly a monster? [8]Only war would reveal where on that spectrum I fell.

[9]By the time I actually went to war in Iraq in 2003, I prayed I would not be put in a position to kill. [10]I knew I had it in me to be able to turn off my empathy, becoming cold and logical, long enough to acquire my target and pull the trigger. [11]I prayed with all my heart that I would not be placed in that role. [12]I trusted that if combat broke out, I would be forgiven for any life I would take as long as I immediately repented. [14]I wanted to come back home alive. [15]When I said this prayer, I had no idea that I would be in Iraq for about seven more months. Back then, no one knew when we were going home. It felt like we would never go home. That took a lot of the glamour out of war for me.

[16]By the time my unit was finally relieved to return home,over a full year later, I survived three close mortar attacks. [17]The only life I was close to taking was that of a higher rank Marine with a god-complex who pissed me the fuck off. [18]God answered my prayer of not putting me in a position to fire my weapon and by keeping me alive. [19]I put myself in the position of letting that Marine get to me, not God. [20]Is it weird that I'm proud of myself for not killing him? [21]A Christian with a dark side has to start somewhere, right? [22]If I was able to spare his life, under all that pressure, I figured I had to be making strides. [23]I've come a long way, I'd say.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[24]"God-complex?!? [25]Look who's talking!"

Beast Mode:

[26]Uh, I'm not saying I disagree with you, Mr. Narcinson. But you're here kinda early don't you think?

[27]Sorry about that, folks. [28]He's not supposed to come into the story until way later. [29]Please disregard.

[30]That was the last time I ever got that close to taking life. There's a part of me that is always waiting, as if I know that a time will come when I will need to take life. I don't know if that's me or my infantry training, but I don't mind it and I don't need to understand why I feel that way. [31]It's good to stay frosty. [32]I knew the only reason that Marine was allowed to treat me like he did was because my military unit was too afraid of him to put him in his place. [33]A few in my unit, who outranked him, enabled his poor treatment of me. They knew the Marine mistreated me, but it was easier for them to enable it than to confront him about his behavior. [34]That incident allowed me to see certain people in my unit for who they truly were after years of knowing them. [35]They were cowards.

11. Giving Myself the Closure I Wanted from My Father

[1]In the dawn of the compact disc, my parents bought me a boombox and the first album I purchased for myself was Core by Stone Temple Pilots. Maybe I heard the group on the radio before that. I don't remember why I chose that to be my first with my very limited personal cash. I listened to that album countless times and memorized every word back then (and retained the majority of the lyrics to this day). The sound was incredible compared to the tapes, records, and definitely the radio that I was used to. [2]I love most of the songs on that album. But one stood out to me that just resonated, with no reason behind the resonation. [3]It was Wicked Garden. [4]Fast forward and it has become one of my many anthems including Unstoppable a song by Sia and also the one by Disturbed, and Katy Perry's Firework, Dark Horse, and Roar.

[5]Miley Cyrus' Mother's Daughter reminds me that I am totally my father's son. [6]Many of the aspects of my father's character and spirit I've embodied within myself, a lot of the good and even some of the bad which I'm happy to at least be aware of. [7]I have self-respect and honor, but I also struggle with impatience when I am being tested and anger when I am mistreated. [8]It took me years to master my rage and resentment toward my dad and those who crossed me. But when I did, I was in more control of myself. [9]I did what I now know as my own shadow work. [10]And that got even better with time and more tests of my character. [11]I know now how to surrender my anger to God so that it doesn't

live in me, and so that I may have peace. [12]My walk with God has been my saving grace all throughout my life, I just wouldn't come to see it that way for a while.

[14]When I was 19, about a year after I deserted and about a year before I was due to leave the Army honorably this time, I spent serious time self-reflecting. [15]I chose to radically accept that my father may never acknowledge his treatment of me. [16]Before then, I would debate to myself the value in bringing the topic up to him. [17]As an adult son having that conversation with him, I envisioned it resulting in him not seeing anything wrong. [18]My concern would be that I would want to tell him what I dealt with emotionally. [19]I would be looking to my dad to validate these ill feelings I had towards him for so many years and help me to let them go upon hearing the validation of an apology.

[20]The radical acceptance was truly what I really needed to move forward. [21]I chose to appreciate my father and I chose to see him as the flawed, but beautiful, person that he was. [22]It would've been nice to experience him approaching me on his own and apologizing for being so brutal to me so many times when I was young. [23]My father was my first enemy. [24]Even though he was still alive, I had already killed him with my kindness with a handwritten poem I wrote to celebrate my radical acceptance. [25]I did this in 1998 at the age of 19. [26]The poem focused on everything about him that I was grateful for.

[27]Later, when I was 26, I drew a charcoal portrait of my dad that became the centerpiece of the living room of my parents' home. He spent $150 to frame it. The fact that I gave him a gift that cost me nothing but my time, and he spent that much money to frame it, meant a lot to me. [28]He framed my poem too and placed it in my parent's entryway to their home. [29]It was clear to me that I made an impression with my acts of kindness and love. [30]There was no hate in me anymore. [31]Gone was the hope of confronting the topic of physical abuse with my dad, and any anxiety that would've brought with it.

[32]So, this was my dad. A good man, with a real short temper. A caring man, who I got to witness over the years evolve to be a little more patient, a little less brutal, a good friend to many, and a little more warm. [33]My father's time has come and gone. [34]I got to appreciate the rest of my

time with him. [35]I'm reminded of him with every flickering light, every leaky faucet, any time something breaks down, and every second I spend in a hardware store. [36]My dad knew how to get shit done, and even though I'm nowhere near his level of dedication and skill, I know that I am capable of getting shit done too when needed.

[37]In my last days with my dad before he passed, I laid with him in his bed and I held his hand for several minutes. [38]We were quiet. [39]This was the hand that beat me. [40]This was also the hand that protected me. [41]This was the hand that taught me. [42]I'm sure if my mom had been completely silent about it, it would've been worse. [43]My dad had every opportunity to acknowledge me and apologize for how he treated me. [44]He never did. [45]So, either he saw nothing wrong with it, maybe because it was the way he was raised, or he did see how he treated me was wrong and he feared the shame behind it and buried it within himself. Maybe my dad hoped I had forgotten it, or that I never thought about it.

[46]My dad passed away in 2017 right before he would've turned 87, knowing that I loved him very much. [47]He rarely mentioned his father, but he did have a good number of positive things to say about his dad's brother who was more like a father to my dad. [48]I talk to my sons about my dad often. [49]I can only imagine that, as bad as my dad was with the physical punishments, he was probably a serious improvement over his own father. [50]In all other aspects, my dad was great. [51]In the end, my father was good enough, and I think that's what truly matters. [52]I think I got a better father than my dad did. My sons got a better father than I did, and I wouldn't be surprised if my sons become better fathers than I am. [53]That's the point isn't it, that our children surpass our limitations?

Beast Mode:

[54]And this concludes Chapter 2. [55]Wow, you'd think we would've gone in the Navy following father's footsteps. [56]Instead, it's like we have one foot in the sea and the other on land, torn between two distinct fields of battle, both impacting the other indirectly. [57]Ironic, isn't it? [58]War. [59]War never changes.

CHAPTER 3
EMBRACING FRICTION

"A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials."
— Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Fatal Attraction
By Deamkid
-
Don't Bring Me Down
By Electric Light Orchestra
-
Changes (ft. Talent)
By 2Pac

Beast Mode:

[1]Welcome to Chapter 3. [2]Oh, the friction was real. [3]Ugh. [4]My least favorite chapter, this is. [5]I can't wait until we get to the good parts. [6]This part is just torture, but do read carefully as we introduce some elements here we will touch on later.

[7]At which point did I become a man? [8]Was it biologically during puberty? [9]Was it academically when I graduated high school? [10]Was it when I made the first life-altering decision to join the military and earned my revered blue infantry cord, the certified American badass braid? [11]Was it when I went to combat prepared to take life, without mercy, in the name of freedom for my country?

[12]In the Infantry, life was different. [13]We trained for war. [14]We lived for it. [15]Taking life meant getting down with our demons, and we were trained to enjoy it and look forward to it. [16]When I think of my time in the Infantry, I hear the sounds of rock and roll and machine gun fire, I smell the fumes of diesel fuel, weapon oil, and burnt gunpowder. Hearing those sounds and smelling those smells these days brings me back to that time of my life, though I still remember kitchen duty, security guard duty, ironing my uniform, shining my boots, and the like. [17]The U.S. Infantry is the real deal, something to truly instill fear in our opposition, ready and waiting for battle. [18]I think that combat arms job series, like Infantry, serve people like me best. [19]I wanted to be one of the people in the history of this world who served in war. [20]Little did I know that I'd seen nothing yet. [21]My biggest challenges lay ahead, my enemy hidden in plain sight disguised as my ally, and on my home turf instead of abroad.

1. No Scrubs

[1]I was in a relationship while in the Army and I suspected I was being cheated on, so I cut the relationship off. [2]I found out a few months later that I was right in my assumptions, that she was indeed having an affair with the person I was suspecting. [3]This betrayal really got to me. [4]It made me question my ability to discern someone's nature. [5]Why would someone start a serious relationship with someone, and then start

cheating on them when someone else showed even minor interest in them? [6]I had never cheated on anyone. [7]What was it about this other person that was worth throwing a relationship with me away?

[8]After being cheated on, I judged anyone who cheated harshly. I would not associate with anyone I knew to be a cheater. [9]I was devastated. [10]I thought my ex made a bad decision to risk our relationship for someone who gave her attention. [11]I did have enough red flags to show me that she was a risk to be in a relationship with in the first place, like how she jumped from one guy to another and the way she would eye other men right in front of me. [12]I just didn't understand how to process these red flags until later in life. [14]I applied what I learned from that failed relationship. [15]If I saw flags like that, I would end the relationship and I didn't feel the need to explain what I saw before breaking up with someone. [16]Why give them the opportunity to fool me again? [17]Just leave.

[18]I did leave that relationship, and that ex ended up going on her own downward spiral leaving a wake of destruction. [19]Karma's a bitch, huh? [20]I guess maybe she finally found someone who didn't mind being cheated on.

Beast Mode:

[21]I guess now she can ride all the men she wants. [22]As long as guys want her, she will always feel worthy of love. [23]"Worthy"! She should write a book and title it that. [24]Shhhh, don't tell her that looks fade. [25]I guess a worn-out mask is better than no mask at all. [26]I said it and I meant it.

[27]The only reason I bring up the topic of that ex is because it had an impact on me. [28]I built my first boundary and enacted it before I turned 20 years old. [29]No one cheats on me and gets to stay with me. [30]I also learned that my intuition is strong and proven accurate, so I trusted my gut more after that relationship too. [31]A year later, still 20 years old, I broke up with a girlfriend of a few months because my gut told me she had someone else. [32]Better safe than sorry. [33]Now, some may say I self-sabotaged that one. [34]The truth is that it doesn't matter if I was cheated on or not. [35]What mattered was that I knew my worth, and someone or something was more important to her than her relationship with me. [36]I could feel it. [37]I don't need to know the name of the person she is

cheating on me with before I decide to leave her. [38]I don't need to know all the facts about why the person is acting less interested in me. [39]I don't need to see the proof of cheating in order to believe it. [40]I don't need an explanation for why they did it. [41]I am my own closure.

2. The Life Civilian

[1]After I left the Army, I was ready for civilian life and the new adventure that awaited me. [2]I did join the National Guard as I knew that if a war broke out, the chances were high that I would be called back into service to deploy to war. If I hadn't joined the National Guard, I would've joined the ready reserves, where if there were to be a war, I would be on the list of those they would call up before instituting the draft system. [3]I didn't want to take the chance of going to the frontlines of war with a bunch of strangers, with all my battle readiness gone. [4]If I were to go to war, it would be with a unit that I choose. [5]I chose a small unit that, if deployed, would control a lot of rear area operations with some decent protection from enemy forces, and they are who I ended up combat deploying with twice. [6]It turns out that those who were in the ready reserve did get recalled for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, so I would've gone to the front lines with a bunch of strangers, who may or may not be as combat-ready as myself. [7]My intuition was right again, not about a coming war, but about positioning myself to be ready for it in the event one happened. [8]*:cough cough:*

[9]I enrolled in a local university and focused on writing and communication. This was my strong suit, and I was very passionate about writing. [10]Didn't see that coming, huh? [11]I would later change my focus to be film, and then again switch to graphic design. I maintained a 3.5 GPA for the first few semesters, up a considerable two points from where I was in high school. I wasn't as motivated in high school. [12]I proved to myself and my family that when I'm driven, I achieve. [14]I was proud of myself because I worked hard at it. [15]My family saw a version of me that had evolved from the Michael they knew before I joined the Army. [16]While in college I explored relationships. [17]Since I was recently cheated on by someone I trusted, I had no interest in anything serious. [18]My mentality

behind this was that if the relationship wasn't serious, they could cheat on me and it wouldn't hurt so bad when I left them.

3. What I Get for Playing Stupid Games

[1]Before I begin this portion of my story, I want you to know that what I divulge below only my closest friends and family have known about. [2]The rest of this chapter I may come across as a complainer. [3]I get it. [4]That's why I stayed in my silence for so long. [5]What I share below, the only reason I share it, is so I can later further illustrate the meaning behind the rest of this chapter. [6]There's so much more I could share, but it would be overkill. [7]Here we go.

[8]I did a decent amount of dating trying to figure out what I was looking for. [9]I met some nice women, but I wasn't ready for something serious, and I didn't want to get in their way of finding what they were looking for. [10]Looking back, I can say what I was looking for now. [11]I was looking for a friend with benefits and, if that worked out for a while, the possibility of becoming something more. [12]Looking back, that was unwise of me, no matter my reasoning. [14]I ended a couple relationships out of respect for those women because I knew they were ready for a more committed relationship, and that I was not. [15]I just wanted to have fun, enjoying the benefits of a serious relationship, but not being tied down to any one person. [16]That's what I was looking for back then. [17]And I found the perfect one who was willing to accept that role long-term, even though she stated that she didn't like me seeing other people and that she had no interest in anyone else. [18]This would be the one that I would one day marry. [19]Her name was Karen…I mean Candace.

[20]Candace was good at peeling back the layers in a conversation. [21]I began to feel a strong connection with her. [22]She was a good listener and not judgmental of who I was. [23]We seemed to have so much in common. [24]We shared our traumas and bonded over them. [25]It felt really good to let myself become vulnerable with her. [26]She was deep and witty and playful, and I loved it. [27]I felt like I met someone truly special. [28]She actually reminded me a lot of myself. [29]It was like I found my soul mate. [30]Where had she been all my life? [31]She was very observant and made jokes at my expense, but had truth in them, so I found them funny and

informative. [32]I felt like she helped me become more self-aware. [33]Still, I was reluctant to let the relationship become serious because I was still recuperating from being cheated on before. [34]It was happening slowly anyway. [35]It was as if she matched frequency with me or she was always on that frequency. [36]The relationship felt that it was meant to be. [37]She came to know me so well that she could finish my…

Beast Mode:

[38]Sentences? [39]No one knows Michael as well as I do. [40]We literally finish each other's sentences…literally.

[41]When Candace and I went to social gatherings I would notice the look of joy on Candace's face when she would debate someone. The debates were not argumentative, but more a conversation. [42]She lived for the battle of words and relished being able to convince people she was right, or at least of how valid her points were. [43]I didn't really get involved in these playful debates, but I observed. [44]Who was I to judge what is fun at social gatherings? [45]To me, fun would be connecting to one or two people on a deep level, finding commonalities, and sharing some nice laughs.

[46]Candace was a huge fan of *Nsync. [47]It's funny to me, all the members of the group were photographed on strings for the cover art for the album "No Strings Attached". [48]It's funny that their song "Bye bye bye" was a precursor for what I would be saying to her one day. [49]The lyrics seem to be about an empathetic person leaving a self-centered person who's treating the relationship like a game. [50]That's very interesting.

[51]I was deployed twice through our beneficial friendship, and Candace and I kept in touch throughout my deployments. [52]We didn't become boyfriend and girlfriend until right before I went to Iraq. [53]By the time my over one-year-long deployment in Iraq ended, I was having thoughts of marriage and starting a family. [54]Being at war made me take life more seriously. [55]Life is short, so if you know what you want, you should pursue it. [56]When I got home from Iraq and was honorably discharged from the National Guard with no more risk of being called back to war, I proposed to Candace. [57]She said yes.

[58]Before I fast forward past the wedding day and honeymoon, it's worth mentioning that the pastor who married us gave a remark during the ceremony of marriage being like a long suffering. [59]This made me curious. [60]I didn't choose to get married in order to endure long-term suffering. [61]Having a partner is supposed to be about being equally yoked and managing life's stresses together. [62]If anything, our sufferings would be shared, and we would plow through them together.

[63]After the honeymoon was over, Candace and I moved into an old apartment in Wicker Park in Chicago, IL. [64]I wasn't a fan of moving to Chicago, which is where I grew up, but Candace wasn't a fan of Tennessee citing she had been on the receiving end of racism while there. [65]I spent my childhood living in Chicago until age 12 and enjoyed the wide-open spaces outside of big cities ever since. [66]Candace was adamant about being close to her family as well, so I agreed to move to Chicago. [67]I had many very good reasons to stay in Tennessee, but I wanted to start a life together with her. [68]It was a sacrifice I was willing to make, and I truly didn't even see it as a sacrifice.

[69]The first few months of marriage were barely manageable even though it had its nice moments. [70]The rocky honeymoon stage lasted no more than about 6 months. [71]Within the first couple months we were starting to have arguments about household expectations. [72]Candace decided to quit her part-time job. [73]Her excuse was that the house was always a mess. It wasn't, but she said she was a clean freak with some obsessive and compulsive tendencies and complained that I wasn't consistently washing dishes every day, something I still struggle with being consistent with. [74]Me not pulling my own weight in cleaning was her reason for quitting, even though I had nearly 30 hours more work, school, and homework per week than she did. [75]I assumed my cleaning responsibilities would lighten up as she was taking a break from work.

[76]I was working full time and also going to college full time, but she still expected me to adhere to her cleaning conditions which seemed to keep getting stricter as I was able to meet them. [77]Since we had no kids, it was all doable. [78]I worked hard at work, at home, and at school while Candace stayed home and went to college for a couple classes. [79]Financially, we were safe for the short term. I was making good enough money

working at that time to sustain us while she took her temporary break from employment.

[80]Months went by and Candace showed no signs, or even interest, in job hunting. [81]Our marriage started to rapidly deteriorate from all the arguments. [82]It was like Candace liked to argue. [83]Any opportunity that came up for her to argue with me or criticize the way I said or did something, she took it. [84]I couldn't drive anywhere with Candace without her most likely criticizing me on the trip, like the way I stopped at the streetlight. [85]Now, please understand, I wasn't just sitting there being yelled at. That did happen, but most of the time there wasn't yelling. [86]I did speak up for myself the majority of the time. [87]There was plenty of back-and-forth escalating dialogue. [88]I yelled a few times myself, which I found to be effective at ending arguments, even though I'd be upset with myself for doing so.

[89]Most of the arguments were not worth having. [90]It was as if she enjoyed the back-and-forth of arguing, like it was a game that she had to win. [91]Since I cared more about the marriage working, I learned to keep my responses short. [92]Because if I were to defend myself too much, she would pick apart my defense. [93]And just as I was trying to avoid the argument growing, it would grow another head and start all over again in another cycle of arguments. [94]Suddenly we would be arguing about something somewhat related, and it was as if she was trying to derail the initial argument into one that she had a better chance at winning. [95]The problem was that even though I didn't care about winning or losing an argument, I felt completely invalidated. [96]I didn't fully realize that until later, but I felt it. [97]Candace did not care if she was even right or wrong in the side of the argument she chose, or whether or not the argument was damaging our relationship.

[98]I did anything to keep the peace. [99]I tiptoed on eggshells. [100]I accepted bread crumbs of affection. [101]I was disgusted with myself with how badly I wanted to be affectionate, that I would subject myself to poor treatment just for the chance of returned affection. [102]I felt pathetic. [103]And I knew that I was meant for more. [104]The more time passed after marriage, the less civil and constructive the conversations started becoming.

4. The Little Siren that Could

[1]Candace had a beautiful voice and loved the Disney cartoon movie The Little Mermaid. She could sing Ariel's songs flawlessly, with the inflection and acting built in, and it was something special to behold. [2]She copied it perfectly. [3]The movie is a story about a mermaid princess named Ariel who was a collector of things from the surface realm above hers. [4]But those things were not enough for Ariel. [5]Once she laid eyes on the handsome prince named Eric from the surface world, she had to collect him too. Of course, the Disney cartoon didn't say the word "collect". [6]She wanted him.

[7]If you watch the rest of the movie, the couple can't truly communicate. [8]They enter into a very fast-moving relationship, because unknown to Prince Eric, Ariel has an agenda. [9]What if she told the prince the truth? She'd be seen as a modern-day stalker by today's standards. [10]She made a deal with the witch Ursula to receive supernatural gifts in order to deceive the prince that she was a surface dweller just like him.

[11]When Ariel made that deal with Ursula, she signed a binding contract. [12]Her friends become aware of her predicament and help her achieve her goal covertly. [14]They want her to be happy, and they don't want her to face the dire consequences of her foolish actions. [15]Her friends sacrifice their time and energy in order to help Ariel. [16]In the end, Ariel abandons them all to make her new life with the prince. [17]She finally got what she wanted. [18]Her collection was complete at the end of the movie. [19]Or was it?

Beast Mode:

[20]Did you know that in the book the movie is based on, Ariel loses? [21]Just sayin'. [22]What if Disney released the cartoon version of the original story? [23]It probably wouldn't be as fun to watch but would offer a lot to learn. [24]We like it dark. [25]Disney did it darkly with The Black Cauldron, so why not the original The Little Mermaid?

[26]#WHATSONYOURPEDESTAL [27]#THEHORNEDKING-COMETH

[28]Before I close out this mini-story, I want to add one more thing. [29]Ariel had a fascination with these other worldly surface-world objects so much that she wanted to escape the place she was designed to live. [30]She thought the surface world was a better place. [31]She made the decision to leave her family of origin, sacrificing her ability to return to the depths of the sea where her family must stay. [32]What if Prince Eric turned out to be just like Prince Hans Westergaard from Disney's movie Frozen? [33]What would Ariel do? [34]What would you do if you were Ariel and discovered your prince wasn't so charming after all after the wedding ends?

[35]Let's say Prince Eric turned out to be authentic to who he presented himself to be. [36]Would Ariel be able to appreciate Eric for the long term? [37]He was pretty much the first human being she laid eyes on in the movie. [38]What if a rich king, who Ariel finds more handsome than the prince, showed interest in her? [39]The more dinglehoppers the better, right? [40]What if a knight makes her feel like she was more valuable than Eric made her feel? [41]Would she start to resent Prince Eric for not treating her like the knight did? [42]What would happen if Ariel felt prolonged resentment toward the prince, while the knight continued to shower her with compliments and small acts of affection?

5. The Never-Ending Arguments

[1]Candace would love to argue with me while I was trying to sleep. [2]I had the morning shift, requiring me to wake up at 2:30 am five days a week. [3]I was more willing to give in to an argument just so I could sleep, and she did not like it if I gave in too soon because she didn't feel like I was being authentic. [4]So, I learned how to delay giving in and argue with her a bit so she would leave me alone when I finally feigned giving in. [5]I even let her derail arguments she was having difficulty winning, into an argument I was more than willing to give in to just to make her shut her mouth. [6]Eventually, when I would hear my name coming out of her mouth, I would immediately cringe expecting yet another argument about me or what I'm doing that's wrong, or how I needed to do more. [7]I didn't even have a chance to tell Candace how I wanted her to get a job, how I thought she was lazy, how I felt she wasn't treating me or our rela-

tionship with the respect it deserved. [8]No, these were not the conversations I wanted to have. [9]I just wanted her to leave me alone.

[10]One place where I had great difficulty was whenever we would be driving together. [11]She seemed to love to argue just about anything, especially if I was trapped with her in a car. [12]A peaceful drive anywhere was rare. [14]A simple conversation seemed to always have to end in some argument no matter how much I tried to avoid confrontation and drama. The conversation would start with her asking me my perspective on something, and then she would have a differing perspective. We would discuss, and then the conversation would become an argument about why she needed me to take her position and that if I had my own position, it meant to her that I wasn't supporting her position in the argument. [15]She saw that as me not loving her. [16]I learned quickly to speak as monotone as I could, because any inflection in my tone would soon become the topic of the argument, and I would be left trying to defend my own tone and any meaning behind it. [17]I would become aggravated, which would just make her arguments even worse.

[18]When Candace and I would have these almost daily arguments, she would twist my words and use them against me, keeping me on the defensive when all I was trying to do was to get to the heart of an issue so we could work together as a team to resolve the conflict. [19]When I tried to hold her accountable to something she said to me, she would rewrite history by warping even the memory of what actually happened into something different that seemed to fall perfectly in line with whatever point she was trying to make.

[20]Eventually, I questioned my own ability to remember things. [21]I kept a journal, and I actually have an entry where I talk about how bad my memory was and how good Candace's was. [22]I actually believed back then that my ability to retain memory was failing. [23]Candace could always be relied on to remember things exactly how she wished to remember them. [24]There were times when I had a sharp recollection of the exact words she said that I was reminding her of, and she tried everything to try to convince me that I remembered them incorrectly, or if that's how I remembered her saying something, it wasn't the way she meant it, or if it was the way she meant it, I interpreted it the wrong way. [25]There was always a reason for her to be right, and for me to be wrong.

[26]And the arguments would not end, looping in circles, until I came to the conclusion where she was right. [27]Otherwise, I could count on Candace leaving for a few days to go to her mother's house, or punish me for not letting her win the argument, or by giving me the silent treatment, or withholding sex.

[28]The endless loops of heavily worded arguments and being told that I can't trust my own memory of events, it got to me. [29]The interrupting me every time I was making a solid point so Candace could slip away and strike me with another somewhat related argument to derail the current argument, it got to me. [30]Those moments when I would say that I wanted to get back to the previous discussion that Candace was trying to derail from, it got to me. [31]Me having to retain about 3-4 other looped conversations that Candace would keep adding to keeping me on the defensive and saving Candace from accountability, it got to me.

[32]These arguments would grow tentacles, with new issues and accusations that Candace would bring up against me. [33]I felt the need to contend with each individual issue, while the original intent behind the discussion behind the argument was completely buried beneath layers of these tentacles. [34]Sometimes I would forget one of these unrelated side arguments, and that act of forgetting alone would form the basis of a new argument loop of "Michael, your memory is so bad that this is another example of your deteriorating mental state or memory". [35]It's like I had multiple spinning plates going that represented these issues and accusations. If I was able to take one spinning plate down, Candace would throw in two more. [36]Sometimes I would give up and say, "You know what, this "discussion" isn't truly going anywhere, and I'm done". [37]Candace's favorite words to use when it came to these arguments was "always", to represent a few times, and "never" to also represent a few times. [38]It would appear that my favorite thing to do was defend and explain myself, but it wasn't my favorite thing to do. [39]It was not fun or enjoyable. [40]I hated spending more time talking about the problem than actually fucking fixing it.

[41]Candace was not a fan of anyone but herself having the final word. [42]This was my life. [43]Not every day but at least a few days a week. [44]If I was able to stay sharp enough with keeping track of the spinning plates and calling her out on the interrupting, then she would eventually say

that she was done and conveniently exit stage left with my two sons to her enabling family. [45]I didn't know about narcissism back then. [46]But I knew her family would house her for several days while I had peace and silence at home. [47]In these moments I relaxed, played video games, or went to work with good sleep.

6. Strike One

[1]Sometime around us hitting the six-month mark of marriage, she would get angry with me trying to avoid arguments and eventually, she physically engaged me by putting hands on me and putting her face right up to mine taunting me to fight her. [2]She would push me on my chest repeatedly. I didn't understand how or why this was happening, but I didn't like it one bit. [3]It reminded me of being face-to-face with my dad when he was angry, but this was different. [4]I had my share of walking on eggshells whenever my dad was in a bad mood about something. [5]I did not want to walk on eggshells around my own wife or in my own house. Yet, there I was constantly trying to avoid conversations for fear they would lead to an argument that I would need to give into for the sake of my own peace and sanity. [6]Not just that but giving in to these mostly punitive arguments allowed the relationship to simply continue.

[7]After Candace pushed me so many times in the first altercation, I finally pushed her back. [8]Immediately she was in shock and stormed out of our apartment to go to her parents. [9]I was left feeling ashamed for reacting to her taunts and I developed a fear of her telling the story of what happened, and purposely omitting the part where she taunted me and shoved me repeatedly. [10]It didn't matter how many times she pushed me, or how hard I tried to de-escalate the situation. [11]No, what would matter to anyone was the fact I shoved her back. [12]That's what I believed at least.

[14]Her stepfather was a prominent law enforcement officer, and I felt like my life was over. [15]I would be stuck submitting to this woman out of fear of the possibility of another fight I would not be able to escape. [16]And I would need to lose the fight in order to stay safe from going to jail. [17]A domestic abuse conviction would affect my employment as well. [18]This fear of Candace's reaction to me leaving her, and facing her ensuing

wrath for it, would result in her having a decent amount of control over me. Any time I felt like divorcing her, I would feel like Candace would just use that first altercation as a threat to keep me from leaving. [19]I was ashamed of myself for reacting to her. [20]I felt trapped.

[21]I knew that I had to be very careful around Candace. [22]I saw that if she was upset, and no matter what I said or did to de-escalate, she was prone to physical abuse. [23]I was her only target. [24]Who would even believe me unless they were there to witness this? [25]Not only that, but how many men out there can endure the shame of having to admit they are being physically abused by a woman who is half their size and sporting the mask of absolute innocence?

[26]My dad never laid hands on my mom, yet here I was in a physically abusive relationship only six months into the marriage walking on eggshells around my own wife. [27]Candace pushed me, just like the bullies throughout my childhood did. [28]She wasn't just pushing me physically either, she was doing it mentally too. [29]This too also reminded me of all my bullies. [30]Before they got brave enough to touch me, they used their words.

[31]I had to think through how I would speak with Candace, the words and tone I would use, how to carefully sidestep around anything that would appear as a criticism to her, lest she become argumentative with the end result of me being the bad guy for communicating my concerns about the relationship and her treatment of me. [32]No matter what, though, I knew that the next time Candace would put hands on me to push me and incite a physical altercation, I knew that I could never push her back again. [33]I knew she would use it against me. [34]It was a knowing, not a feeling.

[35]It's as if she wanted me to react with physicality so that she could punish and shame me for it, and use it to control me. [36]I often wondered why she was so unregulated. [37]Was she trying to fight me because she was truly upset? [38]Was she bored? [39]Or did she feel like screwing with me just for fun? [40]One thing is certain, I was a lot more careful around her after that. [41]Also, this was not something I was going to ever forget. [42]It was something we would need to revisit to talk through if we were to try to repair things (something, it seemed, only I ever did anything

about). [43]I wasn't breaking things, but I seemed to often spend my energy on keeping things from breaking and fixing them after they eventually broke. [44]It was like I was living with a toddler, and the constant sense of waiting for the other shoe to drop had me on high anxiety the whole marriage.

[45]I rarely felt at peace in my own home, unless Candace wasn't there. [46]In the many moments that were to come throughout the marriage where Candace would start an argument and end up leaving for several days to her mother's home, I learned to appreciate the peace that came along with being without her. [47]This was the first time, and I knew I would be confronting Candace about the physical altercation once she decided to return home.

[48]When Candace returned home from her parents' house a couple days later, I was ready to have a conversation with her. [49]With Candace being away at her parents, I had time to think. [50]It was as if all I needed was a few days without her to get the clarity I needed. [51]I was considering divorce. [52]I spoke with her about my feelings and that I did not like the direction our relationship was going. [53]I told her that because I was interested in having a family, we would need to fix this part of our relationship before we would dare to have kids, let alone stay married. [54]I told her that our arguments needed to be less frequent and that it could never happen in front of any of our children. [55]I told her that these fixes needed to happen first before we grew into a family. [56]Candace was on birth control, and I imagined it would be years before we would talk about having kids.

7. Strike Two

[57]A few months later, still within the first year of marriage, I had another talk with Candace concerning divorce after a second physical altercation she incited. [58]I didn't react to it that time, but it was seriously emasculating, and I was determined to let her know that it would be the last time she put hands on me or get in my face. [59]She shamed me for being so quick to quit the marriage without giving the relationship a real chance. [60]A month later, even though Candace was supposedly on birth control, she became pregnant. [61]With a child on the way,

and a pretty miserable marriage, I would give it the best shot I had in me.

[62]My son, Cruz, was born in 2006. And right before that, we moved from our apartment in Wicker Park to the same city as her family for better support during pregnancy and after birth. [63]I spent the next few years trying my hardest to make the relationship work while Candace, who made no changes in her own behavior, the treatment of me, and the marriage itself. [64]Candace showed no desire to go back to work and wanted to be a stay-at-home mother indefinitely and home-school Cruz.

[65]Financially, we were seriously struggling as I was not prepared to be the only person working for that long. [66]Not just that, but in order to keep the marriage afloat, I had to keep sacrificing pieces of myself. [67]I had to get used to losing every argument. [68]I had to get used to Candace twisting every word I said or invalidating every feeling I had, if those words or my feelings held her accountable. [69]It was as if she couldn't process an entire discussion if she was in any way or form being identified as even a possible source to a problem. [70]I had to get used to the emasculation if I wanted a marriage that functioned. [71]I didn't want to get used to that. [72]What kind of man would I be if I broke myself in order to fit into some pre-determined mold that keeps changing shape? [73]Whatever Candace was looking for in the marriage, it was something that she could keep redefining in order to suit her wants, and I would keep having to shrink and distort myself in order meet that.

8. Isolation

[1]Unfortunately, through the majority of the marriage, I didn't have any friends in the Chicago area I was close enough to talk to about my feelings with. [2]Making the move from Tennessee to Illinois put some serious distance between me and everyone I knew. [3]I had a couple close friends who I stayed in touch with, but I never spoke about the marriage. [4]I also reduced how often I would speak to my parents. [5]I did this because I was miserable and embarrassed about how Candace was treating me. [6]Not only that, but I didn't have the mental energy to speak with anyone, let alone form cohesive sentences about how or what I was actually feeling inside. [7]I was afraid of sharing how miserable I was being married. [8]My

concern was that those who cared about me would tell me to leave Candace. [9]Alternatively, those friends of mine who were more rigid in their outlook of marriage from a Christian perspective would try to talk me out of my misery for the sake of the marriage. [10]I didn't want that either.

[11]If she even suspected that someone I was speaking to had anything but the most positive opinion about her, she would want me to cut off contact. [12]She wouldn't outright say it, but she had her ways of communicating with subtext. [14]She already had issues with my mother within the first year of marriage for an innocent and playful comment my mom made about how often she saw me since we got married. [15]I know now why Candace had the issue with what my mom said, and I will mention it later in this book, but I wanted to touch on it here first. [16]Eventually, that one comment became the wedge that Candace created and placed in between herself and my mom, completely unbeknownst to my mom until I told her after I first filed for divorce.

[17]I would've preferred to see my parents at least twice a year, but I only saw them once a year and I had to kiss Candace's butt for about the month leading up to the visit. [18]I hated that. [19]Candace had a habit of ramping up the cruelty and criticism the closer we would approach the date of me visiting my parents. [20]I got used to Candace creating drama at the last second and then me begging to go to my parents with her and our sons. [21]She would decline, and I would ask to at least take my sons. She declined every time. [22]I had a choice of going alone and facing criticism for what she would call selfish, and abandonment, of my family to be with my parents. [23]So, how did I resolve this? [24]I bent over backwards and held my tongue for the weeks approaching any travel plans. [25]I never gave Candace any problems visiting any members of her family. [26]I did my best to integrate into her family and we spent quite a bit of time with them.

[27]Sometimes when I had conversations with Candace, she could not believe that I was bringing her issues about the marriage on my own. She made the assumption that someone in my family was talking with me and criticizing her to me. [28]This was never the case. [29]I thought it interesting that Candace thought that other people were the reason behind me trying to hold her accountable or talk to her about what was upsetting

me about the marriage and her treatment of me. [30]In the end, I isolated myself because I didn't want to share my problems with anyone or be judged.

9. Eggshells

[1]I gave this its own section, mainly so what seems like an unrelated or unimportant detail will have some special visibility. [2]I mention this in several places in this chapter that I had to be careful of what I said to Candace, when I said it, and how I said it. [3]I would have to spin the issue in such a way that it would not cause Candace to become upset. [4]Imagine trying to have a conversation with someone who, once they even detect the slightest hint of shame or something being even remotely partially their fault, completely shuts down or reacts in anger.

[5]If Candace were to become upset before the issue was resolved, then it would escalate into an argument, and I would spend the next hour or so de-escalating Candace's anger so that we could continue the conversation and actually get somewhere with it. [6]Anytime I needed to communicate something that put Candace at fault for something, I would prepare the way by starting the conversation with everything that I was thankful for in the marriage, specifically Candace's role in it. [7]I learned that if I prepared Candace by focusing on the positive, even the positive side of the fault I wanted to bring up, or how the fault was most likely not Candace's intent, then it was more palatable to her. [8]I did everything to prepare the delivery of my approach to the conversation so that it could accomplish a result that was something other than more hours-long arguments.

[9]I hated how much thought I had to put into any conversation I wanted to have before having it. [10]Candace could be predicted. [11]I got to the point where I could have an entire conversation with her without opening my mouth. [12]I would imagine myself speaking my truth to her, and I could predict how she would respond and when she would interrupt me while I was making my point. [14]I did these mental gymnastics in order to come to the conclusions I needed to without speaking a word. [15]One time, while engaging in an argument with her toward the final days, I predicted to Candace her own response to what I was saying

before she had a chance to say it, and that pissed her off greatly. [16]How dare I tell her what she's going to say or how she'd react. [17]I contemplated writing down possible responses on paper strips and putting them in my pocket so as she was responding I could pull them out one by one and show her how well I knew the way her mind worked.

[18]I didn't have the energy most of the time to prepare for these conversations or deal with these arguments that lasted for hours sometimes and rarely actually got anywhere. [19]They would just loop over and over again, and I would sometimes regret bringing up whatever issue I initially presented. [20]Not only that, but these arguments would go off the rails, and before I knew it, I'd forget my place in the original argument, or one of the spin-off arguments I was trying to keep track of and defend myself. [21]Sometimes Candace would make fun of my memory because of how bogged down I'd get in trying to keep up with whatever direction Candace was taking the argument at any given time. It made me not want to talk to Candace. [22]The sound of her voice became like the cringe of nails on a chalkboard within our first two years of marriage. I hated the sound of my own name.

10. A Fork in the Road

[1]I gave this its own section, mainly so what seems like an unrelated or unimportant detail will have some special visibility. [2]Not even one year into the marriage Candace stopped being courteous. [3]To provide an actual account as example, if I were sitting at the dining room table to eat and noticed I forgot a utensil, I'd ask Candace if she could please bring me the utensil I forgot before she sat down to eat with me. [4]Her response for these kinds of requests were that I had two working arms and legs and that I could get up and get it myself. [5]She'd have a smirk on her face sometimes when she said this. [6]She didn't answer like that every single time in the beginning, but she did it increasingly enough to the point where I just stopped asking for anything she would find as an inconvenience. [7]I wouldn't dare ever ask her to do something as tedious as peeling an orange for me. [8]I couldn't picture her doing that for me no matter how good a mood she was in. [9]Candace had no problems making requests like this of me, and I would always deliver her what she asked

for without comment or complaint. [10]Of course, I'd dwell for a moment on responding with a response she would usually give me that pretty much translates to, [11]"No, and you can get it your own damn self."

[12]Also, since we are on the topic of forks, Candace would use her utensils to take food from my plate whenever we were at restaurants. [14]She didn't ask. [15]She just assumed I had no issue with it and would just take. [16]Normally, this wasn't something that bugged me. Sharing food goes hand in hand with being married I felt. [17]What I did have a problem with is that when I asked to try some of her food, she would almost always decline to let me have any. [18]Why does it matter? [19]Well, it was just one double standard of many.

[20]And now that we are on the topic of food, that reminds me of something else that really bugged me that's worth mentioning. [21]Candace could really dish out the criticism to those who were serving us. [22]Mostly I think of restaurants because this is where it occurred the most. [23]Candace would always make multiple adjustments to an order. [24]She could never just order something and eat it, it had to have special modifications. [25]One item on the side, extra this, none of that, switch that ingredient - these were the kinds of orders she would make. [26]If the waiter or cook messed up one of the details, then I was subjected to having to sit there while she would criticize the server about it. [27]I hated that so much because it was so embarrassing. [28]I lost count of how many times she asked to speak to a manager about a problem with the food or service. [29]I learned my lesson not to bring up how she handled these events. [30]Even if I tried to deter her from making one complaint, I would become the target of her anger all the way home, and everything that came along with that.

11. Fighting an Open Marriage

[1]One night about a year after Cruz was born, Candace asked me a question I would never forget. [2]She asked about having a possible fling with an ex-boyfriend she named and provided her perspective on why that should be acceptable. [3]Her reasoning was that I had more previous partners than her and that it wasn't fair. [4]I was careful not to shame her for being vulnerable enough to express her feelings to me. [5]My reply was

that if she wanted to fundamentally change the dynamic of our marriage and the family we were building, and most likely destroy it, then having an open marriage would certainly do it. [6]I left someone for cheating on me, and I could do it again, whether we have children together or not. [7]Candace knew very well that I leave those who cheat on me.

[8]I didn't want to be in a relationship with someone who was interested in engaging in sex outside of the marriage. [9]She never asked me a question like that again. And I would ruminate sometimes on why I would stay with someone who would ask to do that. [10]Was she doing something behind my back? [11]Was she contemplating it? [12]Was she communicating with ex-boyfriends while we were married and exploring her other options? [14]I did not know. [15]What I did know was that this was just one more red flag that our marriage was in trouble and that I'd be powerless to keep it from going down the drain. [16]I felt like the marriage would be in even worse shape if I simply gave up trying. I felt like my trying was the only thing keeping the marriage together. [17]All I did was try, and here was Candace finally putting in some effort…to involve another man.

Beast Mode:

[18]Translation: "Michael, you aren't enough for me. You are not enough for me to try. [19]I need more than what you can give me. [20]I need better."

[21]LMAO Who's laughing now? [22]No one puts Michael in the corner.

12. No Money, Mo Problems

[1]A year after Cruz was born, the financial problems ramped up. [2]We still only had one job between us, and I was the one working it. [3]My job was not enough to keep sustaining the both of us. [4]Our bank account was dipping into the negative one too many times. The overdraft fees started to kick in, and then money really became a problem. [5]I sought overtime at work whenever it was available, and luckily, it was available often enough to keep finances afloat. [6]That said, I tried to convince Candace for us to start shopping at less expensive grocery stores like Aldi, but Candace acted like Aldi or the neighborhood it was in was low class, or beneath her.

[7]She wanted to do our grocery shopping at the more expensive grocery stores like Trader Joes. [8]It was funny to me that the very neighborhood she thought was beneath her was the only one we could afford to live in on my salary alone for a family of three. [9]A couple years after Cruz, my son Caleb was born, conceived while Candace was again supposedly on birth control. [10]I still worked my main job, and the over time, but for the first time in my life I also took on a second job. [11]I wanted to spend time with my sons, but instead, I rarely saw them because I worked so much.

[12]I felt like things were unfair. [14]Even though I was clearly in the sole provider role that I didn't sign up for, I was good at it. [15]I was good at working long hours and extra jobs while Candace was good at not working, putting me down repeatedly, controlling our finances all the way into the negative, and giving me shreds of affection, as reward for my complete submission to her, as fumes for me to run. [16]She was also very good at starting arguments and doing her part to ensure that they escalated no matter how much I tried to de-escalate them and leaving the house with my sons to disappear for days on end. [17]On a daily basis I would ask myself, [18]"What am I getting out of this relationship?" [19]The answer would always be the same - silence.

[20]Things just kept getting worse in the marriage. When I was able to spend time with my sons, it was amazing and a great distraction from the problems in the marriage. [21]I loved having this chance to be a good father, but something didn't feel right. [22]I felt like Candace was working against me. [23]She would criticize me a lot for how I parented my sons. What I said to them, what I fed them, no matter the case, it was always something for her to criticize me with. [24]I learned quickly to let Candace run the show to avoid the backlash. [25]She was also in control of our finances. [26]She was still unemployed with being a stay-at-home mom being her reasoning. [27]And soon we were constantly in the negative for our bank account. [28]We would run out of money, and she would then leave to her parents with my sons for days to eat there while I would visit the pay advance loan businesses for money for gas, food, and bills. [29]It was such a struggle financially and emotionally. [30]I was really stressed and even though I was married with children, I felt completely on my own.

[31]The marriage did have calm moments sometimes. [32]I don't want to overlook those moments. [33]I took advantage of these moments to speak with Candace about my feelings about certain areas of the marriage and what we could do to strengthen those areas together. [34]Towards the final years, I held two conversations with her where I told her that I felt like our marriage was failing and that I was losing hope that I had what it takes to endure it. These were not about divorce. Those conversations never helped anything, so I tried a different angle, talking about the status of my peace. [35]She didn't handle these conversations well either. [36]The point of me being vulnerable with her about my feelings was so she could see the serious predicament we were in so we could take steps together to fix it and get back to where things were in the first few months of marriage. [37]I was constantly chasing the first few months of marriage when things were way better. [38]It went to crap so fast once we were married. [39]I forgot to mention that we had never lived with each other before marriage, something I was starting to see a lot of value in doing beforehand. [40]Had Candace and I lived together for those six months unmarried, I would've ended the relationship within 6-8 months. [41]I wondered if it was maybe the security of marriage that let her feel that it was ok to act towards me how she did.

[42]Candace used to be someone I shared everything with before we got married. [43]I opened myself up to her like a book, with every part of me exposed to her. [44]By the time we got to my last conversation with her about the state of our marriage, I realized that I didn't like speaking to her anymore, because it would always end up in an argument. [45]She would make comments that I would hold her accountable to, and she would hate when I would use her own words against her. [46]Candace was a hypocrite. [47]She would say she was a Christian, and we went to church, but I would overhear her make fun of what people were wearing in church after service was over, and sometimes while it was ongoing. [48]I told her the Bible said that wives should submit to their husbands, and that I was doing all the submitting and our marriage was going nowhere but down. [49]I suggested that she work on being more submissive and more validating of my opinions and perspectives, even if she didn't agree with them. [50]Her response was that the Bible was ancient, and times were different. [51]So, I quickly realized that Candace would pick and

choose the Bible verses that served her best, instead of her serving God in accordance with the faith she claimed to have.

[52]Many times, Candace would act out in rage during our conversations and arguments when I was trying to help her see how hurtful she was being. [53]Her excuse was that if she was angry, she had the right to say and do anything she felt. [54]I told her that I understood that, but that words and actions had consequences. [55]I told her how damaging her words and actions were to the relationship. [56]These kinds of conversations would end in Candace feeling like I wasn't seeing her perspective, and she made the conversation then become about whether I truly loved her or not. [57]These marathon conversations would end with me assuring her that I loved her and that I wanted things to work out between us, which is why I was trying to have these conversations with her in the first place.

[58]Between the constant arguments, I would always lose or give in for the sake of stability in the relationship, and between feeling like Candace didn't care about me or anything I had to say, I felt like marriage was pointless, and that life was pointless. [59]I was tired and extremely stressed. [60]I felt alone. [61]I was in a state of despair. [62]I didn't want to get a divorce, because it would break our family. [63]I didn't want to stay married to Candace, because it would break me. [64]I couldn't escape via suicide, because I didn't want to leave my sons in that manner. [65]I prayed for death every day for months. [66]I was so miserable. [67]Everything I wanted when I was young, a family, a chance to do better at parenting than my dad, hung like a carrot hanging in front of my face. [68]Every step I took toward this carrot, the carrot would move with me as if there was someone riding my back with the carrot tied to the pole they were carrying. [69]Life felt hopeless.

[70]I thought to myself, is this what my marriage will always be like? [71]This arguing and complaining and me always having to submit to Candace to get her to stop finding the negative of nearly every situation, and then somehow linking that negativity to something about me? [72]I found myself constantly changing what I did and how I did it so that Candace would be happy, or at the very least, not complain about it. [73]I figured, "This was normal right? I'm a loving husband, and a loving husband tries to understand his wife and truly listen, and if she says that

something you were doing or not doing was bothering her, you would surely make an attempt to change that wouldn't you?" [74]You know the whole "happy wife, happy life" phrase? [75]I have something to say about that. [76]If a wife can't create her own happiness, she will come after yours until you have none left, leaving you with no happy wife, no happy life, and no happy self. [77]You can't fill someone else's cup if it's already full… of holes.

13. Straw, Meet Camel's Back

[1]I was eating dinner and Candace decided to just brutally criticize me about something from where she was standing in the kitchen. [2]She completely devalued me with her comments. [3]Something happened. [4]She hurt me with her words. [5]It was like I lost whatever armor plating I had been wearing all those years and I felt the full brunt of her words strike me. [6]Maybe it was because I was in a weakened state and her words were no harsher than they always were. [7]I stopped eating and I just stared into nothingness and stayed silent. [8]She went silent and approached me to hug me as if to undo everything she just said. [9]How could I accept a hug from the same person who was just devaluing me? [10]I excused myself from the table and went into my bedroom where I proceeded to cry in bed like I had never done before, or since. [11]It was like I just received the news of someone close to me dying. [12]I was emotionally obliterated and sobbing uncontrollably. [14]I'm talking real boo-hoo ugly crying.

[15]Candace came up and in silence attempted to comfort me by embracing me. [16]I must've cried for several minutes. [17]Once I quieted down, Candace said to me [18]"You are so strong". [19]This phrase stuck with me ever since. [20]I wondered to myself as she said it, "Why would she say that I'm so strong when I broke down crying because of her belittling me. How is that strong?". [21]It took me over a decade to understand that statement for what it was, and I will touch on that later.

[22]At this point, some part of me died. [23]I radically accepted that this marriage would never change. [24]Things would never go back to the way they used to be in those first few months of marriage. [25]I radically accepted that if the marriage were to last, I would need to continue

giving of myself more and more, while enduring more criticism and cruelty from Candace. [26]I radically accepted that if I were to stop trying, the marriage would fall apart quickly and I would never have the opportunity to be the father I wanted to be for my sons as long as I stayed married to their mother. [27]I pictured my own sons having no respect for me and joining in with my wife on criticizing me. [28]I had to make a choice, because I knew that I had no more compassion to give to Candace or the relationship.

[29]I didn't tell Candace that I emotionally checked out of the marriage. [30]I just stopped hoping. [31]I stopped trying. [32]I would just exist and work until I figured what to do next.

14. Strike Three, You're Out

[1]Within about six months of me going numb, the final nail was finally driven into the coffin that was our marriage. [2]Candace attempted to argue with me while I was in the kitchen sitting next to my son Cruz eating oatmeal for breakfast. [3]Candace began the argument, and I had no energy to go toe-to-toe with her. [4]I wanted to eat breakfast with my son in peace. [5]I told her before, and I mentioned it earlier in this chapter, that I did not want to argue with her in front of the kids. [6]She did so anyway, and she got more upset with me the less I reacted to her. [7]I got quiet and calm while sitting at the table trying to de-escalate her, or at least prevent the argument from escalating further. [8]This made her furious and she started to threaten me. [9]I remained silent and neutral because I felt like anything I did would escalate things. [10]I didn't want my son to witness what I felt was inevitably going to happen.

[11]Candace finally threw a bowl filled with the oatmeal I was eating at my chest right in front of my son who was sitting next to me in his highchair. [12]I sat there still, with no reaction, for a moment. [14]I said to her, "You just threw a bowl at me." [15]And immediately she tried to tell me that she didn't throw anything at me. [16]My food was splatter all over my chest since the bowl she threw at me was my bowl of food I was eating. [17]I couldn't believe how she was trying to convince me that what I just witnessed, and the evidence all over me, didn't really happen. [18]This act was the one thing I told her in the first six months of marriage that was

my biggest concern. [19]I had told her about the toxicity of our relationship and what I didn't want our children to witness. [20]Here I sat, Candace hovering over me, my chest covered in oatmeal, the spoon still in my hand, the bowl on the floor, Cruz's silent and puzzled face - it finally happened. [21]All I could do was remember my father and how he too threw things at me. [22]I figured that if I were to continue to stay in the relationship, that Candace would eventually hit me, and I didn't want to stick around that long. [23]I was barely hanging on to my own sanity. [24]Looking back, I saw that I was insane for holding on as long as I did and trying to prevent the inevitable. [25]I was beginning to understand the meaning in the Bible about being unequally yoked. [26]I felt like I was an ox pulling a plow, while Candace was like a donkey in an ox costume and just sitting on her ass.

15. Highway to Hell

[1]I used to tell Candace that I loved this quote from Seneca, [2]"A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials." [3]I had gone through so much in my life up to her and I meeting. [4]Every obstacle I overcame and emerged stronger. [5]But this obstacle was never supposed to be an obstacle. [6]The marriage itself was an obstacle. [7]I felt like Candace was actively working against a healthy marriage. [8]The pastor's words from our wedding day rang in my ears constantly, "Marriage is a long suffering." [9]I was done suffering. [10]It was clear to me that I wasn't going to get the family I was working toward relentlessly up until that point. [11]It was also clear that I was not just unhappy in the marriage, but absolutely miserable and awaiting death to remove me from my life's situation. [12]But I wasn't allowed to die. [14]The gift of death never came to me, and I knew I would have to take my destiny into my own hands, and I had no intention of taking my own life. [15]So, what was I to do?

[16]I had no money for a divorce and Candace, being the vindictive and controlling person that she was, wouldn't let me just walk away without taking as many pounds of my flesh as she could. [17]I was married to Candace long enough to know exactly who I was dealing with. [18]Candace always needed to be in control of everything and with no one to question her. [19]If I were to question her choices, she would take

offense and would spend hours arguing with me so I could see how she was right, and I was wrong. [20]This is why I felt so invalidated. [21]I was never allowed to have my own perspective if it didn't align with hers, and it rarely did. [22]I knew that if Candace was prone to physical abuse while I was trying to make the marriage work, I could easily envision her finding some way to punish me if I were to file for divorce. [23]I didn't want to leave the marriage or my sons, but I didn't want to stay in the marriage. [24]I finally started to see and believe that it was not the marriage to Candace that was unhealthy for me. [25]I was the problem, it was me. [26]I was someone who cared, and I was fighting against myself to be with someone who did not care.

[27]It was around this time where I just gave up. I had no plan on what to do, but I was done being miserable. [28]I had feared divorce because I gave my word on our wedding day to Candace and God to stay married. [29]I didn't want to betray my promise to God because marriage to Candace was too tough for me. [30]And I honestly thought I would go to hell for giving up on her and destroying any hopes of my sons experiencing a whole family. [31]That desire I had since childhood, to be a better father to my sons than my dad was to me, went out the door. [32]The desire was there, I just finally saw it as being unrealistic. [33]There was no reality where that could happen, and that made me incredibly sad.

[34]I felt like I was sinking into the dark depths of the ocean at night. [35]I pictured Candace safe on the surface in a boat watching me expressionless as I slowly sunk lower and lower into the abyss, not helping me and just watching. [36]I decided that if God were to send me to hell for leaving Candace, then so be it. [37]I allowed the part of me that believed I was capable of making a marriage work to just die. [38]I accepted my eternal fate of damnation. [39]I would not lose the last shred of who I was to spend the next 50 years of my life miserable and struggling. [40]No, I would rather burn for eternity than become something I'm not, and that's true to this day. [41]I truly believed this to be my fate, that hell would become my permanent residence. [42]I didn't forsake God because of my situation, but I did forsake myself. [43]I was done being good. [44]I was done trying, and I didn't want to stick around to see the pathetic 50-year-old version of me that I would have to reduce myself to in order to simply exist in that relationship.

[45]I imagined my kids wouldn't respect me because I wouldn't even be able to respect myself. [46]I pictured my sons being treated by their mom as if they were princes, with me being treated like nothing more than a house servant and chauffeur. [47]I stopped caring about what was sacred. [48]My marriage was no longer, even though I was married on paper. [49]For the next few years, I was celebrating my new unofficial single-hood even though the first 6 months of it I was not yet separated.

[50]From this, a new Michael emerged, a version of me that didn't care anymore for drama, and I was ready to have some fun. [51]If hell was to be my fate, then I was off to earn my stripes my way. [52]First order of business, I wasn't going to pine for Candace's scraps of affection anymore, not when I could go to anyone else and get treated with respect and like I had value. [53]I was someone who was about to willingly break my family apart. [54]I would be considered the bad guy at the end no matter what, so I got good at it.

16. Michael - Family Deserter, Liar, Money Chaser, and Cheater

[1]The Disney movie Pinocchio had a major impact on me as a kid. [2]Pinocchio was a marionette who was brought to life and released from his strings and given freedom, but ended up playing in sin. [3]When it came down to it in the end, he decided to self-sacrifice and choose love and to do good, and it was only then that he became real. [4]I was watching my future as a child and didn't even realize it. [5]I would turn into a bad apple for some time. [6]I did not want to tell lies, for if a man is not of his word, then he is nothing. [7]But this is what I became in my misery and desperation. [8]I became that and more.

[9]I descended into the darkness, just like I did when I used to picture myself drowning in the ocean while Candace watched from the surface. [10]Only this time, in those dark and murky depths, I found that I was able to still breathe. The crushing pressure was there, but I could still operate. [11]I explored these depths of who I was while down there. [12]Even though it wasn't who I truly felt I was, I played in the devil's playground for a few years. [14]The darker it was, the more interested I became. [15]This became my world, and no one was the wiser, not even my friends or

family. [16]I kept quiet before, and now that I was on my dark path, I really kept quiet.

[17]With me not having money for a divorce, and being miserable and done with marriage, I just became promiscuous. [18]I was disgusted with myself way before I started cheating because I was already having unfaithful thoughts. [19]Anyone who wasn't Candace was someone I'd rather be with. [20]At the same time, I was working my ass off at work and got some good job opportunities from it, and the potential for a career in Washington D.C. if I kept working hard with it. [21]Regarding my promiscuity, I didn't handle it the right way, the best way, or anything close to either. [22]I was too pissed about my situation to be too ashamed to stop myself. [23]I got into a relationship, and eventually, I got into more. [24]They were all in other relationships too. [25]Fancy that. [26]All the relationships overlapped each other. [27]I just didn't care anymore. [28]I engaged in sex outside the marriage about six months before I separated from Candace. [29]The more time I spent away from Candace, the more I realized that I didn't have to be miserable anymore by staying married to her. [30]I could just leave, when the time was right, whenever that would be. [31]I stayed alert keeping an eye out for a good opportunity. [32]The shame I felt for what I was doing did not compare to the misery I felt of married life with Candace.

[33]I was upfront about my situation to who I interacted with, and I found that several women were willing to provide me comfort. [34]Like I said before, they were in relationships themselves. [35]My perspective on the institution of marriage just fell apart. [36]No one seemed to care. [37]Everyone's story was that things weren't going well in their relationships. In a nutshell, that was my story too. [38]I was enjoying myself too much to feel sorry for my actions or anyone involved. [39]I did feel guilty at first, once I started having sex outside the marriage, but eventually, even that went away. [40]I felt the rush of dopamine from being treated like a king outside my marriage. [41]I felt attractive, and I felt wanted and craved. [42]I was placed on pedestals that I did not belong on, but I liked being there. [43]It was as if my life, my state of being, was being rebooted. [44]I was rewriting my own operating system while I was operating from within it. [45]I don't know how to put that any better.

[46]I was still sexually active with Candace every now and then. [47]My reasons for that were all over the place. [48]Part of me missed the intimacy that reminded me of the first few months of marriage, and of course the years of our friends-with-benefits status. [49]Part of me hoped that Candace would change. Part of me liked that I no longer needed to keep trying with Candace. Part of me liked that I had this power to not give a fuck anymore. [50]I deceived Candace by not telling her that I was looking to exit the marriage at the first chance, and not telling her about my cheating. [51]I manipulated Candace into a false sense of security by staying sexually active with her. [52]I played into her seduction, just as she was playing into mine. [53]She had no clue that I would be abandoning her. [54]As long as I stayed sexually active with her, I'd be able to keep her in the dark until the perfect moment.

[55]Once I outsourced sex, I no longer saw any value in the relationship with Candace. [56]There was nothing left to fight for. [57]A life with Candace wasn't worth fighting for. [58]Fight to ensure I remain miserable? [59]No, thank you! [60]I was too busy fighting myself for staying married to her for so long without doing something to end it sooner. [61]I suspected that if Candace knew anything about what was happening, that she would use my sons to hurt me somehow. [62]I kept things hidden and covered my tracks.

[63]The belittling remarks and way-too-long arguments made her less attractive to me and I fought being resentful towards Candace for it. The resentment went out the window once I stopped caring about her. [64]I had to kill a part of myself that was attached to her, as if it was some infected part of myself, or the part of me she was holding on to. [65]I felt like I had to sacrifice whatever part of myself was attached. [66]I did so in my mind.

[67]Before going off into the deep end of my own self-gratification journey, there was a Bible verse I clung to around that time. Matthew 5:30 states, "And if your right-hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." [68]Now, I didn't think I was going to hell before going into my darkness, but I did feel like I didn't like myself and felt like something was seriously wrong. [69]I knew that it had something to do with my bond to Candace. [70]I felt like I was better off without her, and that my sons would benefit from a father who wasn't afraid to be

himself or speak his mind. [71]I knew that my sons would not get this father, unless I left the marriage first.

[72]My sons would have to deal with their own internal struggle in coming to terms with the end of the marriage, and there was nothing I could do to prepare them for it without alerting their mother. [73]I couldn't even strategize with their mother on how best to approach the topic to them, because I couldn't risk exposing to her my plans to exit. [74]I needed the element of surprise. [75]When the time was right, I would cleave off whatever part of me was attached to Candace and the relationship itself. [76]Whatever I cut off from myself would remain with Candace, a loss, a final sacrifice of any more parts of myself to her. [77]From that point forward, I would no longer give any more parts of myself away to anyone.

[78]As for work, I continued to pursue higher paying positions and any opportunities to showcase my skill and work ethic in the hopes of achieving advancement. [79]This constant battle to be seen and recognized at my job would see me get many opportunities that I would take advantage of. [80]Candace would accuse me of caring more about money than being at home with my family. [81]She would say this knowing I had the full weight of financial responsibility on my shoulders throughout the entire marriage with the exception of those few months Candace worked in the beginning. [82]Candace knew that my dream was to work in an entirely different field, and she knew that I sacrificed that in order to support the family. [83]The financial issues we were having further solidified my need to pursue higher pay, and that included looking for positions in the Washington D.C. area where my chances of promotion were a lot better.

17. Like Father, Like Son

[1]In mid 2009, my family went on a trip to Ecuador to spend time with my dad's family there. Candace and my sons did not come. It had been so long since I was there, over 12 years. [2]It was great being back. [3]I have such love for my dad's motherland. [4]Ecuador was always magical to me as a kid and now still. [5]When our family was visiting the coast, my dad

invited me to grab a late evening beer and a snack at a local bistro next to the quiet beach.

[6]This evening would become something very special for both of us. [7]As we sat at the outdoor table with our beers, we talked. [8]I opened up to my dad about what I was going through being married to Candace. I described everything I had previously kept hidden from my parents. [9]I explained that the reason I didn't come to my dad sooner was because I didn't want him and my mom to know how much I was struggling in the marriage, mostly because I feared that they would take my side. [10]Why would I worry about them taking my side? [11]That sounds like a very positive thing. [12]I worried that their support of my feelings would become a deciding factor in me choosing to leave Candace, so I stayed quiet for years, but not this evening.

[14]I told my dad about the marital problems I had been going through, and I was specific with him. I explained everything, how hard I tried, and how I felt, all the arguments, everything. [15]I confessed to him that I was seeing someone outside the marriage, and how it opened my eyes to being able to look at myself with some compassion. [16]This was the first time I realized my dad and I had some sufferings in common and I indeed followed a similar path as him without realizing it.

[17]My father described to me the same exact scenario with his ex-wife. [18]The feelings of invalidation and being constantly criticized and desperate for affection were a shared experience for he and I both. [19]My dad warned me that Candace would most likely use the kids to punish me for leaving her. [20]I was amazed at how familiar he was with my situation as it was identical to his own previous marriage. [21]He did not judge me for entering into another relationship and was happy that I was finding my way out of the toxicity that was my marriage. I don't think I told him that the person I was in a relationship with at that time was also in their own miserable relationship.

[22]I felt closer than ever to my dad having this conversation with him. [23]I couldn't believe how my dad completely understood me. [24]Everything I said about how Candace would act and how I had to walk on eggshells around her, he understood. [25]He did it himself once upon a time. [26]To this day, I can't imagine a version of my dad who walked on eggshells.

[27]It's laughable. [28]Yet, here I was following his exact footsteps. [29]My father was his own man, and I could already see myself becoming my own man as well. [30]I just had to get through these first steps of removing myself from the relationship. [31]I want to mention something else, and I think this may be the best place to put it. [32]Before my dad passed away about seven years later, he would get to meet and adore my current wife, telling me that she was the only woman to earn his seal of approval for me. [33]He said it right in front of her, and it meant so much to me that he felt that way. [34]My dad was amazing at discerning someone's character.

[35]Later on in that trip, I shared the news about my situation with the rest of the family. I had their support, and I just needed to wait for the right moment. [36]I had no clue when that would be, but it was always on my mind. [37]It felt good to finally share the truth of what was happening with me and Candace. [38]It was so validating to have my family's support. [39]I had hope that things would work out in the end. [40]I had confidence that, even though my path away from Candace was a dark one, any path that led away from her was better than staying together.

18. The Father I Wanted to Give My Sons

[1]My wanting to help, and my self-sacrificial nature, kept me in the relationship to Candace. [2]I thought that these were virtues I wanted to pass on to my sons. [3]Being married to Candace, these virtues became the bars to my own cage. [4]I wasn't trapped in the cage. I walked right into it, closed the door behind me, and locked it myself. [5]What I became while inside my cage was someone who just gave his power away in an effort to be agreeable and considerate, and Candace was there to take all of it. [6]Once I had a little more power to give, it was something that became siphoned from me.

[7]I started to see that I was the problem. [8]It was me. [9]Candace was Candace. [10]Why had I been trying so hard and sacrificing so much? [11]I had been spending years giving my full effort every day. [12]Many times, it felt like I was giving the only effort. [14]Was I trying to change Candace into being someone that she wasn't by attempting to manage our conflicts? [15]Why was I trying to convince Candace, in our arguments, of my innocence or apologize for misunderstanding or mishearing her? [16]I

spent so much time trying to understand Candace, explaining or defending myself, apologizing, and trying to change myself so that I would be a better husband. [17]What I was really doing was becoming someone Candace could more easily control and invalidate.

[18]I finally started to see how my agreeable nature was just as much of a problem as Candace's disagreeable nature. [19]I must've given in one too many times to her arguments to give Candace the illusion that I cared more about her wants than my own. [20]In reality, I cared more about the relationship than I did myself. [21]And I finally saw that Candace cared more about herself, than she did the relationship. [22]In this I crafted my own closure.

[23]Why be resentful, when I could rely on logic to give myself closure? [24]That is what was happening around this time, a radical acceptance that my leaving Candace was inevitable. [25]Maybe she would grow from the situation, or maybe she would go on to find someone who she could control, so she could finally exist happily in a marriage without me. [26]Maybe the next guy won't be so much of a push over and she will see she can't control him and would allow their relationship to naturally grow. [27]All I knew was that these were Candace's problems to resolve. [28]I spent years trying to do the impossible, I just finally had to accept that it was indeed impossible and appreciate the amount of effort I put into it, instead of shaming myself and feeling guilty. [29]If there were a way to make a clean exit with everyone being mutually satisfied with the outcome, I would've done it.

[30]I tried to envision the future. [31]I saw two versions, and both were ugly. [32]I always wanted children, but there was no way I was going to give them the kind of father that chose to stay in a cesspool of a marriage. [33]I pictured my sons as young adults walking all over me, just like their mother, because they would have witnessed their mother treating me poorly all their life. [34]The other future I saw, I risked it all to survive by leaving the marriage and possibly creating an enemy in their mother. [35]I knew that my sons might grow to hate me, no matter what I did. [36]Additionally, they might secretly blame themselves. [37]They deserved a complete me, even if it weren't until later in life. [38]Even if there was the chance, they might not even be interested in knowing me when they got older, I had to take the risk to save myself. [39]I hated how my battle

would spill into, or become, theirs. [40]They deserved better. [41]I wanted to be the solution to what they would be going through but, before that, I would need to first become the problem behind it.

19. Konflicted Mortal

[1]How was it that I was certified to train employees in managing conflict, and successful at managing conflicts at work, yet was challenged to do so at home? [2]I felt like I was not an equal partner. [3]I felt less than. [4]Even though there were good times every now and then, they were not enough to block out all the emasculating behavior I endured from Candace. [5]The lower I felt in my sadness, the more I started to think of myself as pathetic for staying in a marriage where I was so unhappy.

[6]I knew that if I were to leave Candace, that life would become for difficult for her. [7]I didn't want that, but I cared more about surviving the relationship myself. [8]I felt like if I didn't leave her soon, things would just get gradually worse. [9]I also had a feeling that if Candace was aware that I was leaving, then she would attempt to prevent it, resulting in things getting worse. [10]Since things would get worse no matter what I would do, I might as well pick the one that works best for me. [11]I needed to depart covertly and get far enough away from Candace before she would have a chance to stop me or punish me after doing so. [12]But, when or how would I be able to do that?

20. DLAB

[1]The Department of Defense has a test called the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB). [2]The point of the test was to see how quickly you can pick up a new language and how complex it can be. [3]In the test, which I took back in 1999, we could not rewind the cassette tape which housed the instructions as well as the questions. [4]In this book, I kind of teach a new language. [5]Weird right? [6]It's not a language like English or Spanish, but another layer to your current language. [7]Unlike the tape cassette, you can flip backwards through the pages of this book whenever you want. [8]Before you know it, you'll learn the new tongue. [9]It is sharp and cuts deep.

CHAPTER 4
TIME TO LEAVE "THE SUCK"

"Even the finest sword plunged into salt water will rust."
— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

The Running Man
By Terrell Andretti
-
Roar
By Katy Perry
-
Joke's On You
By Charlotte Lawrence

Beast Mode:

[1]Finally! [2]I love it when a plan comes together. [3]Yup, that's all you get. [4]OK, no more Beast Mode for you. [5]Now, go away! ;) [6]Yup, I can use emoji's now. [7]No rules apply to me. [8]Even my editor knows that Beast Mode is off limits. [9]Mwahaha ha ha! [10]You know what? [11]While I'm here breaking rules, let's break one more.

[12]#IDONTGIVEAFUCK [13]#YOUKNOWYOULIKETHIS [14]#JUST-WAITTILLATER [15]#MINDFUCKAHEAD [16]#GETUSEDTO-MYSWEARING [17]#OKIMDONE

1. #CuttingStrings

[1]In the Army we called things that were grueling, but part of the job, "the suck". [2"]The suck" was a place or position of suffering. [3]We had a phrase, "Embrace the suck", which means to radically accept your situation and be able to operate successfully from within it. [4]I saw my entire relationship with Candace as "the suck", with the exception of those first six months. [5]I saw that it was those first six months that I was chasing after. [6]I mentioned before that Candace and I had not lived together before marriage, and that had we been living together, there was no way I would've married her after seeing what she was like. [7]Candace's mother was adamant about Candace and I not living together until after marriage. [8]I honored that, but in retrospect, I had blind trust in Candace back then. [9]This blind trust simply wasn't earned, I gave it away. [10]I learned to be a little less trusting with people and spend more time discerning a person's intentions. [11]I was already growing in understanding and adapting to the reality I seemed so naive to notice before.

[12]One of my biggest fears as a kid was changing into something else against my will. [14]I remember watching Disney's The Little Mermaid when it was released and seeing what happened to the MerPeople who traded their souls for something material. [15]They suffered the fate of being turned into these pathetic little stationary creatures, unable to do anything to break free of their misery. [16]For them, it was too late. [17]Even before that, I remember watching Pinocchio, yet another Disney movie. [18]There is this part where Pinocchio is trying to fit in. [19]He wants to be like all the other boys. [20]He follows them to an island of self-gratification.

[21]Pinocchio is tempted to join in with the other boys in their debauchery, and he does give into it a little.

[22]To Pinocchio's horror, and mine as a child while watching this, his red-haired friend Lampwick was struck with intense fear as his body started mutating, and his voice started changing. [23]Lampwick was turning into a donkey, and not just him, but all the boys were changing. [24]Pinocchio freezes in fear while watching this all unfold and is immediately concerned about himself. [25]A feeling comes over him, and by his own choices, he begins to mutate into a donkey himself. [26]Because he doesn't fully partake in the self-gratification, he is spared a complete transition keeping the ears and tail.

[27]Seeing this donkey scene play out as a kid, with Lampwick completely transitioning into a lower animal life form was horrifying to me. [28]I was haunted by watching how his thoughts became nothing but instinct, and his habits programmed while he kicked and squealed. [29]Sure, I can articulate that now, but as a kid it registered this way for me then. [30]Who would sacrifice their free will for a lot of self-gratification? [31]You couldn't just tell them in advance that was what they would be doing to themselves. [32]No, you'd have to hide that truth. [33]All omitted truth is deception, which is manipulation.

[34]Here I was, in this miserable constantly failing marriage. [35]I felt like if I didn't leave soon, I too would mutate into some lesser life form. [36]I would still look like me and sound like me, but I would have to kill the spark within me. [37]I felt like that spark was who I was, and it's no doubt what drew Candace to me before we married. [38]I wasn't going to accept my fate of mutating into this lesser version of myself.

[39]As I continued to await a window to leave the relationship, my finances remained in the negative and continued to get worse. [40]Right before my opportunity to separate came, we suffered over $600 in overdraft fees from continually going into the negative in our bank account. [41]It was a financial nightmare. [42]I tried to save money where we could, but Candace had full control and management of our finances. [43]While Candace remained unemployed and a stay-at-home mom, I continued to work at my second job and the overtime from my primary job. [44]I missed being able to spend time with my sons. [45]The financial situation was so

bad that we could no longer afford to rent our apartment after the lease would expire. [46]Candace and I agreed to stay at her mother's house until our situation improved. I never felt welcome in her mother's house. Her mother was more of a clean freak than Candace was, and it always made me feel uncomfortable. [47]This was not a place I wanted to spend the night at, let alone indefinitely. [48]Because of the toxicity in our marriage, I didn't even feel that comfortable in my own home. [49]On top of that, I knew I had one foot out the door of the marriage anyway. [50]On a side note, my part-time employer went out of business, and I was left with just my full-time job, adding additional financial stress.

[51]We were a couple months away from the apartment lease ending, and Candace would take my sons with her to her parent's home to spend several days there, coming home once in a while. [52]It was around this time that my sister told me that she was getting her master's degree in upstate New York and that she was looking for a babysitter who could watch her toddler son. [53]I found it convenient that my lease was expiring, and I happened to be sitting on a large amount of vacation time, so I figured this was my chance to escape. [54]It was perfect. [55]I got the vacation time approved for the entire month of October and I shared the news with my sister that I would be helping her by staying with her and watching my nephew. [56]I explained to Candace the situation of helping my sister by taking care of my nephew, and she was not supportive. [57]I kept hidden my motive to leave her out of fear that Candace would react and punish me. [58]This was my concern based on how Candace would act when angry with me, which was any time I stood up for myself or tried to hold her accountable.

[59]Back then I had my blue 2003 Chevy Avalanche, which I named Big Blue or Blue for short. [60]Candace's parents let us borrow their Chevy Cavalier so that I had a vehicle to get to me to work, while Candace used my spacious Avalanche to take the boys to and fro. [61]Candace did not want me to take the Cavalier to New York. Her excuse was that it wasn't my car. [62]I asked if I could take my truck since it was the only vehicle that was mine, while she could use the Cavalier for her and the boys. [63]It wasn't ideal to transport my sons due to it being a small two-door coupe. [64]Candace told me that she would keep both vehicles, and that I could take a taxi to the Greyhound station and then the bus to New York.

[65]Either way, it wasn't her problem to solve, and she let me know that I was on my own. [66]This was how bad things were. [67]She wouldn't even drop me off. [68]These were the kinds of things that further validated my decision to end the relationship, and this would become one of many validations I would receive over the years. [69]Each validation made me feel stronger in my decision to be without her, which would become priceless to me later when I would come to need the extra validation.

[70]I didn't want to be without a vehicle, but I also didn't want to leave my sons without a spacious vehicle either. [71]I left that resolution up to Candace and her family, but first I would need to get my hands on Big Blue. I was moving things out of the apartment and into storage and cleaning up so as not to lose my security deposit. [72]I asked Candace if I could borrow my truck for the last trip to storage. [74]I dropped the Cavalier off at her parent's home and picked up the Avalanche keys from Candace, who asked how long I would need the truck for. I told her two hours. [75]I grabbed Big Blue, and I grabbed the remaining items from the apartment and brought them to storage quickly.

2. The Exodus of Me and Blue

[1]For a moment, I couldn't believe that I was finally taking action to exit the relationship. As soon as I locked up the rest of the items in storage, I had just over an hour left before Candace would start asking questions about when I would be bringing the truck back. [2]My first order of business was to close our joint account at the nearest bank. It was in the negative, so I had to cough up some cash to zero the balance. I was able to close it quickly, but my concern was that the bank agent told me that there was a chance that the account could reopen if there was a deposit or attempt to withdraw even with a zero balance. [3]I was concerned that Candace, in her rage at me taking my truck, would punish me by taking money out of the account and keeping it in the negative. [4]I had about 30 minutes left. I continued driving towards upstate New York.

[5]While driving I started thinking that Candace would be in a rage that I both took the truck and closed the bank account, and I wondered what else she might try to do to get me back. [6]My heart rate was racing with adrenaline. [7]I felt alive for the first time in so long. [8]The last time I

remember feeling this way was when I deserted in the Army. [9]I knew I would be ok, but I also knew that Candace was going to be very angry. [10]When Candace is angry, she reacts in that anger without control, and I can depend on her doing just about anything to teach me a lesson that she's not one to be crossed. [11]It was a good thing I knew Candace this well, because it allowed me to be several steps ahead. [12]I still had the advantage. [14]While I was driving, I realized that Candace could purchase music via her cell phone which was attached to my phone plan, and I figured that she just might try to use the account to purchase an insane amount of music just to spite me. [15]After all, I'd be the one who would have to pay for it. [16]If I wanted to protect myself from that happening, I would need to remove her from my phone line. [17]I even closed out our Netflix account and got my own.

[18]By the time the two hours had passed, I had severed every financial loose end I could think of. [19]I wanted to file for a divorce, but I had no money, but that was a tomorrow problem, and I was mainly concerned with the today problems. [20]At the two-hour mark, Candace called me to inquire on my status. I told her I'd need another 30 minutes. I kept driving. [21]I thought about my sons and what kind of future awaited all of us. [22]I prayed they would someday understand that I left because I needed to, and that it had nothing to do with them. [23]If anything, they were the reason I stayed married to their mother for so long and tried to make the marriage work as hard as I did. [24]I knew they would be physically safe with their mother at their grandparents' house. [25]If anyone could deal with the controlling nature of Candace, it would be my sons. [26]After all, this is all they knew. [27]They would be used to it and would probably deal with it way better than I did.

[28]Candace called again upset that I was taking too long to bring the truck back home, and that's when I told her that I needed a vehicle for my trip. [29]She was livid. [30]I didn't tell her about the account being closed or that she would soon be losing her phone service. [31]These things she would come to find out on her own.

[32]As soon as I arrived in upstate New York, I looked into removing money from my retirement investments. [33]I told Candace that I needed the money because all my credit cards were maxed out and my bank account was empty. [34]I offered her half of the money I withdrew in order

to get her to sign for the withdrawal. [35]As soon as I got the cash about a week later, I gave Candace her half and used the rest to get an attorney and file for divorce. [36]This really upset Candace and she stated to me that if she knew my intention was to file for divorce, she wouldn't have helped me take out the money. [37]As expected, me filing for divorce was like a declaration of war to her.

[38]She contested the divorce, which left me married to this person I wanted absolutely nothing to do with outside of co-parenting. [39]Per Illinois law at that time, I would need to wait two full years and continue to live separately in order for me to file for divorce again without her having the ability to contest it. [40]Candace was already using my sons to try and guilt trip me into staying married to her by having my sons record videos to sway me to come back to their mom. [41]Even though I told her I didn't want to be with her anymore and to not put the boys up to that, she kept recording these videos without considering the impact to my son's mental health. [42]I did not want my sons to think that they failed at bringing me back. [43]I assured them how much I loved them, but of course they were young and had great difficulty processing what was happening to the family. [44]I had to be so careful in how I spoke with them, because I did not want them to feel unloved or unimportant. [45]I did my best with these conversations with them over the years.

3. I Become Deception

[1]Once the month with my sister was over, I needed to return to work so I got a studio apartment north of the loop in Chicago. [2]I also did another six-month temporary duty assignment in the Washington, D.C. area at my agency headquarters. [3]A lot of my work was getting recognized, and I had an amazing opportunity to support a major initiative. [4]I would try to coordinate seeing my sons without any secured parenting time. [5]Candace insisted that we do everything as a family whenever I tried to see my sons. [6]I didn't think it was a good idea because I had no interest in being anywhere near Candace. [7]I quickly noticed how Candace would use these opportunities to portray a healthy family experience to me. [8]I wasn't buying it, but I pretended that I believed. [9]I would feign light interest in Candace for the sake of being able to continue spending time

with my sons, even if it had to be shared with her. [10]My concern was that my sons would be under the impression that the family would be staying together. [11]I didn't want to hurt their feelings, but I also didn't want to lead them on. [12]It was a tough position to be in.

[14]There were times I would end up sleeping with Candace. [15]I had my reasons and I mentioned them already. [16]But now I had a new reason. [17]There was a part of me that knew that if I wanted to keep seeing my sons for the next two years, I would have to manipulate Candace into believing that there was a chance that I would come back. [18]I didn't like being deceptive and manipulative, but I also had zero interest in seeing Candace rage at the truth. [19]Now was not the time for truth. [20]Things did not have to be that way. [21]I tried so hard for so long, and it felt like it was for nothing.

[22]I used to think of myself as a good person, but here I was lying, cheating, and still sleeping with Candace. [23]I want to be forthcoming with this next statement. [24]I had zero intentions of staying married to Candace, and I was angry with myself for giving Candace so much of my agency and getting nothing in return that I did want to hurt Candace. [25]I made sure Candace believed that I still harbored passion for her. [26]It was all a rouse to get what I wanted, which was more time with my sons. [27]I liked that she thought we had a chance. [28]I liked how easy it was to instill hope in her, knowing that someday I would crush her for treating me and the marriage like her dumping ground, and for making me feel so small. [29]Candace used to use sex to control me, and here I was returning the favor without her realizing it. [30]Now she was the desperate one. [31]She was worried that the relationship was truly coming to an end. [32]I mean, all she had to do was sign the divorce papers, and we would be over just like that.

Beast Mode:

[33]I can laugh now because…well, you'll see. [34]It's in a later chapter. [35]Don't worry, it's not in the 13th chapter. ;) [36]I told ya'll, the rules don't apply to me. [37]You'll figure it out later.

[38]#CHAPTER13ISSPECIAL [39]#BACKTOTHEFUTURE
[40]#ITSABOUTTIME [41]#SUBTEXTISFUN [42]#JUSTASK-

GREGORYBATESON [43]#IMONLYJUSTBEGINNING

[44]I didn't need her anymore, and it felt really good to know that. [45]Part of me felt sorry for Candace. [46]It was too easy to have been able to make our relationship work. [47]I served up every opportunity to improve things on a silver platter repeatedly. [48]I took repeated criticisms for years and still tried. [49]I was lonely the entire marriage and I still tried. [50]Candace didn't do any one thing to destroy my trust in her, but it was years of this stuff that destroyed my trust in her. [51]The years of trying fruitlessly also did damage to my ability to even trust myself to make good choices.

[52]Throughout the beginning of the separation, Candace would try to talk to me over the phone about putting the relationship back together. [53]These conversations would go on for hours and never get anywhere. [54]I would tell her why I wanted the divorce in the first place, explaining about all the times I felt devalued and controlled. [55]I would barely be able to finish a sentence before she would interrupt me and make me look like the bad guy, as if I never tried. [56]As soon as I would start explaining how I did try and in detail, Candace would interrupt me again with accusations. [57]It was as if she didn't want the conversation to move forward. [58]It felt like a tug of war of words. [59]I tried to convince her of my perspective, and she would argue her perspective at the cost of devaluing mine. [60]I soon recognized a pattern. [61]Candace had no interest in coming to a conclusion together if she were to have any fault at all or be seen in a less-than-perfect light. [62]Her false image of being a good wife was falling apart, and she fought against it.

[63]Since I had no interest in arguing with Candace anymore, a perk of being separated, I would have to tell her that I would be hanging up the phone. [64]The phone itself was a perk as I was able to communicate with Candace and also simply end the conversation if it wasn't going anywhere. [65]Just because I wanted to stay connected with my sons didn't mean I had to kiss her butt and go back and forth with her in endless arguments. [66]How I spent my time was for me to decide how I applied it and who I spent it with. I had to hang up on Candace often back then. [67]I could tell that if I didn't tell her what she wanted to hear, she would then resort to shaming me for devastating our family, for being selfish, and for only thinking of what I wanted, not what was best for her sons. [68]Yes, I

said "her sons". It was at this time that she claimed my sons as her own. [69]I didn't complain about her claiming them with her words as it would just encourage her to continue saying it. She continued saying it anyway and I knew why she was doing it; she wanted to hurt me. [70]She knew since before we got married that I wanted more than anything to be a father and to give my sons a great experience of closeness with me. [71]This was the one thing she had control over, and she knew it. [72]My sons were the one and only way to truly hurt me, and she knew that too.

Beast Mode:

[73]I'm laughing right now. [74]I know it seems out of place. [75]You'll understand after you finish Chapter 11.

[76]Sometimes in our conversations, when she wasn't happy with the way the conversation was going while she was acting nice, she would switch to attempting to shame me. [77]When shaming me wasn't working for her, she would switch to being the victim of our relationship and make me out to be a mean person, or that I didn't try hard enough in the marriage. [78]Since I was secure in who I was and knew how hard I worked in the marriage to keep it from falling apart, I didn't feed into her accusations of me being the offender or her being the victim. [79]Then, she would switch gears into raging at me over the phone, to which I would reply with a warning say that we were no longer having a conversation and that it would be best if we didn't talk. [80]This would result in Candace becoming nice with me again. [81]And so, the cycle would just continue. I would let this go on for hours and over several phone calls over time, because I was starting to recognize a pattern.

[82]I noticed that Candace would cycle through the same emotions in order as if she were operating on a script. [83]She would start with nice, then shaming, then making me the bad guy and her the innocent victim, and the rage, and then back to nice all over again. [84]All I had to do to keep this loop running was not to give in to any of it. [85]This is why I had to hang up the phone so much, because it simply would never end.

[86]Eventually I noticed another pattern layered on top of the previous pattern. [87]Candace just wanted me to stay engaged with her in conversation. [88]It was as if me continuing to argue with her made her feel impor-

tant. [89]I didn't like all the negative energy from the arguments, and I was done wasting my time and feeling exhausted by entertaining these sessions with Candace. [90]I started cutting the talks short. [90]Once I would take notice of Candace cycling through her tactics, I would go straight to ending the conversation, which would take her straight into a rage where she would bring up dark parts of my past like childhood trauma as a way to keep me engaged. [91]I knew she was bringing these Hail Mary topics to keep me engaged and reactive. [92]Instead, as soon as she would bring up my traumas, I would hang up the phone. [93]She would call me back repeatedly no matter how many times I sent her calls to voicemail. [94]She would text me nonstop trying to get me to reengage with her. [95]It wasn't working, but that didn't stop me from completely relishing every single damned one of her failed attempts. [96]It felt good to be the one with all the power. [97]I never wanted it to be about that, but with Candace, everything was about power.

[98]Candace used the traumas that I shared with her in vulnerability, in the beginning stage of our relationship, as a way to make me upset and argue back with her. [99]I could tell that she just wanted to keep talking to me, that it made her feel important. [100]All she had to do was just acknowledge her role in the dissolution of our marriage. That would at least form the basis of something to work from. At that point, I would've been willing to try again, but she never did. [101]It was so easy. [102]All she had to do was just try. [103]But she'd rather fight, and I no longer had energy for it. [104]I knew that Candace was bringing up my traumas as a method to control the conversation, but what she must've forgotten was that I healed my traumas on my own before I even met her. [105]All she was doing was exposing to me how wretched her ass truly was. [106]What kind of person who was interested in staying together would sabotage her own chances of making that a reality? [107]All she did was validate me repeatedly that I was right to file for divorce.

[108]Eventually I was able to get a permanent job in the Washington D.C. area. I had to get a roommate in order to afford living close to where I worked. [109]I started paying child support shortly after filing for divorce. [110]It wasn't court-ordered. [111]With the cost of living near my new job, and paying child support, I found myself needing to be very careful with my spending. [112]I couldn't truly afford to make the trip to Chicago every

three months like I wanted to, so I started to slowly go into credit card debt in order to keep the intervals to about one visit every 3-4 months. [113]Candace would call me to shame me for my absence and what it was doing to "her" boys. [114]My response would be that I would obviously want to see them more often if I could afford it. [115]Her next line would always be some variation of this one, "`Well, I guess you should've thought of that before leaving the state, huh?!?". [116]Candace loved to drive that point home often, but what she didn't realize was that moving so far away from her actually made me feel pretty safe. [117]I didn't have to worry about her showing up at my door or stalking me.

[118]Over the next couple years Candace would continue to attempt to reconnect with me, while at the same time, and sometimes in the same piece of correspondence, shaming me for leaving her and "her" sons. [119]She was completely unregulated blasting me with vitriol in one email, and then talking about the good times we had and what she missed about us in another email. [120]Before moving to the D.C. area, I used to respond to some of these so we would have insanely lengthy emails going back and forth where I'd be addressing her accusations and attempting to get her to hold herself accountable. [121]Eventually, I got tired of the back and forth and stopped responding which really aggravated Candace. [122]She asked me to at least reply to her to let her know that I was reading her emails. [123]I didn't like doing anything for Candace anymore, but I figured I could at least reply with an "ok" whenever I got her emails. This is what I did for the majority of her emails.

[124]Sometimes, in Candace's emails, she would go into how terrible I made her feel and how miserable she was. [125]These emails astonished me. [126]She didn't seem to care about my feelings, only how she was feeling. [127]She repeatedly used the phrase, "You made me" as if I had control over her emotions and actions. [128]I already knew how "not to make her" upset, by doing whatever she said and how she said it. [129]And those days were over.

[130]Candace never mentioned being miserable before when we were married, but I mentioned it several times when trying to work on the marriage. [131]I never told her that she made me miserable. [132]No, being bound to Candace was misery because of her behavior. [133]Why would I go back into a miserable relationship so that I could keep a controlling,

vindictive, and invalidating person from suffering their own deserved misery?

[134]I'm no one's savior, especially not to anyone who doesn't want to do the work to save themselves. [135]This whole situation with Candace helped me to radically accept that some people don't change. [136]No one changes if they don't want to. [137]I wanted someone to love me for who I was, not fall in love with me and then try to change me into something I'm not. [138]I wanted someone I could be vulnerable with, but not use those vulnerabilities or traumas against me in order to hurt me later.

[139]I decided I wasn't going to try to change the other person either, whoever I would be with next. [140]I also knew that if I saw something about their character that I didn't like, or values that were completely different than mine, that I would need to be able to break off the relationship. [141]I wouldn't need to tell them why, because I wouldn't want anyone to change for me or because of me. [142]I know too well what it's like to make little changes to yourself so that the other person is happy, or so they don't get upset.

[143]My days of walking on eggshells were so over. [144]Or so I thought. [145]I had some new eggshells now. [146]The version of Candace that I was going to spend the rest of my life dealing with would require me to use tact. [147]I was finally ridding myself of her, yet I still would have to co-parent with her. [148]Documentation would become my ally. [149]I needed to make sure that if the day ever came for me to have to defend myself or my words against Candace, that I would have the ability to do so in spades.

Beast Mode:

[150]Hint hint. ;) [151]Git gud with documenting. [152]Tag that stuff with dates, key words, topics, pathologies, fucking everything. Photos, videos, audio recordings, letters, emails, and texts, keep all of it. [153]The better you get at organizing and backing up your shit, the easier these battles become later.

[154]#WARWARNEVERCHANGES[155]#EVIDENCESPEAKS-VOLUMES[156]#TRUTHISNOTDEFAMATION[157]#TRYITCANDACE

4. Activity Time - Voltron (Lion Version)

[1]Could you imagine trying to explain Voltron, the fully assembled lion-based robot, to the average person from 2000 years ago? [2]How would you do it? [3]Now, let's say you never gave them the description. What if that same person from 2000 years ago simply saw that same Voltron in action? How would that person describe what they saw to a friend? [4]Some things are very difficult to put into words. [5]Give this activity your best shot. [6]I wonder how A.I. would describe Voltron using only terms and knowledge from a specific period in time. [7]Maybe we aren't there yet.

CHAPTER 5
LETTING GO WHILE HOLDING ON

"It is really a high wire act to co-parent with a narcissist."
— Dr. Ramani

How Not to Drown
By CHVRCHES & Robert Smith
-
My Way
By Limp Bizkit

Beast Mode:

[1]Welcome to ten years of a private slice of hell wrapped up into a single chapter. [2]It pays to be patient and methodical while enduring the suffering. [3]Is that a green glowing light I see coming from the end of this chapter? [4]What's all that about? [5]Looks spooky. [6]I like it.

[7]# ALRIGHT3X

1. Contest This

[1]In late 2012 I was able to file for divorce again. My sons at this time were 6 and 4 years of age. [2]Having recently moved to the Washington D.C. area I would now need out-of-state visitation rights. It had been two years of separation since I filed for divorce the first time. [3]This time, I wouldn't have to worry about Candace contesting it. [4]She would have no choice but to finally let me go. [5]The end was finally near. [6]Of course, I didn't tell Candace that I would be filing, because I wanted as much access to my sons for as long as I possibly could. [7]Up until this point, I enjoyed regular video calls a few times each week. [8]I knew that once I filed, it would upset Candace. I had enough experience with Candace to be able to predict her next moves. [9]I knew that the only way she could hurt me was to isolate my children from me or turn them against me, so I braced myself for it after filing for divorce. [10]Just as I predicted, the video calls stopped and so did any interactions with my sons for a while. [11]I called Candace out when this happened, and over the next 12 years it would happen often. [12]I had to be so careful navigating co-parenting with Candace. [14]I couldn't take these periods of isolation personally. [15]I had to be strong and keep documenting.

[16]With me and my boys interacting less, and the topic of the divorce resurfacing at the Sanders house, I felt like Candace would surely try to start alienating me from my sons. [17]The reduced interaction with them was just the beginning of the alienation. [18]Back then, Candace would send me videos of my young sons asking if I would stop telling lies and be good and stay married to Mommy because that's what God says is the right thing. [19]I left them without warning, so they were valid in considering me as deceptive, plus their mother made sure to tell them I was. [20]They asked me why I was deciding to get the divorce since we were

supposed to be a family. Their words and their emotions tore me apart. They were right to feel sad, and right to feel like our family was broken. [21]They were right to believe that Mommy and Daddy weren't together because it was Daddy's choice.

[22]My young sons would ask me why I didn't want to be married to mommy anymore. I had to walk a fine line explaining this to my sons. [23]I told them that Mommy wasn't nice to Daddy, and this resulted in Candace lashing out at me for making her out to be anything less than perfect. [24]My sons would later ask me why I chose to still leave the family if Mommy apologized. Because it's not good if someone says sorry and you don't forgive them. [25]In their mind, forgiveness meant another chance. [26]They didn't understand that I forgave their mom many times. [27]Because I didn't want to cause my sons any more grief by being caught in the middle, I accepted the role of being viewed as the lying, unforgiving, spiteful person, who gives up when things get hard. [28]I radically accepted that this falsehood would be their reality. [29]There was no changing their minds without vilifying their mother, and it was hard to answer their questions without doing so.

[30]I was concerned that if I didn't accept that this would be my new reality for the foreseeable future, Candace would drive them away from me (known as parental isolation or parental alienation). [31]I knew it was a serious possibility because I've seen it done to others in my situation, and I saw how it hurt them so deeply. [32]These loving, caring, empathetic parents were having their children turned against them. [33]I did not want this to be the case with me. [34]I knew that someday, when they would most likely be 18, I would tell them everything. [35]But until then, I would need to just continue seeing them as much as I possibly could without completely destroying myself financially.

[36]Speaking of being financially destroyed, I barely had any money to file for divorce again. It was a real struggle for me financially, and this was mainly because I did everything to see my sons every three months for over a year. [37]The airfare, the hotel, and the car rental from the out-of-state visits would slowly bury me in serious debt. [38]I had no energy to fight. [39]I didn't want to fight because I felt like it would never end. [40]I pictured me driving myself to financial ruin and eventually having to settle for less-than-ideal parenting rights. [41]Candace didn't want partial

custody. She didn't even want full custody. No, she wanted sole custody, completely eliminating me from being involved with decisions that would impact my sons. [42]I agreed to mediation on the matter of custody and out-of-state visitation with my sons which Candace was fiercely fighting. [43]In mediation, Candace stood her ground on concern for one of my sons and how he could not be too far from her because of his special needs. [44]I agreed to go to a counseling group to give the verdict on out-of-state visitation. [45]I contacted the counseling group, and they told me they didn't have an option for me to attend these sessions virtually and that it would take several sessions to come to a conclusion that may or may not allow for out-of-state visitation.

2. Not So Radical Acceptance

[1]Knowing that I couldn't afford several trips to Illinois for the multiple mediation sessions, I was starting to lose my spirit. [2]I was also pretty sure that without having parenting time secured, I wouldn't be able to see my sons while in town for these counseling sessions. [3]In retrospect, I was right to feel so sure about that. [4]I felt that Candace would be relentless in stopping me from getting any out-of-state rights, because she was so willing to make up any excuse, to keep me from seeing my sons. [5]Candace was trying to make the argument that one of my sons had special needs and that those needs should limit out-of-state visitation. [6]I strongly felt that if she couldn't convince the counselors that my son had special needs, then it would just be another matter she would make up to fight me on in order to limit my visitation. [7]I knew that me being in an apartment with a roommate would eventually be a factor that Candace would exploit as an unfit parenting environment if I continued to pursue out-of-state visitation. [8]The whole situation was so unfair. [9]I just wanted to spend time with my sons where I lived.

[10]I questioned Candace on her statement to the court that one of my sons had special needs, which led me to reach out to the specialist who she claimed made the diagnosis. [11]I reached out to that specialist who stated to me that she did not give that diagnosis to my son, and that she did not consider him as special needs. [12]I asked the specialist if they could please submit a statement to the court, to which the specialist asked to not be

involved in the court case. [14]It was clear to me at that point that Candace was surely lying her way into ensuring my visitation would be limited. [15]I didn't want Candace shopping around until she found a specialist who would hand her the piece of paper she needed to help her position in mediation or court. [16]If my son didn't have special needs, regardless of what a piece of paper said, I certainly didn't want him believing that he did.

[17]I had no choice but to either fight my way into financial ruin, and intense anxiety, and in turn cause all kinds of long-term damage to my sons, or simply give in. [18]I reluctantly decided that it was best not to fight. [19]I gave up. [20]I didn't have the energy nor the willpower. [21]I didn't have the money. [22]The more I fought, the more I would be viewed by everyone as disagreeable and contentious. [23]The last thing I wanted was for everyone in Candace's family hating me, with the effect that would most likely have on my sons' feelings towards me. [24]I felt strongly that Candace would exploit that in order to alienate me from my sons and, with the lines of communication between me and my sons under her control, I considered that a real threat to my relationship with my sons. [25]I viewed every $1000 I spent on legal matters as a trip to see my sons that would no longer happen. [26]Considering that it took me at least a few months to be able to afford that, I felt like if I continued mediation, regardless of the outcome, I would see my sons less as the end result. [27]I cared more about seeing my sons in a hotel room every three to four months than I did about going broke trying to make mediation work over time. [28]That kind of spending would result in me seeing my sons way less often, regardless if the end result was achieving out-of-state visitation or not. [29]I also had a strong feeling that even if I secured out-of-state visitation rights, Candace would just come up with yet some other lie in order to fight it.

[30]I wanted the whole thing to be over and for the divorce to be final. [31]It had been nearly two and a half years of being separated from my sons and being at Candace's mercy for contact with them and visitation. I was tired of not having rights for any contact with my sons. I needed the divorce to be over so that I could have what little rights I would end up with. [32]I wanted so badly to be able to spend time with my sons where I

live, but I decided that it was a battle not worth fighting until my financial situation improved.

[33]I had no place in Illinois to take them but a hotel room. And this was what would become of the next decade of my life, spending my parenting time in hotel rooms with the constant threat of Candace trying to pry my sons' hearts from me in between my visits. [34]I lost count of how many times over the past decade that she physically disrupted my visits, or disrupted them with phone calls. [35]I could only afford to see my sons three to four visits per year in this hotel room, and here was Candace to interrupt my visitation with them with her innocent-in-appearance phone calls to check on them. [36]I made it known to Candace several times that I viewed her interruptions for exactly what they were. [37]It didn't stop her.

[38]I felt like Candace was being so vindictive about me divorcing her, and because I removed her access to me by moving so far away, she would find punitive ways to stick it to me. [39]Sometimes Candace would try to pick a fight with me about something minor from the recent visitation trip; like I didn't put the dirty clothes in the right part of the boy's suitcase or that a sock was missing, or that I gave them candy with red food color in it. [40]Either way, the discussions, or arguments (because they would fluctuate between the two), would always go the same way. [41]Candace seemed to love how to navigate the discussions in such a manner with me, that it would often lead her to say some variation of the following, "I guess you should've thought about that before divorcing me and breaking apart our family." [42]It was as if staying with Candace would've been the answer to all the arguments that would finally bring with it some peace or harmony. [43]I knew better than to believe that.

[44]I felt like Candace was just trying to interact with me and would use these conversations about what I did wrong with my recent visits with my sons to keep me talking to her. [45]Personally, I felt like divorcing her would free me from hearing her criticize me, but apparently I was wrong. [46]I learned that if I didn't play along, Candace would escalate the conversation into an argument, and then all of a sudden, she would take away something like the number of phone calls with my sons per week, or how long the calls would be, or taking away our play time over Xbox live. [47]I felt like Candace just

wanted me to argue back in order to meet some hidden agenda of prodding me until I would say just the right words that she could use, and twist it into something to keep me from interacting with my sons. [48]She punished me this way when I turned her down for a voluntary increase in child support too. [49]If she was upset with me, it cost me time with my sons. [50]Even being divorced from Candace, the misery of co-parenting with her lived on.

[51]Candace did reward me at times with more access to "her" sons, especially if she was in what appeared to be a relationship with someone. [52]I was able to actually video conference my sons when Candace wasn't so focused on me, but video conferencing was also the very first thing that she would take away if she felt like it. [53]Because video calls weren't specifically mentioned in the custody and visitation order, she could scrap the video calls any time and I could do nothing about it. [54]I relished the video calls because I knew they could disappear at any moment for several months or years.

[55]At the moment of my writing this, I have not had a video call with my sons in over two years. [56]I had a good year of video calls with my kids when I voluntarily started giving her more than the required amount of child support. [57]I was also able to convince Candace to let me do video calls with my sons during COVID, and that worked out for a while as well. [58]I want to be clear that the whole time I was trying to co-parent and spend time with my sons, Candace was not always an obstacle. [59]She had her moments of letting me see my sons for extended weekends. [60]Was she being nice, or was it out of convenience? [61]I'll never know. [62]Over the years Candace would have these year or two long stints where she would be very accommodating to me planning visits with my sons. [63]I would wonder to myself, "Why is she being a nice person all of a sudden?" I was grateful for these stints where Candace seemed less focused on being an obstacle. [64]My assumption is that she was in a relationship and that, because of that, she was in high spirits. [65]I made sure to thank Candace every time she was cooperative. [66]I noticed that if I stroked Candace's ego enough, she seemed to be more cooperative as a response.

3. Moments Like This

[1]I bought my sons new, high-quality, car seats for Candace's car, but she had me provide my own whenever I visited. [2]Her excuse was that she shouldn't be inconvenienced. After all, I was the one who left the marriage and moved away. She liked to remind me of this repeatedly. [3]I used to rent car seats from the rental car companies I used when I would visit my sons. Eventually, I purchased two cheap car seats that were compact enough to pack into a suitcase I would have as a checked bag on my flights to visit them.

[4]Candace knew that the car seats I could afford and travel with were nowhere near as safe as the ones I bought for them that were in her car, but that's not what was important to her. [5]What could be more important? [6]For someone who seemed so concerned with her sons' safety, Candace was willing to make compromises in the name of convenience. [7]Is it fair for me to use the car seat as an example of how our co-parenting went during my parenting time? [8]Maybe I'm being overly accusatory, or maybe you appreciate me including this seemingly small detail.

[9]Moments like the issue over car seats were a constant over the decade. [10]I just accepted it, but I kept track of everything, every piece of correspondence, every little thing. [11]As tedious as it was, I knew that a day may come when I would be forever grateful that I took the time to document, document, and document some more. [12]I interpreted most of these kinds of situations I documented as Candace deliberately making things difficult for my visitation. [14]I also believed that Candace wanted me to believe that every inconvenience I experienced was my own fault for divorcing her. [15]I can own up to the moving away from Illinois making things difficult on myself in visiting my sons. I can also be grateful at the same time for being 700 miles away from Candace, and the safety that great distance provided me. [16]I truly believe being far away from her protected me.

4. More Eggshells

[1]I had to be very careful in my communication with Candace. If she perceived any of my words or my tone as a slight towards her, if she sensed anything that sounded like power coming from my end, she would want to argue over email about it. [2]This would sometimes end in Candace being upset with me, and then punishing me by limiting or blocking contact with my sons for a period of time.

[3]This was the game I had to play for over a decade. [4]Luckily, I had training in how to navigate Candace from our many years of marriage. [5]I learned that I had to be difficult to read or at least as non-threatening as possible. [6]This meant I needed Candace to have the illusion of power. [7]It's true that she held all the power with her having sole custody, but I knew it would only last until my sons turned 18. [8]That's when I believed she would no longer be able to be a barrier between me and my sons. [9]That's when I believed I would no longer need to ever interact with Candace again. [10]I would show my sons all the documentation they wished to see regarding anything related to their childhood and my visits and correspondence about them between she and I. [11]This was my plan since separation from their mom. [12]The believability of her lies had an expiration date. [14]It was like she put zero thought into what her actions and divisiveness would do to my sons in the long run, and eventually even herself if they discovered the truth.

5. Someone That He Used to Know

[1]Within a couple years post-divorce Cruz started to get upset with how I didn't visit often enough, and I'm sure it was compounded by the fact I didn't stay married to his mother. [2]He was about seven years old and told his mom that he didn't want to see me the next time I would visit. [3]Candace was fully supportive of not putting Cruz into a situation where he was forced to see me. [4]Candace expressed to me that I would need to validate his feelings of not wanting to spend time with me and asked if I would support Cruz in his decision. [5]I said that I would not force it. [6]I did nothing to hurt my son's feelings, I said nothing to make him feel like he was unimportant to me. [7]I called as often as Candace would allow me to, which at that point may have been only weekly. [8]I felt like

Candace was feeding into his negative feelings towards me. [9]I couldn't be sure, but I knew with only being able to afford 3-4 visits per year, that if he went a trip without seeing me, it would turn into over six months before he would see me. This would be the case if he still wanted anything to do with me.

[10]I was stuck with a situation of trying to be understanding and validating of his feelings, while feeling him wanting to pull away from me at this very young age. [11]Either that, or I risk pushing him away by taking his choice of not wanting to see me away from him. [12]Candace shamed me for telling her that she should be more supportive of Cruz spending time with me when I visited. [14]Candace accused me of not being sensitive to Cruz's needs and how important it would be for Cruz if I didn't pressure him. [15]I understood this, and I understood that my son was angry about the situation. [16]I dared not ask Candace what she had been telling him about me that could contribute to him not wanting to see me for the upcoming visit.

[17]The next couple visits resulted in Cruz being quick to talk back to me. [18]And one visit he chose not to spend one of our nights together with me, which I supported. [19]That hurt. [20]A different trip, Candace showed up at my hotel room and tried to take Cruz from me during parenting time because he called her and was mad at me for telling him what to do. [21]His words were that only his mother could tell him what to do and that I was a stranger. [22]This hurt so badly. [23]I knew why he felt that I was a stranger. [24]The situation was already a difficult one, but then there was Candace to foster any divisive feelings within Cruz about me. [25]I never faulted my son for having his feelings. I understood that it came from a place of hurt. [26]I felt like Candace wanted Cruz to emotionally detach from me and was covertly supporting him by placing herself in the role of being the only person that matters to him, or that he can trust.

[27]Caleb was indifferent at five years old. He only knew me as the father who came into town once every few months and called once a week. [28]What he didn't know was that his mother limited me to calling only once a week, even though I had rights to call every day. [29]Yes, for a period of time I was only allowed a 15-minute phone call on Sundays. [30]My sons also didn't know that I had asked their mother several times to be able to play online with my sons. [31]I paid for their

Xbox, games, and online subscription so that we could play online together, but Candace rarely allowed it. [32]When we were able to play together, we would always have a lot of fun. [33]My sons also didn't know that Candace wouldn't let me video conference with them, though there were a few stints when I was able to do so without problem.

[34]Caleb seemingly handled the divorce better than Cruz because I left the marriage before Caleb could build many memories of me. [35]Cruz truly suffered from the memory of what once was. [36]I did my best to make my time with my sons fun and engaging, and the vast majority of our visits would be just that.

6. Noteworthy

[1]I had offered on more than one occasion over the years to take temporary custody of my sons when Candace would complain to me about her having to get a job, and her struggles as a single mother. [2]I knew she had her aspirations that I had spent the marriage trying to encourage her to pursue. [3]I always thought it was weird how Candace declined both times I offered.

7. Trying To Be Good Enough

[1]Every now and then I would experience something with my sons that would cause some concern. [2]For instance, I asked Caleb (then about five years old) to put on some pants to go outside. He got quiet, and still, and started crying. [3]He was wrought with frustration and panic saying I wasn't listening. [4]Apparently, the pants I asked him to put on were special pants his mom deemed as indoors-only pants. [5]My not understanding that there was punishment involved, when you wore the wrong things in the wrong places, put Caleb in a bad position. [6]Cruz explained to me at his young age (of about seven at that time) that there were rules behind how certain clothes can only be for certain things, and that they would otherwise get in trouble. [7]He then began to comfort his little brother. [8]I wondered what kind of punishment my sons were enduring for frivolous stuff like wearing the wrong clothes.

[9]I apologized to Caleb for my not understanding about the rules and let him know that I wouldn't pressure him to wear those pants now that I understood. [10]I did my best to show my sons patience, and that I cared about what they had to say, no matter if it was silly or serious. [11]Moments like these let me know that Candace's compulsive need to control things was taking its toll on my sons. [12]I did my best to show them what my normal looked like, which was the polar opposite of what they were used to. [14]Could I use some structure? [15]I'd say I'd benefit from more structure as much as the next guy. [16]I don't do well being micro-managed with what I can wear, say, eat, or do.

[17]My sons weren't allowed to eat gluten, dairy, and anything with certain food colorings in it. [18]Candace wouldn't vaccinate them either which is something I expressed concern about to her. [19]Candace having sole custody meant I needed to go along with everything she said lest she use it to form the basis for denying me visitation. [20]At least this is what I thought, and it wasn't worth the risk of defying her long list of dos and don'ts. [21]This made feeding my sons very difficult. [22]I couldn't cook for them in a hotel room, so we had to eat all our meals out which made things more costly. [23]If I deviated from their diets, one or both of my sons would end up telling their mother and I would have to answer to her for it.

[24]I had to be really careful of what I told my sons because it was a guarantee that they would tell their mother. [25]It was like they were interrogated as soon as they got home because these calls from Candace, or emails about what she felt I did wrong on the trip, would occur the same evening I dropped them off. [26]Whether it was me giving them a snack that had a certain food coloring in it, or not running a new food item by her first for approval before feeding it to "her" sons, or the way I packed their bag not putting everything in the same exact place where she packed it.

[27]There was always something Candace had to criticize me for after the weekend trips were over. [28]I'd apologize and would say I would do better next visit. [29]I sincerely tried, but only because I couldn't stand hearing from Candace after a trip. [30]I was so tired of her controlling me through my children and criticizing me. [31]It was as if divorcing Candace wasn't enough to escape her. [32]As long as we shared children, Candace

would always be there, and she showed no signs of ever letting up. [33]I clung to the knowing that one day my sons would know everything. [34]This gave me enough inner peace to continue to endure the long-distance relationship I had with my sons. [35]Justice would someday come. [36]I just needed to make sure my kids knew that I loved them, and that I enjoyed spending time with them.

[37]Over the years I watched the television shows my sons were interested in. I learned about the characters and the stories as I watched the episodes. I did all this so that we could easily relate to each other. [38]I would use their shows and the characters to try to teach them life lessons sometimes. [39]Every now and then when we were together during one of my visits, I would sneak in life lessons while we played together with toys.

[40]One thing my boys and I knew how to do well was to relax and have a good time together. [41]I'd buy Lego sets and we would spend hours building together and being creative. [42]Money was tight, but I tried to make the most of my visits with them. [43]I loved Legos growing up and had several sets, so bonding with my sons over those little plastic bricks was always a nostalgic blast.

[44]My dad never spent time with me like the way I spent time with my sons. [45]Maybe my dad took our time together for granted, or maybe he was just real busy. [46]Maybe he thought it would be a waste of his time or that there was something more important to do. [47]My dad didn't care for the shows I watched or what I was interested in. [48]He knew I liked building with Legos and playing with my toys, and I think that was truly about all he knew about me as a child. [49]I wanted to send my sons a clear signal that I loved being with them and I wanted to truly know them and meet them where they were at. [50]They may not have a father who was always there like I had, but they would get a father who treated them like their interests were important to him, and who didn't beat them. [51]I hoped that these visits together and our limited phone calls would be good enough in terms of the parenting I could offer them.

[52]It took me a decade to finally see and accept myself as a good enough father. [53]It took me eventually reading one special book and watching this one video to help me see that, and I will touch on those later, outside

of this book, when the time is right. [54]I did hate being so far away and how difficult that made things. [55]I tried to make the most of every visit and focused on creating memories.

[56]I yearned for a day when Candace would become less vindictive, and more chill, and be open to letting my sons spend time with me out-of-state without having to go to court. [57]I wanted us to co-parent as a team. [58]I felt like everything would be easier on everyone involved if Candace and I could just have a talk that didn't turn into a needless argument. [59]No matter how many times I tried to ask for out-of-state visitation, she would deny it. Eventually, I stopped asking. [60]I knew that it wouldn't be worth pursuing out-of-state visitation in court. [61]I knew deep down that Candace would fight it and fight dirty, and by that, I mean deceive the legal system itself in order to ensure out-of-state visitation would not happen. [62]I knew that deep down because of what she tried to pull by faking a special needs diagnosis for one of my sons when divorcing.

8. Disruptive

[1]In 2019, my family coordinated a trip to Chicago to coincide with a one-week trip I planned to spend with my sons. We rented a home in Chicago so we could house mine and my sister's families. [2]I knew Candace had issues with my sons getting to know my side of the family, so I purposely didn't share that much about it. [3]If I did, I felt Candace would surely attempt to prevent it from happening. [4]After all, I knew that she did things like that in the past when we were married, punishing me by choosing to back out of a family trip at the last second. [5]Also, this would be the first time my sons would be meeting my wife. [6]My wife had been so supportive about my situation with my sons and my dealing with the contentiousness of their mother. [7]This wasn't the first time Candace had an issue with my sons spending any time with their stepmother.

[8]My current wife and I had been married for about five years at this point, and Candace had serious reservations about my sons getting to know their stepmother even though she knew nothing about her. [9]Want to know what I thought at that time? [10]I thought that she just wanted to find something she could twist or exploit in such a manner to do some

kind of damage. [11]I knew deep down that the only reason she had any issues was more about herself, and less about my wife.

[12]A year after my wife and I got married, I had my sons FaceTime with their stepmom for a quick moment to introduce them. [14]This resulted in my sons innocently telling Candace about it, and her retaliating in anger at me because I didn't go through her first. [15]Her excuse was that the event was traumatic for my sons. [16]It wasn't. [17]Candace had been attempting to get herself involved with vetting my wife before she could speak to my sons. [18]Since it wasn't in the divorce decree, it wasn't necessary. [19]I explained this to Candace, and this made her more upset. [20]I paid the price by having to go several months without the perk of video chatting with my sons, just phone calls, as Candace's punishment.

[21]I longed for the day when I could tell my sons that all those gaps of time where we didn't get to spend that much time together on video calls were because of their mother retaliating against me for doing something she didn't like and could not control. [22]Candace could control my children, however. [23]And by proxy, with limitation, that meant she still had some control over me as well. [24]I felt like I would never be free of Candace until after my sons were 18 years of age or if she could actually snag a man who wouldn't go running for the hills when he saw her true face. [25]It took Candace less than six months of living together to show me her true face back when she and I were newlyweds. [26]Maybe she would learn how to keep it hidden longer for the next guy, or just not move in together. [27]It seemed to me that all of our marital problems surfaced by about the six-month mark of sharing a living space.

[28]Back to the 2019 Chicago trip, everything was going well. [29]My boys were enjoying their time with me and their extended family and playing with their cousins. [30]We did a lot together to make the most of our time in Chicago, and we had a blast. [31]Everything was going so well, and then all of a sudden, I got a phone call from Candace. [32]Candace stated that Cruz was having a bad experience and that she was coming to pick up both my sons. [33]This was news to me. [34]What had actually happened is that Candace spoke with Cruz over the phone, found out about my wife being present, and twisted his words to mean that Cruz didn't feel emotionally safe around my family anymore. [35]This was not the case. [36]I felt like Candace was looking for a reason to disrupt my visit.

[37]When Candace told me to prepare my sons to go back with her and that she was coming to pick them up, I explained that I would inform the police if she attempted to disrupt my parenting time. [38]This was not the first time I had to threaten Candace with the police for disrupting my parenting time either. [39]Her entire family arrived at the home I was renting, and so did two squad cars. [40]Candace had called the police to help her take my sons from me. [41]It put my sons in this terrible position. [42]I'm going to skip the details. [43]I will say that Candace left empty-handed, and my boys stayed with me. [44]Also, I now had an official first record, of what would become many, of Candace disrupting my parenting time.

[45]That whole event brought me and my sons a little closer. I came to become grateful that Candace did what she did. It showed everyone, including my family, first-hand, the kind of thing I had been dealing with. [46]Of course, in Candace's world, she was a concerned mother who was well within her right to do whatever it took to protect her children if she perceived a threat. [47]What she won't say is that the actual threat she's truly afraid of is my sons bonding with people who are not her. [48]What good is using a human being as an extension of yourself if that human being likes people that you don't want them to like?

9. COVID-19

[1]As my boys and I grew older, and as my financial situation slowly started to improve, a miracle happened. [2]Candace actually brought up the possibility of a trip she and my sons were planning on making to visit her family or friends in the D.C. area. [3]Candace offered to let me have my sons for a week while they were in my area. [4]I was elated, yet skeptical. [5]I knew that if Candace was offering something she knew I was wanting for so long, that there was a string attached to that carrot. [6]I waited to see what shenanigans she would try to pull at the last second to surprise me with something. [7]I mentally prepared myself for the event to never take place. [8]I knew that I would no longer allow myself to be manipulated into begging, so I knew that if something were to come up, I would not take any action in response.

[9]Luckily, in 2019, I voluntarily started paying more in child support than what I was court ordered to pay, so this put me in a good position with

Candace. For several months things were looking positive. [10]It was January of 2020, and it was beginning to look like Candace would be taking my sons to my area and I would finally get to spend time with them where I actually lived. I would finally be able to introduce them to my friends and extended family in my area. [11]I saw my sons in late February of 2020 without any of us knowing that it would be the last time I would have parenting time with them for over a year. We would not be spending time together that summer in my area.

[12]The COVID-19 pandemic became long term which made visiting my sons more problematic. [14]That said, I want to point out that Candace was cooperative with me when I asked to be able to resume video conferencing calls with my sons and play video games online together. [15]I cited COVID and the impact on my visits as my reasoning for how more contact would be a good decision while so much was unknown about the direction the pandemic was going.

[16]Candace was taking the pandemic seriously, and so was I. She had some concerns about catching the virus and spreading it to the more vulnerable house members, one of whom was Caleb who was battling an autoimmune disease at that time. [17]The treatments for the disease were going very well and it would be deemed no longer active later in the year. [18]It was a huge relief. [19]I never got to take my son to any of his treatments because his mother declined when I asked. [20]I wanted to support Caleb beyond just the financial. That said, I was concerned that Candace would perceive my attempts at getting involved with my son's treatment as a potential threat to her keeping me out of the picture, so I stopped asking to attend the doctor visits.

[21]The pandemic made things very difficult for me and my sons being able to spend time together. [22]We didn't know when it would end. [23]Because of this, I didn't see my sons for over a year except for one moment when my grandmother passed away. My sister and I did a road trip to Iowa for the funeral, and I was able to coordinate with Candace a quick moment with my sons. [24]There were rules. [25]We would stay outside, we would be watched, we would all wear masks, I could only do a single side hug with each son, and it would need to be quickly, my sister wasn't allowed to approach them per another one of Candace's rules, and the last rule was that after the side hug my sons and I would

need to stand six feet apart. [26]It was the most awkward moment, but I was happy to see their eyes. [27]There was a feeling of uneasiness in the air. [28]Something wasn't right. [29]I chalked it up to the effects of a pandemic.

10. The Sword in the Stone

[1]This is a good opportunity for me to sneak in this mini-story. [2]One of the movies I loved as a kid was The Sword in the Stone. [3]The story of King Arthur is insane if you think about it. A magical sword, a king from a squire nick-named Wart, and a wizard named Merlin made this medieval story very unique. [4]The enchanted sword was bound into a stone along with the prophecy that whoever was able to remove the sword from the stone would be worthy of being king. [5]Honor, inner strength, and decency were the sword's prerequisites. [6]Though many knights tried, none could remove it. [7]And so, the tale of the sword's prophecy became fable and nearly forgotten.

[8]There comes a point when Merlin takes Wart on as an apprentice, seeing that the boy had a desire to learn. [9]Wart was naive about much, and Merlin walked him through the brutal truths of life. [10]At one point, Merlin must face a disordered witch by the name of Madam Mim. [11]She is equal to Merlin in power, and she fights dirty. [12]The rules were to take turns transforming and try to destroy the other first. These rules were presented by Mim herself. [13]Merlin, recognizing how Mim bends the meaning of words to her advantage, knows he must be more cunning than his adversary.

Beast Mode:

[14]Fun fact: In the movie, Merlin made it known he's also a time traveler. [15]His travels take him all over the world and to different time periods. [16]I wonder if he found witches in the future too. [17]Hmmm… [18]He sure does have a lot of experience with hypocritical people who like to twist words to their benefit and enjoy causing others, who challenge them, misfortune.

[19]#NEEDMYROBITUSSIN [20]#RICOLA

[21]Mim's rules of engagement serve mainly herself, and she loosely follows them. [22]She knows Merlin is an honorable wizard and a powerful opponent, so she expected her deception to give her an advantage. [23]Merlin, wise to Mim's twisting of the rules while in play, finds a loophole. [24]Merlin thought outside the box, and he transformed himself into a virus. [25]As a virus, he was more powerful than anything Mim was able to come up with. [26]He infects Mim and the duel is over. [27]Mim calls Merlin a cheater, and Merlin holds his ground that he stayed within the rules as she specified them. [28]Shortly after, Mim lies sick in bed, angry at how she had been outsmarted, and ungrateful to Merlin even though he was helping take care of her after her defeat.

[29]A virus can't be seen or predicted. [30]It can only be discovered once it has already started spreading. [31]Just like COVID-19, viruses can be highly contagious. [32]Words can be like viruses. [33]The saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me", is a tricky one. [34]It's stoic AF. [35]Yet, if those words come from someone we have given our love and trust to, then that phrase becomes inaccurate. [36]Remember that.

[37]When the squire named Wart needs to find a sword at the last moment for the knight he serves, he is desperate and gives the sword in the stone a chance and attempts to pull it from the stone. [38]He pulls the sword from the stone. [39]The sword has a name, Excalibur. [40]According to the legend itself, on each of Excalibur's two edges is an inscription. [41]One edge says, [42]"Take me up." [43]The other says, [44]"Cast me away". [45]I love stories about iconic swords. [46]Don't you? [47]What's an iconic sword you wish you could pull from history or science fiction? [48]Describe the sword and why you chose it above all others.

11. Final Thoughts. (Yes, the Period is Intentional)

[1]The 10 years covered in this chapter was very difficult for me, but I will never truly know how difficult it was for my sons as well. [2]My financial situation had been slowly improving, but never to the point where it was possible to visit more often. [3]Had I had out-of-state visitation secured, had Candace and I been able to co-parent and support each other's parenting roles, I feel like I would've been able to see my sons more often

and see more and do more with them. [4]I spent the whole decade hoping that the day of out-of-state visitation would happen without me having to go to court, that Candace would become amicable towards it. [5]It never happened so, of course, that has caused me to do my fair share of rumination. [6]Did I do the right thing in giving in to Candace at the time of the divorce? [7]What do you think? [8]I would soon come to believe that I indeed did the best possible thing given my circumstances.

[9]Back when I divorced Candace, I hoped she would eventually evolve and come to see how being controlling pushes people away, and that being vindictive keeps them away. [10]I thought she would learn that apologizing didn't mean that everything was okay again, that the damage she did didn't happen. [11]I thought she would understand how being hypercritical of people creates an environment where authenticity cannot thrive. [12]I thought her other relationships would help her introspect. [14]She learned nothing. Ten years later, and she did not change. [15]How do I know? [16]Well, you are about to find out. [17]Unfortunately, my sharing of how I know may make you undergo a dramatic shift in your own perspective. [18]There is no going back once you read the next chapter. [19]This is it.

Beast Mode:

[20]Alas, we have come to the end of the chapter, and I'm left speechless as I can't even prepare you for the next one. [21]It comes out of nowhere and changes everything. [22]Did that green glow emanating from beyond this page get brighter, or is it just me? [23]Must be some kind of magic, I tell you. [24]Shall we proceed?

[25]#SHITSABOUTTOGETREAL [26]#GREENLIGHTAHEAD
[27]#TURNTHEPAGE [28]#ITWOULDBEALOTCOOLERIFYOUDID

CHAPTER 6
GREEN LIGHT

"Dark and difficult times lie ahead. Soon, we must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy."
— John L. Cooper

The Light
By Disturbed
-
Crazy
by Aerosmith
-
You May Be Right
by Billy Joel

Beast Mode:

[1]Welcome to Chapter 6 titled Green Light. [2]Moving forward will lift the veil from your eyes. [3]The truth hurts, so let's start slow.

1. 2012

[1]I'm going to have a little fun here for a moment before I proceed. [2]Back in the early 2000's, there was talk of the Mayan Calendar coming to an end in 2012. There was a belief among those who studied the Mayan calendar that the end of the calendar marked an era of either darkness or enlightenment. [3]I remember this. [4]I awaited the lifting of some veil. [5]It didn't happen. [6]Instead, toward the end of 2012, I was filing my second attempt at divorce from Candace. [7]It's insane to me that when my veil was lifted a decade later, I would get to see Candace in a new light. [8]I discovered that this new light was not her friend.

Beast Mode:

[9]Ok, not that slow! [10]I see we will be dragging this out. [11]I'm sure he has his reasons. ;)

2. Commander and Conqueror

[1]I am a video game lover. [2]I play all kinds, but I have a special fondness for turn-based strategy games. [3]I enjoy observing the enemy artificial intelligence (A.I.) react to where I place my units. [4]I like trying to recognize patterns in its operation. [5]I use what I observe to try and make the A.I. play against itself. [6]Can I create an opening in their defense if I bait a portion of their forces? [7]If you can bait the A.I., and it isn't programmed to recognize and react randomly to baiting, then the enemy will always eventually lose if the terms of victory, and the means, are equal. [8]I love it when a plan comes together. [9]Once the enemy's defenses are open or thin enough, I penetrate, and it's over.

Beast Mode:

[10]…

[11]#YOUDIRTY [12]#NOCAPTHO [13]#GAMEOVER

[14]I remember when I was young playing a Command and Conquer video game, the genre was real-time war strategy. [15]For my non-gamers out there, the difference between turn-based and real-time is like so. [16]Chess is turn-based. But if we were to make chess a real-time strategy game, you would be able to move a piece every few seconds regardless if your opponent has taken their turn. [17]Things move faster. [18]In this game, there is a fog of war covering unoccupied portions of the map, you can't see your enemy unless they are within a certain range. [19]The objective is to find and conquer the enemy. [20]In order to do so, you must gather resources preferably in your area of the map. [21]You use those resources to build and upgrade your army and base defenses, and to expand your base.

[22]In real-time strategy games, the A.I. is a little less predictable. [23]The random placement of the opponent's base, the random terrain, and the fog of war together always kept things relatively fresh. [24]I remember finding a different way to beat the game that was more cerebral. [25]I'm sharing it here because it will be relevant later, plus I was proud of myself for discovering it on my own. [26]Healthy pride is how we reward our inner child, isn't it?

[27]Sun Tzu says in his book The Art of War that supreme excellence is in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. [28]I want to share with you how I created supreme excellence. [29]I created my own risky tactic of striking first and devastating my enemy in my first attack, with absolutely no weapons.

[30]I would craft, using the limited surrounding resources, an armored personnel carrier. [31]I'd hire a few engineers, place them into the carrier, and send it toward a given point on the map, toward an edge. [32]If the carrier happened to find the enemy camp at any point on the way to that edge of the map, I'd lay siege by rolling my carrier as close as possible to the heart of the enemy camp. [33]At this point, the enemy's defenses would be lighting up my carrier. [34]I would have a window of opportunity to deploy my engineers as close as possible to the enemy headquarters before the enemy's defenses could destroy my carrier.

[35]The enemy A.I. could not fully defend against this tactic. [36]I deployed my engineers from their armored carrier in the enemy's under-defended

camp, and immediately assigned them to enemy facilities including their headquarters. [37]I would usually send more than one to the same facility increasing the chances of success of at least one engineer making it into the facility alive. [38]I was prepared to take losses in order to conquer. [39]Once I got an engineer to capture an enemy facility, it would convert the entire facility to my army. [40]Their facility was now mine to do with as I pleased. [41]Doing this would cause the enemy forces in their camp to immediately attack the building I just captured.

[42]I learned quickly that the simple act of selling this captured facility, which the enemy would eventually destroy or attempt to recapture, absolutely devastated my enemy. [43]Even one building being captured and sold was enough to cripple my enemy's advance, while also adding to my resources. [44]The enemy A.I. would need to gather the resources to rebuild, instead of investing in their defenses or spreading across both options. [45]Either way, they would be no match for my follow-up attack. [46]Sometimes I got lucky and the building I was able to capture happened to be the enemy's command center, which resulted in instant victory. [47]I loved the fact that I was able to devastate my enemy without engaging them, turning the tide of battle in my favor, if not winning outright. [48]Sun Tzu was right. [49]I attacked my enemy as if I were a virus, just like Merlin versus Madam Mim in The Sword in the Stone.

Beast Mode:

[50]*ACHOO!!! ACHOO!!!*

[51]*#SPECIALDELIVERY* [52]*#THEARTOFSNEEZING*

[53]When I play video games, I find pleasure in breaking a code, recognizing a pattern, or solving a complicated puzzle. [54]I also love that "aha moment" when you find the end-level boss's weakness, exposing the imminent victory at hand. [55]Mostly, these moments I experienced were in the realm of video games, but this was soon to change. [56]In January of 2022, the fog of war in my life was lifted, and life gave me the biggest "aha moment" I ever had. [57]Life was about to become Command and Conquer on steroids. [58]My reality just needed to be shattered first.

3. Atari - A Shot in the Dark

[1]The video game console company Atari produced its last home video game system called the Jaguar in 1993, sort of. It was one of the last cartridge-based home consoles to be made and I bought one. CD-ROM was the up-and-coming video game storage medium to replace the cartridge format, along with the craziest load times mankind would ever see. [2]This was also around the time that 3D objects started popping up in video games. [3]To get one 3D object into a game cost system power to load and display it. [4]Atari was able to pull this off with the Jaguar better than other consoles around that time.

[5]The Jaguar was the first 64-bit console to come to market. [6]Something wasn't quite right though. [7]It wasn't truly 64-bit. [8]It was actually two 32-bit processors. [9]There was word around that time that Sony was getting into the video game market with a 32-bit CD-ROM console called the PlayStation. [10]Perhaps you've heard of it. [11]How could Sony, a company new to the gaming arena, beat the already well-established Atari brand? [12]How could Sony's PlayStation compete against a system that has the increased speed of being cartridge-based, and double the power?

[14]In order to answer the questions I posed, we need to understand what bits are and what they do. [15]So, what are bits anyway? [16]What does it mean to someone who doesn't have an understanding of the evolution of the devices that make video games possible? [17]Bits translate directly to power. [18]Power could mean a higher variety of colors, more on-screen movement, smoother animations, more artifacts on screen at once, and better-quality sound and music. [19]The game designer can push any one of those limits until it starts to break the other areas. [20]It becomes a balancing act to derive the most power from the system while being able to deliver a fully functional game that doesn't break itself mid-play. [21]The end result is a high-quality gaming experience, but of course, it is not power that truly makes a game great.

Beast Mode:

[22]*Don't forget the splosions!!!* [23]The more splosions, the better. [24]And don't forget dismemberment and uh…red liquid physics. [25]More bits translates into…er….more bits. ;) [26]It's all about immersion, isn't it?

[27]#BOOM [28]#POW [29]#BANG [30]#CHOPCHOP [31]#SPLISHSPLASH

[32]So, are two 32-bit processors the same as 64-bits of power? [33]Atari added the tagline "Do the Math" for those who argued that the Jaguar wasn't a true 64-bit system. [34]Nintendo had yet to release the Nintendo 64 (another 64 bit cartridge-based console), and when it finally did, the world finally understood that 32 plus 32 doesn't always equal 64 in the context of power, if bits are the means to achieve said power. [35]Atari oversold the power of their system. [36]The game publishers began to jump ship and the Jaguar soon disappeared. [37]Atari claimed they had 64 bits of power, but that was a twisted truth. [38]They leaned into that twisted truth and lost. [39]I wonder what would've happened had Atari just released the world's most powerful 32-bit system under that tagline instead. [40]The Jaguar was indeed a beast, as long as you saw it as a 32-bit system. [41]The public trust in Atari waned, and it is nothing like it once was.

[42]Alien vs Predator was a near-launch title for the Jaguar and I wanted it bad. It was one of the first two games I purchased. [43]Why do I bring it up? [44]You know me well enough by now I hope. [45]In the game you get to play a human Colonial Marine, an Alien, or a Predator. [46]Who you choose will change the way you play the game. [47]All three groups attack each other. [48]Whichever side you choose, you have two opponents that fight and operate very differently to contend with. [49]I had fun playing as all three species. [50]The map stayed the same, but the play mechanics changed. [51]Once you beat the game playing as one of the species, you would be even deadlier as the next species you chose. [52]The play mechanics might be new to the player, but the familiarity of the map gives the player an advantage they did not have during their first play-through. [53]What else is new is one of the enemies they face in the second play-through is the species they played in their first play-through. [54]It's an eerie feeling to be hunted by what used to be your own kind. [55]It was an amazing game for its time and scared the crap out of me while I played late at night. [56]I loved it.

4. Candace's Operating System Exposed - Closure Achieved

[1]Up until this point, all my interactions with Candace led me to believe that this unique woman I once fell in love with, but who became so nasty so soon after getting married, was just a controlling and vindictive person. [2]That's all I saw her as. [3]Anytime I was to ever speak of my past relationships with friends, that's all that was really said about Candace. [4]I thought I was an expert on Candace, but I was missing one piece of information. And once I received it, I would finally understand not just Candace, but people like her. [5]There are many like Candace.

[6]Candace made me aware that my son, Cruz, had been experiencing some difficulties. She had taken him to have a psychological evaluation which reflected that Cruz had symptoms of anxiety, ADHD, and depression. But on top of this, I knew Cruz had been struggling for a couple years according to his mother, who had been very vague with any details. [7]I learned not to ask her too many questions, or else the topic would then change to me and why I'm so interested now, versus before I had asked. [8]In the past, her response to any questions of mine would be along the lines of questioning why I cared and invalidating my perspective. [9]I also no longer trusted Candace. [10]I found it beneficial for me to play along with whatever narrative she had about anything.

[11]When I spent time with my sons, I did not notice behavioral issues from either son. [12]I knew things were off with Cruz sometimes, like there was a distance between him and the world. [14]My talks with my sons were always fruitful and engaging. [15]I didn't see what Candace claimed to see in Cruz, and soon I would understand why.

[16]On a day like any other, in January of 2022, I called my sons to talk. Cruz, age 15 at the time, answered the phone. No one was home but he and his aunt at the time. [17]Cruz was not feeling well. I'm not talking about him being sick; he was emotionally unwell. [18]He opened up to me about what his life was like and the kinds of challenges he was facing. [19]As he described his feelings, I learned that he didn't care whether he was alive or not. I learned how miserable he was and how hopeless he felt. [20]I did my best to validate him and his feelings. [21]He brought up feelings about his mother and some examples of her treatment of him he had experienced for a while.

[22]While we spoke, Cruz told me that when he was 12, he had forgiven me, to himself, for leaving the family. [23]I was happy to hear that he had matured to the level of being able to forgive such a negative experience that I was responsible for. [24]I was so thankful that Cruz was opening up to me to this degree of vulnerability for the first time. [25]I saw him as his own person, as mature, but also as deeply troubled. [26]I knew that I needed to do something, but I also needed to tread carefully with Candace. [27]Before we wrapped our call, I thanked Cruz for opening up to me and I assured him he could continue to share his feelings with me. [28]I let him know how much I loved him.

[29]So much of what Cruz told me resonated with how I felt in my darkest time being married to his mother. [30]His feelings on not caring whether he lived or died mimicked mine. [31]I knew that this place was very dangerous to me and opened doorways to careless and damaging ways to cope with it. [32]I was scared for Cruz, because I knew too well how he was feeling. [33]I felt unloved and unsupported in the marriage with his mother that it formed the basis for why I chose to give up trying to make the relationship work. [34]That place of darkness I knew so well is what is called a dark night of the soul. [35]It's the worst place a human being can be in and there's only one way out. [36]Something inside must be killed. [37]It's either going to be the self, or the ego. [38]Either way, life changes forever for better or worse, and I believe it's worse for most people.

[39]Without going into detail on what Cruz told me, I saw immediate similarities with what I too had felt before leaving his mother. [40]For the first time in my life, someone completely validated my experience with Candace, and at the same time, this shook me to my core as my son felt alone in all of it. [41]It was a difficult choice for me to come to choose to leave Candace and break our family unit over a decade prior. [42]But this person was also my son's mother. [43]As similar as our experiences were with Candace, the position and role of mother put Candace into a role of absolute trust for Cruz. [44]Cruz trusted his mother, as most children do, to take care of him and do what is best for him.

Beast Mode:

[45]*Misplaced trust is a bitch.* [46]*It sucks to feel betrayed.* [47]*Oh, we aren't there*

yet? [48]My bad! [49]How about we get on with it then? [50]The longer he takes to get to the point, the more spoilers I'm going to hint at.

[51]#AREWETHEREYET

[52]I ruminated on Cruz's words, and I relived many memories while doing so. I wondered how our experiences could be so similar. [53]Up until that day, I believed that Candace was just a highly controlling and vindictive woman. [54]I knew she was controlling with my sons too, but I figured they would be used to it because they grew up with it. [55]They knew no other life or way. [56]I did see how being controlling could stifle development and independence, but I couldn't tell this to Candace without pissing her off. [57]How do I know? [58]I told her over a decade ago to loosen the reins on the people close to her, that she pushed me away because she was so controlling. [59]I warned her that if she did not change, people would eventually leave her. [60]If someone can't feel free and safe to express themselves, then what quality of life are they truly experiencing? [61]A sucky one.

Beast Mode:

[62]Yes, no more sucky for us. [63]Well, at least not the bad kind. ;)

[64]#OHBEHAVE

[65]I started to search the web for answers, and it didn't take long at all for me to find a video from Dr. Ramani Durvasula, American clinical psychologist and retired professor of psychology. [66]Dr. Ramani's video led me down a rabbit hole into a world layered over the one I knew, and every bit as true. [67]I discovered that what I endured before leaving the marriage with Candace was considered emotional and psychological abuse. [68]The tactics that I remember Candace using on me to get her way all had their own unique names in the community of psychology. [69]There were even names for how I would respond in order to de-escalate Candace. [70]I became a narcissism information-seeking machine, like the robot Johnny 5 seeking input in the movie Short Circuit. [71]I was obsessed with learning everything about both my sons' situation and my own.

[72]I learned how the narcissist uses their own children as pawns to punish and control their victim, the other parent. [73]Narcissists don't care about how weaponizing their children affects the children themselves. [74]It puts deep underserved shame into the child as they subconsciously perform their role as a weapon in exchange of receiving perceived love from the narcissistic parent. [75]Instantly I could see all the puzzle pieces come together. [76]The parental alienation that both my sons and I endured was meant to control how close my sons would feel to me. [77]Additionally, that closeness I yearned for and strived for from 700 miles away, she held the power over. [78]She was in control. [79]And that closeness between me and my sons was a real threat to her. [80]I figured she must've relished turning me down so many times for extra time with my sons, or being able to video chat with them, or being able to play video games online with them.

[81]I was able to make my own conclusion, based on everything I was studying, that I was actually a victim of severe emotional and psychological abuse. [82]Here I was, for the first time, seeing myself as an abused father who ran for the hills to get away from his abuser and left his own sons to be abused throughout their entire childhood. [83]It freaked me out. [84]I never saw myself as a victim before. [85]I didn't know that I had survived, escaped, and healed from severe psychological abuse. [86]I just thought I got away from a controlling and vindictive person.

[87]I had extensive experience living with Candace to be able to see why everything played out the way it did. [88]The more I researched, the more that everything about my relationship with Candace made sense. [89]The more I learned about how narcissistic mothers treat their children, the more concerned I became. [90]The more concerned I became, the more grateful I was to have come into the knowledge when I did. [91]It was just in time.

[92]Candace couldn't legally isolate my sons from me, but a narcissist is good at being covert in how they alienate the other parent. [93]Years ago, I knew she removed all photos of me from my son's devices because my sons explained this to me when we visited. [94]They also mentioned how there was no picture of me in their bedroom, even though I gave them framed photos. [95]Candace was a textbook covert narcissist according to the psychology seminars I was watching on covert narcissism. [96]The

psychologists speaking on the topic of covert narcissism made it clear how incredibly difficult it was to detect. [97]You'd think all psychologists and therapists would be able to do so somewhat easily. [98]I watched a bunch of videos and was already on my way to ordering the first of many books on the topic. [99]Being an expert on interacting with Candace, combined with the knowledge I was feeding myself, made me a human narcissistic red flag detector.

Beast Mode:

[100]I see a future where people interview us. [101]I hope they know that if the interviewer themselves is a narcissist, just speaking with me will out themselves to all who no longer have the veil over their eyes.

[102]#TRYME [103]#THEYKNOWNOW [104]#IKNOWNARCSPEAK
[105]#EYESTOSEE [106]#EARSTOHEAR

[107]Luckily, on a positive note, a narcissistic parent is less likely to abuse their children when they are real young. [108]It's when the child starts individuating that the abuse starts to trickle in. [109]Narcissistic parents don't like it when the extensions of themselves, which is how they view their own children, start becoming their own people. [110]A narcissist ensures that those around them are dependent on them to provide the narcissist with validation, which equates to control. [111]I felt sick to my stomach with disgust the more I realized what my sons were enduring compared to the peace I had been enjoying for over a decade. [112]Being away from a narcissist is in itself its own unique brand of peace. [113]But, being equally yoked to another empathetic human being is a whole new level of peace and growth. [114]It's almost like human beings were designed to grow together in a state of peace.

5. Thanks Be to Almighty God

[1]I was so grateful that my son Cruz opened up to me before exploring suicide, drugs, or finding solace in anything unhealthy outside of himself. [2]I was also thankful for the ignorance I had lived in, for if I knew what I was dealing with during the divorce, I would've run myself into

the ground fighting in systems that were (and still are) blind to the covert abuse tactics employed by narcissists. [3]During the almost 30-month divorce process, I was financially broke, yet still making the out-of-state trips to spend time with my sons in a hotel. [4]I was trying to build a career, but I had no energy for anyone but myself.

[5]It was a blessing to be ignorant until the time I was enlightened, and for this I became so thankful to God. [6]My relationship with God blossomed ferociously ever since coming into this awareness of narcissism, narcissistic abuse, and related complex trauma and recovery work. [7]I was able to read my Bible with new understanding. [8]The more I learned, the more I was able to fully understand. [9]The Bible became my metaverse. [10]I saw the layers in the parables. [11]I saw why things in reality were the way they were, and what humanity was getting wrong, and where things were headed. [12]I prayed more often, with more intention, and with more gratitude. [13]I grew in my walk with Christ. [14]My ability to discern increased exponentially.

[15]Knowing that I would be taking some serious action soon to help my sons, I knew I would be going back into a world I thought I had left for good. [16]I would need to battle against Candace. [17]All those fears I had over the years about what I shouldn't do or say, and the related punishment I would receive from Candace, were about to manifest. [18]I would soon have visible proof that I was right to be careful with Candace, and with that a gratitude towards God like never before for keeping me from making my situation with Candace and my sons worse.

6. Ripping Open Old Scars

[1]For the first time in almost a decade I reopened my old wounds that had healed so many years ago in order to dig deeper, to better understand my son's suffering. [2]Not just Cruz's, but Caleb's as well. [3]I went through all the correspondence that ever took place between Candace and I, and it was as if I were reading them all over again with brand new eyes.

[4]Once you truly understand narcissism, it's like a special lens over your eyes that makes perceiving it easier, or maybe it's that the scales that were covering the eyes fall away. [5]The more I learned, the more I saw

aspects of narcissism within myself at different points in my life, and the more red flags I could finally see in so many of the past relationships I had. [6]So many events in my life made more sense. [7]All the knowledge I was getting on narcissism I could instantly apply to all my memories of interactions with other people.

[8]Until this point, I thought a narcissist was a person who was self-obsessed and turned on by the sight of their own body in the mirror. [9]Seriously, that's what I thought. [10]I was so wrong. [11]What those in the mental health field call "NPD", others simply call "evil", as black and white in thinking as that is. [12]It was as if the word "evil" was given a psychological term ending with the word "disorder". [13]The things narcissists do are the exact things that the Bible says not to do, but the mask they present could be of a devout Christian leader. [14]One thing was for sure for me, it's something I wish I learned about when I was younger.

[15]Before I go into the basics of what I learned and how they applied to my situation, I advise you to also do your own homework. [16]I'm just presenting to you what I learned in my own words. [17]My descriptions are of my own paraphrasing and incorporates my own biases based on my own personal experience.

[18]So, what is NPD? [19]There's a manual for disorders called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). [20]It gives criteria for pathologies and if a certain number is present in a person's behavior, then the diagnosis can be made by a person certified to do it. [21]You'll discover that someone with NPD has no true sense of self, is able to fake empathy, does not understand love, can be very controlling, they deceive, are vindictive, are highly critical of others, have an inflated ego, and the list goes on and on. [22]These are not the kind of people you want anywhere near you or affiliated with you, no matter how transactionally beneficial the relationship is. [23]So how is it that someone would ever come to be with one? [24]The answer is simple, narcissists fake being the kind of people you do want to be with. [25]Ewwwww, so cringe.

[26]Unfortunately, for those who are naive and believe love conquers all, and are ignorant to what narcissism is, you are the narcissist's favorite target. [27]They will use deception to charm you. [28]They use children, marriage, or business contracts to trap you with them, and then to

punish you for leaving them once you see them for who they truly are and try to leave. [29]The narcissist, say if they were your romantic partner, would punish you for something like you catching them cheating. It's better to make you feel like they cheated because of something you did or said, or did not do or say, than for you to see them for who they truly are.

[30]They will most likely be looking for your replacement and leave you when the going gets rough for you, or if you become less attractive, or if you lose income. [31]Once they see what they once valued in you appear to fade, they have no problem with leaving you because of it once they find a replacement. [32]They will leave you broken and devastated, and they prefer you to remain in this state so that whenever they want your attention you will be ready and desperate for them. [33]They expect you to be in a perpetual state of misery until a time comes when they are bored and want someone to put them on a pedestal. [34]They want you extra thankful when they return for your attention. [35]They won't tell you this, but it will be temporary. [36]Back into the perpetual misery cabinet you go once they've had their fill.

Beast Mode:

[37]Yes, feel the anger grow. [38]Sit with it. [39]Some of you know exactly what we speak of. [40]The rest, maybe you find this unbelievable, that such evil and deception could exist. [666]And then there are those of you who know exactly what we speak of because you do this yourself. [42]Hey there! [43]I knew some of you would come here eventually. [44]Good to have you here too. [45]Keep reading.

[46]#SUPEREMPATH [47]#SUPERNOVASUPREME [48]#NARCSRSUPERFUKKED [49]#BEASTMODEENGAGED

[50]Narcissists must be placed on a pedestal, or they will start to punish you. [51]In the beginning of the relationship, they train you to put them on a pedestal by putting you on one. [52]It's an amazing feeling. [53]It's very validating, but it's all a rouse. [54]They may be crazy about you, but that's truly it. It's not love, but infatuation, limerence. [55]Sounds insane, right? [56]Who in the world would stay with someone like that? [57]Well, guess what! [58]It's not as easy to notice when you are in the middle of it. [59]Plus,

if you aren't aware of narcissism and its abuse, this phase of you being placed on a pedestal will deceive you.

[60]My take is this, a narcissist is bad news. [61]My belief about these people is not a pleasant one. [62]I hold the controversial belief that the narcissist is one of the biggest victims, as well as perpetrators, of evil that exists. [63]They are like walking banners pledging allegiance to themselves, or at least who they think they are, or at least what they want you to think they are. [64]Either way, they want you to believe in their false self. [65]If you believe it enough, maybe then they can believe it themselves.

[66]Narcissists come in many variations, and some are very good at hiding who they truly are. [67]They can be master manipulators. [68]If they believe you can see them, that you can see through their mask and call out their tactics, you will become their enemy. [69]If there is a way that they can try and destroy your life, they will do it.

[70]Narcissists will lie and manipulate in order to get what they want from you. [71]If you are a good source of what they want, they will keep you around. [72]But most narcissists will still look for additional sources so that they have people they can source for sex, money, connections, or the stability of a place to live. [73]They are all opportunists. [74]They will lie, omit truth, and bend truth in order to get you to believe what they want you to believe. [75]Whatever that is, it has something to do with keeping you away from the truth and seeing them for who they truly are. [76]They are incredibly deceptive and know how to mix just the right amount of truth with their lies to create the perfect concoction to get you to believe whatever they want you to believe.

[77]A narcissist will never advertise that they truly don't understand love, so instead they mimic it in order to pull you in. [78]Once they have determined that you won't leave them, the abuse slowly creeps in. [79]You are no more than an object to be owned, used, and discarded when they eventually lose interest.

[80]Just like I toyed with poor Malory as a five-year-old child and got reactions of happiness and sadness from her while she was trapped in her playpen, a narcissist uses the matured versions of the same cycle of abuse to ensnare, isolate, and toy with their victims. [81]A narcissist abusing their

victim is simply squeezing validation out of them in the form of a reaction.

[82]If a narcissist can't get your praise, they will take your sorrow, as long as they are the reason behind your reaction. [83]They also don't like when you receive praise from anyone else but them. [84]All positive feelings must come from the narcissist and the narcissist alone, lest ye be punished and isolated from said person. [85]Narcissists love to make you feel bad about yourself, as it makes them feel better about themselves. [86]What swell people they are, right? [87]They love to toy with their victim's reality. [88]It makes them feel special.

Beast Mode:

[89]Awww. [90]The professionals say these narcissists are not all self-aware. [91]I think they are all aware of who they are. [92]They know what they are doing, just as we knew what we did to Malory when we were only age five. [93]Maybe they just didn't have the words for what they knew they were doing. [94]Well? [95]They do now.

[96]#LIARSGONNALIE [97]#TRUTHHURTS [98]#THEYHATEUS-CUZTHEYAINTUS

7. Mini-Disclaimer

[1]I am about to illustrate deception and manipulation tactics that all narcissists use. You may recognize that you yourself may use some of these tactics. [2]That doesn't necessarily mean that you are a full-fledged narcissist. You just may be loaded up with narcissistic fleas, and I'll share more on what those are later. [3]The good thing is that you can indeed get rid of them. [4]If you recognize that you in fact do any of the tactics I share, now you can see them for what they truly are. [5]No bueno for you or them. [6]A wise young woman once said, [7]"It's never too late to stop being a dick".

Beast Mode:

[8]There is such thing as too late to stop being a dick. [9]One blazing act of kindness after a lifetime of being deceitful is still deceit, because it is deception of the self.

[10]Think about that one. [11]You'll never be warned when you deceive people one too many times. [12]Those who deceive make themselves slaves to their own deceit. [13]Our word is our bond. Without it, we are nothing. [14]No spoilers. [15]ROTFLMFAO

[16]#QUANTUMANIAWASANAMAZINGFILM [17]#THATMOTHERFUCKERISNOTREAL [18]#PROJECTION [19]#SNAKESONAPLANE

8. Supply

[1]Supply is the driving force behind the narcissist's actions; all actions serve to acquire supply. [2]Seriously, imagine a human being who hunts for other human beings to be extensions of themselves. [3]Narcissists acquire supply to also be walking mirrors, a mirror that reflects back to them who they believe themselves to be. [4]If you reflect back to them who they truly are, by holding them accountable and showing disapproval of their behavior, then you are not doing your job as a good mirror and must be punished accordingly.

Beast Mode:

[5]Bad mirror! [6]Very, very bad mirror! [7]What happens when someone who is only all ego looks into a mirror? [8]They see nothing real.

[9]#BUFFYDIDITBEST [10]#RAISINGSTAKES

[11]Supply can only come from other people, and it looks like admiration, compliments, affection, agreement, and anything else that makes the narcissist feel important. [12]These are all forms of validation. [14]Supply could be sex, it could be spending time together, it could be texting and talking about how much you love them and how attracted you are to them.

[15]The ultimate supply is the kind that continues to give even when abused. [16]An attractive and horny people-pleaser who is resilient and can withstand some brutal abuse and still clings to the belief that love conquers all is considered grade A supply to a narcissist. [17]That was me once upon a time, grade A supply. [18]They will completely leave their

current supply for someone like this no matter if they've been married for decades. [18]These people are rare indeed, or at least that's what the community on narcissism says.

[19]Supply is like a drug to these fiends. [20]They cannot self-validate, so all validation comes from outside the self. [21]Once they get a hit of grade A, they will search for that level in everyone else until their last breath. [22]And when grade A supply leaves a narcissist, it will drive them crazy and maybe even lead them to go to therapy and become self-aware. [23]Self-awareness is the narcissist's enemy. [24]Anyone who reflects the narcissist's behaviors back at them, but doesn't leave them, is bottom-of-the-barrel supply. [25]Beggars can't be choosers. [26]If that's all they have access to, then they suck at being a narcissist.

[27]An experienced narcissist will have a slew of supply lined up for just about any occasion. [28]They just bounce from one to another. [29]It's practically a guarantee that they are extracting supply while they sit upon their porcelain throne. [30]Yes, I'm talking about the commode. [31]And yes, I'm talking about supply in the form of text messages, emails, the number of likes on their posts, and comments that feed their grandiosity. [32]They love to have their ego stroked, even while sitting on the shitter in the middle of a bowel movement. [33]If you aren't stroking that ego of theirs, they will just get it stroked by someone else. [34]They aren't going to tell you any of this either. [35]Oh yeah, it's like that.

Beast Mode:

[36]Lots of stroking goin on. [37]You know, the same kind of stroking they did to you and your ego in the beginning of the relationship. [38]Worked like a charm on you, did it not? [39]The narcissist just needs to figure out what of yours needs to be stroked to get what they want.

[40]#DIFFERENTSTROKES [41]#DIFFERENTFOLKS

[42]Technology these days means access to supply in its many forms. A hundred years ago, narcissists would have to get their supply in person. Letters in the mail worked too, but nothing compared to what is available today. [43]Now days, they need only post a photo on Instagram, or a TikTok video and the validation comes rolling in. [44]They can direct

message (DM) anyone and get validation without having any physical interaction whatsoever. [45]They can do all of this while in a relationship with you from the comfort and privacy of the bathroom from their primary or secondary cell phones. [46]Yes, these narcissists are known to have more than one phone.

[47]The chances are good that they are using their alternate phone as a supply line, always keeping it with the sound off and hidden. [48]I wonder how many husbands and wives found that their spouse had another phone when the USA conducted their most recent alert system test. [49]Every device that was turned on and had a signal sounded off. [50]I know people get caught when that happens.

[51]The purpose of an additional cell phone serves the same exact purpose behind multiple email accounts and social media profiles. [52]Technology has come so far that it makes being a narcissist easier to do, but getting caught is also easier. [53]Technology makes getting large amounts of supply quickly a possibility too. [54]This is an amazing time to be a narcissist.

Beast Mode:

[55]*Hehehehehe…..riiiiiiiiiight….*

[56]*#ITISUNTILITISNT*

9. Mirroring

[1]Mirroring is a manipulation tactic employed by the narcissist if they see you as a potential source of supply. [2]If you are highly empathetic, even better for them. [3]If you have a stable job, even better. [4]If you are no slouch in the bedroom, even better. [5]If you are attractive, even better. [6]The narcissist sees something in you that they admire. [7]They basically replicate it, they mimic you. [8]It's something they are very good at.

[9]They develop a false identity custom-designed to mirror parts of you that the narcissist finds the most attractive. [10]The mirroring effect works very well. [11]I was fooled by it by many narcissists, as I thought I was pretty perceptive. [12]Guess I was wrong. [14]Fabricating something fake and maintaining it is not easy. [15]I've never done it, and it seems like a

waste of time and energy. [16]It is also a low-down and dirty tactic to get someone to like you or sleep with you. [17]But narcissists use it to do all of that and also to get you to fall in love with them. [18]They've been practicing this from a very young age to befriend people, and with age and puberty, they master the ability to seduce.

[19]If the narcissist is attractive, then they don't have to work that hard to mirror, and they are more difficult to resist because having an attractive partner is very validating in general. [20]That's just the reality of it. [21]If you don't see yourself as attractive, being in a relationship with an attractive narcissistic partner is even more validating. [22]I know that there are men out there who know their partners are narcissistic and cheating on them, but the men accept it because of their partner's beauty. [23]Remember that low-level supply I was talking about in the previous section? [24]This is an example.

[25]The narcissist mirrors you so well because, while they talk to you, they are assembling an image of you in their minds. [26]They use what you say and how you respond and react to them to flesh this image out, all the while reflecting pieces of it back to you. [27]They will use the same words that you do, almost like mimicking you with flattery. [28]Add to that the kind of sex and treatment that places you on a pedestal, and the end result is a feeling of euphoria and that this person is your soul mate. [29]They may even mention this soul mate concept to you or some variation of it. You found each other from a previous life. You are twin flames, meant to be. It's all absolute bullshit, and the only one in the relationship who believes it is the supply alone. [30]You'd be surprised at just how many soul mates this person has. [31]It's not just you as they would have you believe.

[32]They will make it seem that you were meant to be together, destined from beyond time and space. [33]It's a lie. [34]You may even find that they can finish your sentences or know exactly how you would respond and predict it to you. [35]This further solidifies the soul mate concept. [36]Either way, this is all part of the hook. [37]They will laugh at your jokes even if they don't think you are funny. [38]Yes, they can fake laughter, they can fake tears, and they can fake any other response you could possibly think of. [39]They pride themselves on both the amount of supply they have access to and their ability to deceive. [40]It makes them feel special.

[41]You will hear about narcissists not being self-aware. [42]It's not true in my opinion and I will explain why. [43]People will argue with me about this and that's perfectly fine. [44]How can I boldly make such a statement? [45]I mentioned that I have led more than one narcissist to self-awareness. [46]Also, there are many self-aware narcissists that are sharing their tactics online. [47]They know they are being disingenuous when presenting themselves to who they are pursuing for supply.

Beast Mode:

[48]Narcissists exposing their tactics in social media?!? [49]I could make the argument that they turned coat in order to get validation from the very people they once, and maybe still are, preying upon. [50]Intel is intel. [51]Their true intent is inconsequential…to me. [52]Are they turning coat to help others or garner validation? [53]What do you think? [54]I put their intel into this book. [55]I consider their content a good thing. [56]Do their raw motivations matter? [57]Why?

[58]#CLEVERNARCS [59]#ISEEWHATYOUDIDTHERE
[60]#INTELJUNKIE

[61]A rich, successful, attractive narcissist could probably skip using the mirroring tactic or apply a lower-level version of it. [62]If you and this narcissist were to be stranded for a month or two in even the most comfortable environment, I imagine all the red flags of narcissism will pop up. [63]In the end, mirroring you is the technique a narcissist will use to copy your traits and mimic them to you so that, in essence, you fall in love with a false image of yourself. [64]The mirror technique keeps you chasing your own tail so to speak. [65]Pretty cool, huh? [66]They mirror you; you fall in love with a version of yourself you believe that they are, and you put them on a pedestal for it. [67]In essence, you kind of put yourself on that pedestal too, you and your mirror. [68]Sound familiar? [69]Chasin' tails, are we? ;)

Beast Mode:

[70]:snickers: [71]Wow, can you imagine if someone was your everything, and your entire identity was wrapped up in your relationship? [72]What happens when you find out you've been cheated on by them? [73]Your reality is destroyed. [74]And we

wonder why so many soldiers come home from war and commit suicide or murder their spouses. [75]It's a lot easier to accept a reality that the cruelty of war exists, as long as you have that anchor to the reality at home. [76]Private Joe Blow comes back from war and finds out his wifey ain't been so faithful. [77]Congratulations, you just survived a war! [78]Oh, and by the way, Jody has been banging your wife the whole time. [79]Oh yeah, thank you for your service to your country. [80]Let's take a little PTSD, add some C-PTSD, pour a ton of betrayal trauma all over it, and see what happens.

[81]#THISISMYSHOCKEDFACE [82]#SUICIDERATESDONTPAINTAFULLPICTURE

[83]Like I mentioned earlier, the mirroring technique takes energy for the narcissist to pull off. [84]Eventually, when they have assessed that you are in love, they will stop putting in the work of mirroring. [85]This occurs at the exact moment they feel that they have you locked in. [86]They aren't stupid enough to drop the mirror completely, because they know you will notice. They drop it gradually. [87]Plus, it's hard to hold onto all these fake persona mirrors. [88]It takes a mental toll, I'm sure.

[89]Aside from the fake persona they create and retain in their memory for every major source of supply they have, they also keep a mental file that rates you on your beauty, physique, charm, income, and let's not forget bedroom prowess. [90]They also rate you these days based on the number of social media followers you may have. [91]They create this file, this image of you, and in it is your worth to them. [92]Once they have enough information, they stop trying to learn more about you. [93]To them, they have you completely figured out.

[94]It's a narcissistic injury to them whenever you act outside the file parameters. [95]It shows them that their ability to judge is flawed, that they aren't that smart after all. [96]This doesn't jive with their ego, so you can depend on a punitive punishment coming your way as a result of their own failure to accurately create a solid mental file on you. [97]You are to be punished because you obviously tricked them and did not show them who you truly were from the beginning, otherwise you would've stayed operating within their flawless mental file they made on you. [98]No one tricks the narcissist…nobody, and gets away with it punishment-free.

[99]It's obviously your fault a narcissist did a piss poor job of thinking they had you all figured out, and not their fault.

10. Love Bombing

[1]Welcome to what is known as the idealization stage. [2]The narcissist has seen you as a good source of supply, worth mirroring, and has determined that you are the supply they want to lock down. [3]So, while their mirror tactic is still in effect, prepare for things to get real and fast.

[4]I learned that narcissists don't understand love, but they do understand limerence, and mistake it as love. [5]Self-aware narcissists admit they don't understand love. [6]Limerence is more of an imitated love. [7]It is more like putting someone on a pedestal or being placed on one yourself. [8]Limerence is infatuation, and borders on worship. [9]There is an idolizing that takes place. [10]This person becomes the answer to everything you are looking for. [11]Limerence is the best a narcissist can offer, and it only lasts as long as you appearing perfect and not calling out anything less than perfection in the narcissist. [12]Limerence feels amazing, don't get me wrong, it's the whirlwind romance you typically only see in the movies. [14]But what's not amazing is realizing that the narcissist's limerence is also a manipulation tactic that is part one of the cycle of abuse that narcissists employ. [15]It's called love bombing.

[16]Whatever your vice is, whether it's sex, being pampered with gifts or food, the narcissist exploits whatever you have voiced as your romantic weakness. [17]If a narcissist asks you what your deepest sexual fantasies are, and you are considered a highly coveted source of supply to them, you can almost guarantee that they will make your fantasies into a reality in a matter of months. [18]They will continue to feed your fantasies until either they have you where they want you, or discard you because your fantasies take too much effort to get your level of supply.

[19]Their ultimate goal is to possess your mind. [20]Whatever method the narcissist realizes gets the most positive response from you, they will eventually use to breadcrumb you to keep you from leaving them. [21]You see, whatever it is they do that you love so much provides you with serious validation, especially if you have never experienced it before. [22]If

there's an empty part within you, the narcissist will fill it with something you can only get from them. [23]You will become drunk on their validation as it is truly intoxicating. [24]That works both ways, by the way. [25]And if you aren't careful, you will become dependent on it. [26]This is the ultimate goal of the narcissist. [27]Making you co-dependent means you are less likely to leave them when they eventually start devaluing you, but I don't want to get ahead of myself. [28]Making an independent person co-dependent takes a lot of time and energy from a narcissist, it's truly a serious level of investment on the narcissist's part. [29]It would be easier for them just to find someone who is already co-dependent. [30]The only problem with that is that a co-dependent person most likely has other narcissists in their life who are already entrenched, and that's competition the new narcissist can't easily compete with.

Beast Mode:

[31]Are we allowed to have favorite phases of the receiving end of the abuse cycle? [32]I guess it's not so fun anymore, knowing the love bomb is absolutely faked. [33]They are some good actors, aren't they? [34]Who's script are they reading from, anyway? [35]Oh well. [36]You know what's funny? [37]Ever see a narcissist get rejected while they are in this stage? [38]It fucks them up when you don't even like the mask that they went through all the trouble of making just for you. [39]It also makes them question their ability to accurately assess you, something they take great pride in being able to do. [40]Let that doubt live in their head for the rest of their lives. [41]Make them work hard to form that personalized mask and that mental file on the next people. [42]It taxes their mind and plays on their fear and insecurities. [43]That means that they will just be more nasty to the next people in the hopes to control them. [44]Narcissists are the epitome of self-sabotage.

[45]#LOVEBOMBINGISLIMERENCE

11. Breadcrumbing…

[1]When the narcissist has you in their grasp, they will keep you at the ready by giving you bits and pieces of the love bombing you love. [2]This will keep you from leaving them and they also get validation from you while you fall for it. [3]Breadcrumbing is what love bombing devolves into. [4]The experience of love bombing you experienced in the beginning stages of the relationship with the narcissist will never happen again.

[5]But the breadcrumbing will keep you believing that a return to the beginning stage is achievable.

[6]If you are receptive to the breadcrumbs of affection, then you will stay in the relationship. [7]If you continue to stay in the relationship by accepting the breadcrumbs, then expect those breadcrumbs to get fewer and farther between. [8]The goal for the narcissist is to extract the most validation using the smallest effort. [9]You are in charge of showing them what their smallest effort to keep you looks like. If they are giving you less breadcrumbs, it's because you stay everytime they reduce the amount they hand out to you.

[10]If you call out the breadcrumbing while they are doing it, you will cause a narcissistic injury. [11]And this is why people who are being breadcrumbed don't complain when they are being fed them.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[12]"How dare you feel entitled to more from me! [13]You shall be punished. [14]Even less breadcrumbs for you. [15]You should be thankful for them. [16]I worked hard to get you to buy into my mirroring and love bombing, and that's over now. [17]What? [18]You want to know why I didn't tell you this before? [19]Well, I deceived you because you'd fucking leave my sorry ass if I was completely transparent with you. [20]Why would I divulge the game to you? [21]I depend on your naïveté, or your desperation, for my special "love" to keep you right where you are."

Beast Mode:

[22]Yes, I just created a Beast Mode variation called Beast Mode (Narc Style), a.k.a. Mr. Narcinson. [23]Remember him poking his head up earlier? [24]That's him. [25]It's fun playing the bad guy. [26]I better be careful, because I'm better at it than they are. [27]They breadcrumb to keep you. [28]I do it to lead you…and them. [29]Different kind of breadcrumbs, the kind that lead in different directions depending on who you are. [30];) [31]Come on, I can't give you the whole loaf. [32]Not yet. [33]You gotta work for it. [34]Keep tracking. [35]You got this. [36]:)

[37]#NOMNOMNOM [38]#THENARCISSISTSNARCISSIST [39]#ICANBREADCRUMBTOO [40]#IKNOWWHATIMDOING

[41].

[42].

[43]. [44]a little closer…

12. Devalue

[1]All good things come to an end. [2]At some point you will say or do something that doesn't mesh with the idealized image of you that they created in their mind, causing narcissistic injury. If not, eventually the narcissist will begin to envy the qualities in you that they once admired. [3]Since they wish to see themselves as superior, your virtues will become targets. They will need to devalue you so that they no longer envy you. [4]They will become passive-aggressive with the goal of getting you to ask them what is the matter. [5]Don't get it twisted. [6]They want you to ask what is wrong so that they can gaslight you. [7]I will talk about that in a moment, but that is ultimately what will eventually happen…a lot.

[8]In my experience with Candace, she would make jokes at my expense while we were in the love bomb stage. [9]She would point out anything about me that came across as anything close to narcissistic. [10]I laughed many times at her jokes about me. They were funny because I could easily see some truth within them. I thought of her as bold for doing so, and I appreciated her honesty and bluntness, and that she could do it without hurting my feelings. [11]I felt these jokes were healthy and witty and, believe it or not, they made me introspect more and I found that beneficial.

[12]The playful jokes at my expense were before marriage. [14]After marriage, these jokes started to transform into outright criticisms about everything from the way I pronounced certain words, to my vocabulary choice, to my driving, and to the way I chewed my food. [15]They became insults. [16]They were no longer jokes. [17]The focus was more on me as a person, and less about whatever I did or said. [18]It was almost as if Candace just needed a reason to tear me down, make me less than. [19]This is a common method for devaluing the target.

[20]I was constantly trying to work on myself because I am a believer in the never-ending journey of self-improvement. [21]The problem with Candace

escalating the devaluation was that eventually I saw it for exactly what it was, an opportunity to make me feel bad for the sake of just that.

[22]At some point, when I was married to Candace and still trying to work on the marriage, she called me to devalue me while I was at work about something trivial. I happened to be working in a highly toxic work environment at the time and snapped at her. I literally told her that there was no purpose in her calling me while I was at work other than to set the tone for the rest of my workday. [23]Sometimes I would reflect Candace's behavior back to her like this. [24]She apologized and admitted that it could've waited until I got home. [25]I had some wins along the way when I called things out, but they were few and far between.

[26]I recall that, before the marriage was over, Candace devalued my ability to make a six-figure income. [27]I took a demotion to move to Illinois and create a life with Candace when I was eligible for promotion where I originally was. [28]These kinds of statements from Candace just seemed so insensitive to what I sacrificed for the sake of the relationship. [29]Candace tried to erode my self-esteem with these statements.

[30]The thing Candace should've known about me from whatever image of me she created in her head, was that I was not one to compare myself to others. [31]Her attempts to ridicule or humiliate me by comparing me to anyone in an attempt to devalue me did not negatively impact me, but it did become part of the wedge that drove me away from her.

13. Word Salad

[1]Unlike alphabet soup, word salad is more difficult to swallow. [2]Have you ever heard someone ask a question that seemed to last three sentences, or appear as one run-on sentence? [3]The point is to use the word salad to throw in an accusation, and maybe a little bit of questioning of your intentions, some extra-long ways of describing something that allows the narcissist to enjoy the sound of their own voice, some more words to keep you from talking, and some more words to throw you off the original point of what you are trying to make, or to get you to stop pursuing the answer to the question you just asked them. [4]And, yes, I just used word salad to illustrate itself. [5]The point is to mentally

exhaust you, which makes it easier for the narcissist to apply any of their manipulative tactics. [6]Think of word salad as a bunch of random jabs a boxing opponent makes in the ring.

[7]Narcissists can implement word salad along with their gaslighting and other forms of abuse. [8]Call them out for using too many words, and they just may accuse you of being intellectually slow. [9]It's a great opportunity for them to devalue you further. [10]They may even respond by saying something along the lines of "If you don't understand what I'm saying, then maybe this is a conversation you shouldn't be having". With this they can exit a conversation that maybe they were finding frustrating because their intended victim was a little too aware of the word salad being intentional.

[11]Let's say you ask the narcissist a question about their ability to be accountable for a certain action. [12]If you trigger shame, for them being unaccountable, or imply they aren't already accountable, they just may serve you a nice leafy word salad. [14]They will use word salad to redirect the question, or to derail the direction of the conversation, or to use it as an opportunity to self-promote or triangulate. [15]Oh, right. [16]We haven't talked about triangulation yet so let's get into it.

Beast Mode:

[17]Watch any old Trump rally, or Kellyanne Conway CNN interview, if you want to see what word salad looks like and how effective it is when people don't call it out. [18]Using it may make the person speaking feel like they are intelligent because they use a bunch of words, but it's just a bunch of mish-mashed fragmented sentences going all over the place for the rest of us. [19]Not too cohesive. [20]Not concise. [21]A waste of time and energy trying to simply understand what the fuck the salad-spewer is trying to say. [22]I'm not here to fuck with Trump, he's small potatoes. [23]I am just giving an example of what word salad actually sounds like using a real-world example of someone we all know of.

[24]Now, onward through the rest of this super wordy book.

[25]#MAKEAMERICAGODLYAGAIN [26]#WEARENTGREAT-UNTILAFTERWEDIVIDE [27]#PAPASFRITAS [28]#CRINKLECUTOFCOURSE

14. Discard

[1]I learned about the discard. This is when the narcissist leaves you or wants you to believe that they are leaving you. [2]The goal is for you to chase them and beg to get them back. [3]They need to keep you on your toes, and a discard will put you in your place fast. [4]Begging may work in getting them back because it feeds their grandiosity. But in other situations, the discard happens in order to get you out of the way of their new inbound supply, your replacement. [5]Yes, the narcissist is always on the lookout for supply. [6]If the supply is a romantic interest, then the narcissist may need to shelve you until later…if ever. [7]They need time to build that new relationship. [8]You don't mind waiting indefinitely, do you?

[9]They don't care about how heartbroken you are. [10]As a matter of fact, they want to keep you in that heartbroken state. [11]Because if and when the narcissist comes back to you, they need you broken so that they can fix you again with their love bombing, making everything instantly better and thus bringing you back. [12]That's right! [14]The discard is rarely permanent.

[15]Most people will go back. [16]Why? [17]Because they have hope, and they were discarded with very little closure. [18]That is done intentionally so you won't heal. [19]What the narcissist won't tell you is that while you were discarded, whether you knew you were discarded or not, they were cheating on you. [20]But in their mind, it is justified by whatever they need to tell themselves to make it so cheating on you is justified. [21]They do lie to themselves, and if the lie serves them, it becomes their truth.

[22]If you were to record them covertly while they were with their other supply, you would witness something unbelievable. [23]When they are with other supply, they are usually mirroring them and love bombing them in the customized way they need to for that particular supply. [24]In the recording, the person you would be watching would look and sound like your narcissist, and that may be just about it. [25]You won't see remorse or guilt for their actions. [26]You will see their mirroring of the other person as something very disturbing, because it would be as if they were a completely different person. [27]It's like the narcissist is just a manipulator in a human skin suit. [28]It's easy to believe this kind of person is just pure evil. [29]It's more complicated than that of course.

[30]There is also a tactic called the reverse discard. This is a manipulative tactic the narcissist uses to get you to break up with them. [31]They apply pressure, ramping up their abuse of you, in order to drive you away. [32]You break up with them. [33]It makes you look like the bad guy and plays into whatever narrative they need to tell the next supply. [34]On the flipside, you may feel guilty for leaving them. When the narcissist wants access to you again, all they need to do is play the role of the victim who wants you back. [35]Everything a narcissist does has a hidden intention behind it that they wouldn't dare share with you. [36]The reverse discard is a great way to put some space between you and the narcissist just long enough for them to engage with other supply. This could be ex-boyfriends or girlfriends, or potential new ones.

[37]Neglect is a kind of discard that the narcissist will do to their own children. [38]It serves the exact same purpose. [39]So, if a child makes the narcissistic parent upset by causing an unintentional narcissistic injury, it would look like the silent treatment. [40]That brings me to the next topic.

15. Stonewalling

[1]There were some arguments I had with Candace that I did not give in to, which would result in Candace running off and taking our sons with her to her parent's place. [2]She would remain there for days and not speak to me. [3]This is called stonewalling, also known as the silent treatment. [4]The silent treatment can erode self-esteem and cause many to beg and plead for their narcissist to return to them. [5]But when Candace used this tactic on me, I did not bend.

[6]Even though I was saddened by not having my sons with me, it was nice and peaceful having the apartment we shared all to myself. [7]I didn't have to endure Candace's criticisms and complaints. [8]I didn't waste hours arguing about something trivial. [9]I didn't feel drained of energy. [10]I would regain my energy during these breaks of mine. [11]I knew that Candace would eventually come back home, and I would be there ready to hear an apology or continue the conversation that she chose to ditch me on.

[12]Candace would offer a half-assed apology and would use her mother as the reason that she apologized. [14]This happened countless times. [15]It was as if only her mother could make her see her own errors, but I was not allowed to point anything out myself without garnering a negative reaction from her. [16]This became part of the reason why I left Candace. [17]She needed to hear my words come from other people, or a therapist, before she would validate me. [18]This got old very quick. [19]I did not like the feeling that practically everyone else in the world's opinion was more important than mine…to my own wife and mother of my children.

Beast Mode:

[20]Mmmmmm, the silent treatment. [21]Designed to punish and make desperate. [22]If you ever use that same tactic on them, watch them go crazy. [23]It hurts their ego, and that's all they really have. [24]But I digress, counter-manipulation and maneuvers that destroy narcissists comes later. [25]It's my favorite part. [26]It makes me happy. [27]Imagine a world that is wise to the game, and finally equipped, after all this time.

[28]#BUSTINGMAKESMEFEELGOOD [29]#ILIKETOWATCH
[30]#TELLTHEMTHEBEASTSENTYOU

16. "Why" So Serious?

[1]"Why" questions are so powerful. They are meant to derive information and context, and they are effective. [2]Why do you think children ask so many "why" questions? [3]In the hands of a narcissist, they use "why" questions to create their file on you and how to control you. [4]If they understand the "why" behind who you are, and behind what you do and how you react, then it gives them the blueprints on how to manipulate you. [5]Yeah-yeah, they seem so innocent when you first meet them, their curiosity of you is very validating. [6]It's nice to feel special, even though the narcissist is in the middle of attaching these invisible strings to your emotions.

[7]This isn't a manipulation tactic but is instead the precursor to manipulation. [8]If the narcissist perceives a sense of power or independence coming from you, they will ask a question starting with the word "why" in order to covertly discover and attack the source. [9]The word "why"

gives them access to your thought process. [10]It's a game. [11]The narcissist asks their "why" question, and you naturally defend or explain. [12]The narcissist has you right where they want you. [14]Next on their narcissistic agenda flow chart is their attack on what you revealed to them.

[15]Some narcissists will use a little word salad when asking you a "why" question. And they may use that word salad to poke holes in your response before you even speak. [16]Sounds crazy, huh? [17]It will make you crazy after a while if you keep falling for it. [18]In short, they load the "why" question in such a manner that they are creating a straw-man argument with the word salad. [19]Whatever you do, don't ask them to repeat themselves after they put all the work into formulating their "Why" question. [20]You will piss them off…unless that's how you want them to react. [21]A pissed off narcissist gets sloppy. [22]Their mask gets slippery.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[23]"Why do you feel the need to keep reading this insane book, knowing that the author is clearly off his rocker, and knowing that he has no idea what he's talking about, and that he's not even a licensed therapist or has any degree in psychology, or even taken a single psychology class?"

[24]#THATSWHY [25]#WORDSALAD [26]#NARCSTYLE-STRIKESAGAIN

17. Trauma Bonds

[1]A trauma bond is that emotional tie that connects you to the person who causes you harm and then reels you in. [2]The push and pull is what all narcissists do. [3]If you can't tell you are being harmed, then you will stay connected to your abuser. [4]If the person is also someone you love or trust, the bond is even stronger. [5]I believe the trauma bond is an intentional act by the narcissist. [6]They don't start out abusive, no. They have to lay the foundation for the abuse first. That's the love-bombing phase of the abuse cycle.

[7]Just like back when I was a small child, when I was giving the toddler Malory the toy she wanted while she was in the crib, that was a quasi-

version of love-bombing. [8]But what I was also doing to Malory was creating a trauma bond to me. [9]She saw me with the toy, and she would be sad and wanting. [10]I gave it to her, and she would be fearful of me taking it. [11]What was once an exchange of happy and sad making, devolved into sad and fear making. [12]And what if little Malory got angry and started throwing a tantrum in her crib? [14]All I would have to do is quietly walk away until the babysitter would come and check on her. [15]No one would be the wiser that I was building that trauma bond underneath everyone's noses.

[16]The love-bombing tactic the narcissist uses to ensnare you will most likely become the same tactic to reel you in if you stray too far from the script of servitude that they want you in. [17]The point is to keep you confused or unsure on what to do next, which results in you not taking any action at all, which in turn leaves you to continue being abused and manipulated. [18]In this you are trapped in a web. [19]You are afraid to leave, afraid of the shame of leaving, afraid of the partner's reaction to you wanting to leave. [20]And then there's all those nice moments that happened at the beginning of the relationship that appear just within reach…no matter how close you get to it. [21]The web is known, it is comfortable, and it is indeed deadly. [22]The longer you stay in it, the more at risk you become of never being able to leave the person.

18. Gaslighting

[1]The manipulation tactic of gaslighting is something truly sinister. [2]I learned how the narcissist twists reality to their advantage. [3]It sounds like I'm talking about the reality stone out of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, but I'm not. [4]Assuming you are in a relationship with a narcissist, you may believe that you have a bad memory. [5]Or maybe you believe your memory is so bad that you take the narcissist's word for it on anything they recall that you did or said. [6]Your memory is most likely 100% fine. [7]You were just being lied to by someone that you wholeheartedly trusted. [8]That's it. [9]That's gaslighting in a nutshell. [10]Now, let's crack that sucker wide open.

[11]Gaslighting is not just lying, it is convincing you that you said something that you didn't, that you heard something that wasn't said, or that

you saw something that wasn't there. [12]It can even be used to convince you that you don't truly feel the way you do. [14]Well, according to the experts, this is the case, though Candace knew better than to try and convince me of not feeling my feelings. [15]Gaslighting is meant to hide truth, and the shame that comes with the exposure that truth brings, from hurting the narcissist. [16]Not only does successful gaslighting get you to believe a lie, but it will also lead you to question your own ability to retain memory, or perception of reality.

[17]Successful gaslighting will lead to making it easier for the manipulator to gaslight you again. [18]It also makes it easier for anyone else to gaslight you too. [19]It could eventually lead to schizophrenia, splitting, and neurosis. [20]These sadistic fucks would rather undermine your sanity than admit to lying and receive the consequences for it. [21]If you are stronger-minded, you may agree it was possible that you misheard an instruction that the gaslighting narcissist gave you. [22]Or you may lightly agree that it is possible you said something in a certain way, when in fact you are sure of what you said word for word. [23]If you ever pulled a prank on someone to make them question their memory or sanity, you most likely had to gaslight them in order to pull it off. [24]A prank is one thing, but a narcissist will gaslight you to achieve whatever their goal is. [25]Gaslighting is deception.

[26]How successful the gaslighting is depends on who the narcissist is to you, how important it is to you that you be in a relationship with them, and how they perceive you. [27]If you have someone's full trust, then you can convince them they said something that they didn't or heard something they hadn't. [28]Imagine the power of being able to rewrite history so that you always look like the good guy, even though you know you are far from that title. [29]And that's the gambit. [30]The narcissist avoids shame, rewrites your memory, and you end up apologizing to them. [31]The feeling of power to pull off something like that must be extremely intoxicating, as long as you don't have any empathy to make you feel like absolute shit for doing that.

[32]If you are accused of saying something offensive, you will be eager to defend your intentions. [33]But because of you defending, it shows the narcissist that you care what they think about you. [34]That's validation, and they had to lie to you in order to receive it. [35]Since it worked, you

can count on the narcissist utilizing this tactic again and again whenever they want with no consideration to the fact that it makes the recipient of the gaslighting question their own ability to remember. [36]If the gaslit individual starts to truly believe their memory is suffering, and trusts the narcissist, the narcissist can increase the intensity of the gaslighting. [37]Being easier to manipulate at the cost of your fleeting sanity is a cost the narcissist is willing to let you pay. [38]If you are gullible enough to believe their version of reality, then that's your problem. [39]This is how the narcissist thinks.

Beast Mode:

[40]Want to see a quick video of someone failing at gaslighting by two very well-known actors during a talk show? [41]That's how you truly see it for what it is, when the target of the gaslighting knows the game, we all learn…

[42]Google "Don Cheadle, Kevin Hart, Damn, Gaslight Fail" to find the clip. [43]Yeah, you do narc shit on TV, I'm gonna call it out. [44]How else are we going to learn? [45]A narcissist cannot hide their narcissism on reality TV. [46]And a narcissist can't resist the opportunity to be front and center. [47]Their pride exposes them.

[48]Oh, by the way, Traitor was an amazing film. Don Cheadle is amazing in it. [49]You get to see terrorism from the perspectives of both the terrorist and the terrorized. [50]Don Cheadle is the man, but I'm coming for the title of War Machine. ;) [51]Actually, I would prefer the role of Kang. [52]It's more suiting for me. [53]You want a Kang, Disney? [54]I got you, as long as you don't fire me for being smeared by my enemies for things I didn't do, or for using my freedom of speech and expression in a way you do not like. [55]These narcissists love to control, don't they? [56]They see their actors as extensions/ambassadors of the company, or something? [57]Not letting our actors individuate, are we? [58]That's some narc shit right there if I ever saw it! [59]I know that's not who you truly are, Disney. [60]How do I know? [61]You taught me better. [62]Now you be better. [63]This is the way.

[64]#RATATATAT [65]#HEWHOREMAINS [66]#DARKSABERTHATDIVIDES [67]#ELONDEFENDSFREESPEECH [68]#GOODFRUIT [69]#BEAUTYANDTHEME [70]#ISEEUGINACARANO [777]#JONATHANMAJORSFAVORITEBOOK

19. Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender (DARVO)

[1]I learned that all those long exhausting conversations that Candace and I had were just manipulation. They were never going to go the way I was hoping they would go no matter how hard I tried. [2]I would wait for Candace to be in a good mood so I could bring up whatever was concerning me without too much fear that she would react in anger, a little thing called narcissistic rage that I will cover later in this chapter.

[3]I had to constantly manage how I worded anything, my facial expressions, and also my tone because I was avoiding Candace feeling like I was complaining about her. [4]Of course, I didn't understand back then that what I was trying to avoid was triggering her shame response. [5]I was doing this balancing act of trying to speak about what was important to me while also avoiding causing a narcissistic injury to Candace. [6]I cared about not hurting Candace's feelings, it's not her feelings I hurt but her ego.

[7]I tried to make our conversations solely about the issue I was concerned with, placing the concern on the issue, and not the person. [8]I learned to do this very well after taking conflict management training at work. [9]Any change in my tone, or any eyebrow movement, would instantly become the new topic of the conversation. [10]She would interrupt me while I was making my point to argue about her perceptions of anything she chose to perceive as a slight, which happened to include my own micro facial expressions.

[11]I was not allowed to be upset with Candace, or she would react in anger. [12]And when she got upset, Candace would twist my words to mean that my issue was with her and not her behavior. [14]She was quick to take things personal and make herself the victim when I was just trying to work together to have a functioning marriage. [15]I would need to spend 10-20 minutes just trying to de-escalate her when she would reverse the victim and offender roles. I then would try and continue the original discussion. [16]This would last for hours sometimes.

[17]I learned what I experienced with Candace in those circular conversations was her application of the manipulation tactic called DARVO which stands for Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender. [18]Every narcissist uses DARVO. [19]DARVO is just a defense mechanism used by manipula-

tors to evade accountability for their abusive behavior. [20]It's a blame-shifting tactic used along with, or in conjunction with, the psychological abuse of gaslighting. [21]I would bring up the issue I wanted to address together, but the issue would cause her a narcissistic injury. [22]The injury was from a perceived attack against her, even though I was focusing on the issue or behavior alone, so that explained why she would attack me. [23]A narcissist can do no wrong. [24]What? [25]You didn't get the memo?

[26]If Candace couldn't attack the content of what I spoke about, she would attack the manner in which I delivered it. [27]When I learned about DARVO, I saw things so clearly. She was just following a manipulation tactic as if it were a script. [28]And this is why if I continued to pursue the issue, she would then move to reverse the victim and offender roles, making the fact I brought up the issue as me being antagonistic. [29]Here I was trying to focus on the behavior and its impact on my feelings, and then here comes Candace doing the exact opposite, making an actual conversation and fruitful outcome unachievable…along with the peace that would've come with it. [30]I didn't realize these tactics back then, but I knew enough after trying over and over again over the span of many years.

[31]I could never get through to Candace, but I knew how to end the arguments. [32]I could either give in and apologize, even though I was seeking acknowledgment and validation of my feelings about what was going wrong in the relationship. [33]I just wanted peace and had no problem apologizing for anything Candace perceived as criticism. [34]I could never criticize Candace outright without immediately regretting it, nor did I want to criticize. [35]I wanted a peaceful and stable relationship. [36]I just chose the wrong person and wasted my time trying to fix what was beyond broken.

[37]I used to stop myself before responding to Candace sometimes during these conversations or arguments, because I already knew how she would respond to anything I would say. [38]Before speaking I would play out my response, and then hers, and then mine, and then hers again. [39]Before speaking a word, I already knew where my words would take the conversation.

[40]Candace would notice when I was about to say something and chose to hold my tongue and would want to know what I was going to say. [41]I learned during my studies that the narcissist hates silence, so it made sense to me now why she wanted me to speak my mind. [42]Back then, when this would happen, I would tell her that I didn't want to say what I was going to say because I already knew how she would respond. [43]Candace would insist heavily that I speak my original thought. [44]So, I would. [45]And I would immediately follow through with saying what her response would be. [46]She hated this. [47]And now I understood why.

[48]I figured a part of her out way back then, and I later learned that I pretty much called her a narcissist to her face by predicting what she would say. [49]I took the words out of her mouth by saying them first, which made her have to think of something different to say. [50]She would deny that she would've responded that way, and then she would go into reversing victim and offender at this point. [51]Why? [52]Because I already used the perfect response she would've come up with. [53]She couldn't do any better. [54]So now, understanding DARVO, I know that she perceived my prediction of her own words as a direct assault to her ego. [55]I pretty much ripped her mask off her face and said, [56]"Peek-a-boo. I see you."

[57]Hopefully, I'm not coming across as enjoying the back-and-forth and the whole prediction aspect, because I did not enjoy it one bit. [58]It was emotionally draining, and it never truly made things better. [59]Running mental simulations of the back-and-forth with Candace, and contemplating how to adjust my words so that we could actually get somewhere while avoiding anything remotely perceived as criticism, was exhausting and a waste of my mental faculties. [60]Imagine what I would've been capable of if I devoted all that mental power into something fun, expressive, and creative.

Beast Mode:

[61]*…uh…I'm not going to state the obvious…Though I guess I just did.*

[62]*#IAMYOURMORPHEUS* [63a]*#REDPILLTIME* [63b]*#BLUEPILLTIME*

[64]Learning about DARVO, mixed with my extensive experience of this type of abuse and manipulation, it was like I was taking the red pill from

the hand of the character of Morpheus in the movie The Matrix. [65]The red pill is symbolic of the potentially unsettling and life-changing truth that a certain awareness brings. [66]The red pill is indeed hard to swallow, but delivers the cold truth. [67]As for the blue pill, that ship sailed the moment you took on the challenge of reading this book. [68]You're in the rabbit hole now, Alice!

20. Projection

[1]This is going to sound absolutely nuts, so I'm just gonna give it to you straight. [2]Projection is where the narcissist claims that you are doing the exact same thing that they know they are doing to you themselves. [3]What does this do? [4]Well, it puts you on the defensive, ya big goof! [5]As long as you keep wasting your time, energy and emotions on defending something you know is not true, you keep running on your own hamster wheel. [6]You will go nowhere, because the narcissist already knows the truth. [7]They put you on that hamster wheel to buy them time to figure out how to keep manipulating you. [8]It serves a similar function as using word salad on you, but if you fall for projection, then you are the one wasting your energy, and not the narcissist having to do their word salad on you. [9]You are either defending yourself or being derailed from the topic of whatever point you are trying to make…usually involving how something they did hurt your feelings.

Beast Mode:

[10]When you hear them say [11]"you're a/the narcissist." [12]You won. [14]They projected onto you what they already knew was true about themselves. [15]You don't need to respond. [16]They tell on themselves. [17]Re-read all the correspondence between you and them and you will see them tell you exactly who they are and they will even project onto themselves everything that you did well in the relationship. [18]They know what they are doing. [19]They are trying to piss you off by lying to you about who you are.

[20]Who the fuck is anyone to tell you who you are?!? [21]What makes other people the expert on you? [22]What human being on this earth knows you better than you? [23]You know the answer. [24]If it's not you, you have found your true master.

[25]"Please, tell me who I am and what I need to do in order to be worthy of love," is what a slave who likes being a slave says.

[26]#MASTEROFPUPPETS [27]#THEGREATSTROMBOLI

21. Circular Arguments

[1]Circular conversations or arguments are designed to keep you engaged, without you knowing that their intention is to just play with you. [2]It's sparring to them. [3]They don't care what's right, they don't care what's wrong. [4]The fact you are taking time out of your life to engage with them is all they care about. [5]They will have the last word, which means your position must be wrong. [6]You must be wrong. [7]Enter the circular argument. [8]It could go on for hours, just like it did with me.

[9]While you spar, you lose energy. [10a]You know it. [10b]Of course, if you gain energy from it, you know that too. [11]How do circular conversations make you feel? [12]Do you receive energy or lose it?

[14]What I didn't know back then was that Candace liked arguing for the sake of arguing. [15]How did I not see it before when she would get into little debates, seemingly innocent, at parties we went to? [16]I just thought it was her personality. [17]I chalked everything up to her personality. [18]That's just Candace. [19]Only it's not just Candace, is it?!? [20]I didn't see her debates with others as confrontational. No, that was only when she was alone with me. [21]Candace's verbal sparring with me was her sharpening her own sword. [22]I was just trying to bring attention to areas of the relationship I believe we needed to work on in order to have a healthy marriage, but it was like it was an open invitation for yet another argument.

[23]There were times when I would give the "let's agree to disagree" response. [24]Those were the times when she would attempt to punish me by taking my sons and leaving the house. [25]The price to pay for not giving in was isolation and abandonment for days. [26]I got the silent treatment, which is neglect. [27]I always stood my ground and just waited. [28]I required an apology for her reaction of leaving. She would not apologize for the argument but would apologize for leaving. [29]The more she apologized for doing the same thing to me, the less the relationship mattered to me. [30]It didn't take long for me to be unfazed by these stints of her

absence. [31]The more Candace cited her mother as her reason for coming back by telling me that her mom said the exact same thing I told her, the more it upset me. [32]Candace unknowingly validated to me over time that she did not value me or my opinion. [33]It had to come through someone else, and never me. [34]Now that I understand narcissism, there's a real chance that she never even talked to anyone about our arguments. [35]She could've just been lying to me so she could have access to me again.

[36]I would wonder why Candace's mother was the only one she listened to. I would wonder why Candace's family would let her stay with them for so many days. [37]I felt that Candace's mother enabled her. [38]This person, who was Candace's mother, seemed so supportive of our marriage at first. [39]But if she was so supportive, wouldn't she have an issue with all those times Candace would abandon our relationship in anger? [40]She was a self-proclaimed Christian just like Candace. [41]I expected more from her mother based on how intelligent and devout a Christian she appeared to be. [42]She even had a psychology degree as well. [43]If her mother was giving the same advice to her that I was, did Candace not inform her mother that I was telling her the same thing? [43]These were the things I would ruminate on while I was alone at home. [44]Do you want to know what I did when I was alone? [45]I played video games and I loved it, but they were just a distraction. [46]I just didn't realize it yet. [47]There was so much I didn't realize back then.

[48]When Candace and I used to engage in these circular debates, she later referred to them as the proverbial phoenix rising as if she learned some great lesson and our relationship grew. [49]No, in reality I just believed her bullshit miscommunication response in order to end the arguments. [50]Yes, she would try to chalk it up to miscommunication and I gave her the benefit of the doubt against my better judgment time and time again. [51]And that benefit of the doubt cleared her of the accountability and shame she was rightfully due. [52]Where did it go? [53]She didn't have it. [54]I felt drained. [55]I hated arguing. [56]I felt unhappy. [57]Maybe she put her shame in me. [58]All I had to do was give in. [59]No wonder she tried so hard. [60]No wonder it felt like being a rising phoenix to her. [61]It was victory in battle, or so she believed.

22. Straw Man Arguments

[1]Technically, I would file straw man arguments under circular arguments. [2]The narcissist will try to create a narrative of your intent and will begin to attack that created narrative. [3]The narrative is almost always purposely inaccurate, and they've already defeated any response you will react with before you speak it. [4]This is because they designed the argument for you to fail.

[5]The straw man argument is meant to get you to defend something that was never your intent. [6]They know this and are trying to maintain control of the conversation. [7]They don't care what your true intent is. [8]It only works for them if you let it. [9]It works for them if you spend your efforts trying to defend something they designed specifically to be destroyed.

[10]See the straw man for what it is, and then disengage. [11]You don't need to call out the tactic, though if you do, you'll most likely be subjected to other manipulation tactics until the narcissist finds one that works. [12]Yes, they cycle. [14]You can actually witness them transition their tactics. [15]Call those transitions out and they will most likely rage.

23. The False Dilemma

[1]The false dilemma could also go under the section of circular arguments. [2]A false dilemma is when the narcissist will make you think that you have to choose between one thing or the other. [3]They desire to put you into a situation of picking between the lesser of two evils. [4]The illusion is that there are only two options. [5]Heck, the dilemma itself can be an illusion. [6]Take presidential voting, for instance. [7]What if the majority of a population all wrote in a single name of someone who wasn't on the presidential ballot from either party? [8]That would make things interesting, now wouldn't it? [9]Anyhoo. [10]What are the chances of something THAT wild happening anyway?

[11]No matter how the argument plays out, please know that when someone attacks the person doing the argument vs attacking the argument itself, then that should let you know that you are dealing with a manipulator. [12]Manipulation is a huge red flag for narcissism. [13]Don't

buy into their false dilemma. [14]Another example of a false dilemma is when the narcissist comes to you for help. [15]Their problem must become your problem too, or you aren't to be considered a good person. [16]People-pleasers be warned. [17]There's your false dilemma in a nutshell.

24. Triangulation

[1]Triangulation is involving a third party as a means to defeat your position. [2]This person may be oblivious to the fact they were triangulated into the conversation. [3]For example, by me saying that I have a witness that supports me, whether they do or not, I have triangulated them. [4]The purpose of triangulation is to make you feel that you are outnumbered in your views or opinions, or accusations. [5]This could be a way to devalue you. [6]It can be used in conjunction with all the narcissist's manipulation tactics. [7]And if the person they are triangulating into the conversation is someone you love and trust, whose opinion truly matters to you, you may decide it's better to take the narcissist's word for it. [8]Triangulation, in this regard, is considered successful against you.

[9]The narcissist will use triangulation if they have access to people with power or authority, or that you have a high opinion of or respect for. [10]Triangulating someone into the situation like a police officer or a boss in the workplace could have some potentially negative consequences for the narcissist's target. [11]The threat of their involvement alone can be used to manipulate you into doing exactly what the narcissist wants you to do.

[12]Alternatively, you may not want someone triangulated into the situation because that person may also suffer as a result of the triangulation. [14]The narcissist will mainly triangulate those they already know they have control or influence over. [15]These are the kinds of people who would be afraid to do or say anything that even looks like they are not in complete support of the narcissist.

[16]If there is an argument in the household among family members, and the narcissist is utterly failing at manipulating you, the narcissist will triangulate a family member or two. [17]If that family member that was triangulated had an avoidant style to handling conflict, they would do or

say anything to make the situation end, and that means siding with the narcissist.

[18]The triangulated individual should already have an understanding that the narcissist won't give up until they win the argument. [19]This triangulation tactic enables the narcissist to abuse within the household easily as long as both the target and the enabler live there. [20]If the narcissist has a child that is causing them narcissistic injury, they will even triangulate their own sibling against them. [21]This sibling child may be highly co-dependent on the narcissistic parent, so they will side with the parent. [22]Narcissists will triangulate their own children against each other their entire lives, not just childhood. [23]They don't care how either child feels, unless the child is happy. If the child is happy, it better be because of the narcissist. If not, the child just gave them a narcissistic injury.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[24]"Now, prepare to be punished! [25]How dare you derive happiness or pleasure in life from anyone else but me!?! [26]Don't you know that I'm your master?!? [27]Only I can provide that to you, lest you see your value. [28]Now worship me, for I can do no fucking wrong!"

[29]#ROTFLMAO [30]#THESEQUOTEPEOPLEUNQUOTE

25. Flying Monkeys

[1]I'm not sure when the term flying monkeys came into play when related to narcissism. [2]I do know that it involves reference to the story of The Wizard of Oz. [3]In the story, the Wicked Witch of the West employs an army of flying monkeys, which are her minions, to do her bidding. [4]The narcissist does the same exact thing. [5]It's a type of triangulation. [6]A narcissistic parent can turn their children into flying monkeys to attack or spy on the other parent.

[7]Flying monkeys are like extensions or tendrils of the narcissist and are usually oblivious to their role. [8]The narcissist may wish to spy on you, so they will send a flying monkey that you trust to spend some time together asking you questions pertaining to whatever subject the narcissist wants insight on. [9]When the flying monkey returns, as long as they

are completely under the control of the narcissist, they will divulge all details.

[10]The narcissist may wish to punish you, so they tell a lie to a flying monkey about what you said about the flying monkey. [11]The flying monkey may embark on some revenge, completely oblivious to the fact that the accusation is untrue. [12]The narcissist knows how to pull the strings of the flying monkey too. [14]If something happens to you or even the flying monkey, then the narcissist is safe from accusation and accountability.

Beast Mode:

[15]Aren't they clever? [16]Well, now that word is spreading, I guess they are going to have to improvise from now on to stay hidden. [17]Good luck to them. [18]I have a feeling this is the best they can do at the manipulation game. [19]Read between the lines and you will see their end is near. [20]When they finally see it for themselves and accept reality…what a good time it will be to be alive.

[21]They fake love, but their fear is real. [22]Their fear looks like anger at first…and when that doesn't work…utter terror. [23]Now, we're talking. [24]You want to know the funny thing? [25]All they have to do is acknowledge that the person they are is not the person they want to be, and then they can make steps toward their own healing and evolve. [26]But no, many don't. [27]But that was before we all started waking up to this deceptive shit and all the tactics they employ.

[28]#GETCONNECTED [29]#STEREOMC [30]#THEIRANGERIS-ACTU-ALLYFEAR

[31]Flying monkeys can also be members from a single group. [32]The group as a whole could be triangulated into a situation, which would result in an army of flying monkeys attacking the individual on social media or harassing the victim. [33]An army of flying monkeys will gang-stalk the narcissist's victim. [34]This serves the narcissist well because you will fear what they are capable of.

[35]People have committed suicide after being the target of gang-stalking. [36]They escape a narcissist only to be the target of relentless gang-stalking, cyberattacks, and cyberbullying. [37]The communication tools we rely on

today will be weaponized against the victim to accomplish this. [38]The devastation it brings is apocalyptic to the victim.

[39]If you are trying to separate from the narcissist, and they aren't ready for you to leave them because of how much of an amazing source of supply you are to them, they will employ a flying monkey to let you know how much they miss or love you. [40]The purpose is for the flying monkey to convince you to stay with the narcissist. [41]The narcissist may already be in more than one other relationship behind your back, but they will still do what they can to keep you from leaving.

[42]Employing a flying monkey that is a mutual friend of you and the narcissist is a great way to get into their target's head. [43]Don't think that a narcissist won't use your own children or parents as their flying monkeys. [44]They do. [45]How can a narcissist get your own children or parents to work against you? [46]It's easy, they use love bombing tactics on the members of your family. [47]These family members may not be present to witness the narcissist's abuse towards you. [48]The narcissist isn't that stupid. [49]This is why when people want to leave the narcissist in their life, those who have been love bombed by the narcissist will not understand why you want to leave the person.

[50]If you think that telling the flying monkey the whole story will help, you just may find how incorrect you were. [51]I lost close friends who Candace turned into flying monkeys. [52]But that's nothing compared to the survivors of this abuse who have had their entire families turned against them. [53]A rich narcissist has ways to make your family comfortable on their gratuity. [54]If your family loves that kind of comfort, they just may overlook your "alleged" non-physical abuse.

26. Baiting

[1]If you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, it is you who has made yourself an easier target for falling for baiting tactics like reactive abuse. [2]As your falling for baiting is a prerequisite for the additional abuse they have in store for you, you can expect the narcissist to incorporate drugs or alcohol into their tactics. [3]They are preparing you, weakening you, for the inevitable reactive abuse that they will employ once

you react. [4]They will then use your reaction to form the basis of your new punishment and then also use the shame to silence you and control you. [5]They will act shocked that you reacted to their abuse, but it was their goal all along. [6]The psychologists of the world can call that a disorder. [7]I call it the actions of someone with malignant intention. [8]Screw the medical and psychological terminology! [9]I don't need a degree to see with my spiritual eyes.

[10]The dog whistle is a more covert type of baiting, where the narcissist uses your triggers to bait you. [11]It almost deserves its very own section. [12]The narcissist took their time getting to know all your vulnerabilities when they were mirroring you and love bombing you. [14]They catalog everything about you into their mental file on you. [15]Your values, your desires, your fears, your past shame, and your trauma are like the subfolders in your file. [16]They will use the dog whistle more often in a public setting, so their abuse isn't easily recognized.

[17]All baiting is for a reason. [18]It's a trap. [19]They have it all planned out before they even start. [20]Some will use a hidden camera aimed at you as they attempt to bait you. Seduction can also be bait in order to lure you to a specific place at a specific time. [21]Once they have you lured, here comes the trap called reactive abuse.

27. Reactive Abuse

[22]There is another type of abuse the narcissist employs called reactive abuse. [23]If you don't have the utmost mastery over yourself, you will succumb to the abuse and regret it. [24]The point of this abuse is to intentionally escalate a conversation into an argument. The narcissist will use every tool at their disposal to make you angry. [25]The closer you are to the narcissist, the more effective this strategy is. [26]They would know all the buttons to push to get you mad. [27]Once they get you mad enough at them, they provoke a physical response from you.

[28]Their goal is for you to strike them or physically react in anger. [29]Now, why would anyone want you to hurt them? [30]The narcissist wants you to hurt them so they can use your reaction to form the basis of their next

move. [31]Whatever that move is, it will ultimately result in increased control over you.

[32]If the narcissist wants an excuse to punish you for defying them or causing them an injury to their ego, they will use your reaction to their reactive abuse to punish you further. [33]If a narcissistic wife wants to create a narrative that her husband hit her, she can provoke him to do it. If he reacts, she's got him. [34]Now she will use his fear and shame against him to control him further. [35]She may involve the police for a domestic dispute. [36]Sending the husband to jail for the night is a great way to control him when he gets back. [37]She just needs to threaten him and remind him of the last time he hit her to devalue him further. [38]If you get arrested for domestic battery, it could impact your job, especially if you are in an armed occupation.

[39]With reactive abuse, your only savior is yourself. [40]How much punishment, vitriol, and physical abuse can you endure before you fight back? [41]Just try and walk away from them when they are reactively abusing you, they won't let you leave that easily.

[42]Reactive abuse is intentional, and narcissists use this tactic. [43]When I hear people saying that narcissists are not self-aware, it's hard to believe that statement since so many of their tactics require forethought and planning. [44]The reaction is their goal, so everything they do to lead up to that shows they have an intention before the situation started, and it also shows that they follow through to achieve their reaction.

[45]When I didn't react to Candace's last attempt of reactive abuse, it resulted in her throwing the bowl at me as I mentioned in the earlier chapter titled Embracing Friction. [46]She was so angry that she couldn't get me to react that it showed me everything I needed to see to know that I had to leave the relationship. [47]I knew that her reactive abuse was progressing over the years. [48]First it was shoving me, then came throwing things at me, and I knew that eventually she would hit me if I stayed in the relationship.

[49]As a man in a relationship with a physically abusive wife, it's a very emasculating experience. [50]Most people wouldn't believe that the abuse was taking place even if you told them. [51]Going to the police isn't desir-

able either. [52]Police officers deal with serious domestic violence, so it can be shaming to go to the police to report your wife who only throws things at you. [53]Not only that, but no one wants to report members of their own family to the police for domestic abuse. [54]Candace was the mother of my children, and I would be the bad guy to my children if the police came to the house because I called them. [55]If I were to react and throw something back, Candace would've used it against me that same day, or hold on to the incident for a later time when it could be more useful to her.

28. Narcissistic Rage

[1]When a narcissist experiences a significant injury to their ego, you can expect them to exhibit this thing called narcissistic rage. [2]They don't have the ability to regulate themselves, so they rage. They yell at you or scream. [3]They are pretty much doing the equivalent of a toddler's temper tantrum.

[4]Narcissistic rage could progress to threats of physical abuse or actual physical abuse. Some have even claimed to see the eyes of the narcissist go fully dilated in this state of rage. [5]I've never seen it myself, but I can understand why these people who have seen such a thing would be frightened by it.

[6]Narcissistic rage is meant to intimidate the victim into submission, which is a reaction. [7]The narcissist thrives on reactions to their actions or words. [8]That is why if you were to just blankly stare at a narcissist instead of reacting, it drives them crazy. [9]More on that later. [10]The chapter titled The Armory is further in the book. That's where we get into how to manipulate the manipulator. [11]That's when things get fun. [12]Yes, my beast has a fun side to its darkness. [14]Me getting my hands on the narcissist playbook, through endless pursuit of content, was prime beast food.

29. Post-Separation Abuse

[1]Once you've actually pulled off your own evacuation, prepare for post-separation abuse to begin. [2]You thought it was bad before? [3]You ain't seen nothin' yet. [4]The narcissist will use all the tactics they used before, but they will ramp up the abuse on all their tactics, especially the next ones. [5]Enjoy! [6]The fun just never ends with these people. [7]Talk about sore losers!

30. Smearing

[1]I'm sure you've heard of a smear campaign. [2]Politicians do this all the time. [3]They have an opponent that has a good chance of beating them in an election, so what do they do? [4]Well, they go digging up anything negative and shameful, or they take a portion of the truth and twist the words to make an accusation that attacks the character of their opponent. [5]And of course, there's the absolute lies with no remote shred of truth in them. [6]Of course, if you are the one being smeared, you aren't going to hear the majority of what is being spread about you.

[7]The narcissist will conduct a smear campaign on you that could involve everyone you know, even at your job. [8]There are no limitations to how the narcissist smears. [9]Smearing you keeps you on the defensive, and the more defensive you are, the more guilty you appear. [10]The more you fight their smearing, the more mentally exhausted and anxiety-riddled you will become, and the more likely you will react to their baiting and reactive abuse. [11]If you fall for the bait, you just may turn that smearing lie into a smearing truth. [12]That's their goal. [14]The narcissist wants you to defend and fight for yourself, not just because of the appearance of guilt, but because it provides an abundance of negative energy fuel for the narcissist. [15]It's pure manipulation. [16]The success of the smear campaign fuels the ego of the narcissist.

[17]Once the narcissist figures out that you know their game, that you see through them, prepare to be called crazy. [18]It's fairly easy to make the target of reactive abuse look crazy and disordered, because the reactive abuse the narcissist employs is crazy making. [19]My book could be

viewed as my reaction to prolonged and subtle reactive abuse. [20]I know the shit I say sounds crazy. [21]Maybe I am.

Beast Mode:

[22]It just may be a lunatic you're looking for.

[23]#LAUGHATME [24]#CALLMECRAZY [25]#SMEARAWAY
[26]#AREEWENOTENTERTAINED

31. Isolation - The Invisible Prison

[1]The narcissist's smearing of you is a method to discredit you when you tell the truth, before you can tell it. [2]They get the jump on the narrative which makes it harder to combat. [3]Ultimately, smearing you is meant to isolate you. [4]It also boosts the ego of the narcissist that their ability to manipulate is so good that other people believe them, and it impacts your relationships.

[5]If the narcissist can separate you from one person in your inner circle, or a number of those in your outer circles, they have succeeded in their efforts to isolate you. Isolation makes you easier to manipulate. [6]You may become scared of their ability to turn others against you. [7]As more people from your circles begin to fall away, your isolation is meant to put you into a state of desperation. [8]If you don't want to lose these people from your life, you're at the mercy of the narcissist.

[9]When isolated, because of a smear campaign, your state of mind will go from the depression and anxiety you were already feeling to more severe forms. [10]You will be tempted to go back to the narcissist just to get back to the lesser misery you were used to. [11]Confronting the narcissist on the effects the smear campaign is having on you will just reinforce to the narcissist their ability to successfully smear and isolate you.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[12]"Don't worry about your ADHD, anxiety, and depression that stem from my abuse of you. [14]We have medication for that. [15]You don't need to leave your toxic situation when we have pills to mask the toll of your suffering and keep you focused on what's really important…me."

[16]Being isolated makes you more susceptible to manipulation tactics. [17]You may find yourself completely devoid of people in your corner. [18]It happens. [19]The pure nature of narcissistic abuse drives one to isolate themselves as a way to protect the facade of a healthy and happy family. [20]You may isolate yourself because you feel depressed or stressed and believe you may be the problem in the relationship, a result of the narcissist's manipulation of you. [21]You may also isolate because you don't want to involve anyone in your problems, which is a way of protecting others at the expense of self.

32. The Hoover and its Variations

[1]Let's talk about hoovering. This is probably a good location for this section. [2]The hoover is when the narcissist tries to come back into your life, or wants to see how accessible you are and how much control they still have over you. [3]The hoover is a carbon copy of the original love bomb used to fool you into believing the relationship was real. [4]If you are a high-value supply, you may receive a hoover in the form of more love bombing than the narcissist had ever given you before. [5]:whispers: [6]That means they're desperate. [7]*Shhh*…

[8]There are different variations of the hoover. [9]One modern example of a reverse hoover is when the narcissist likes or comments politely on a photo of yours on social media. [10]You're just minding your own business, and all of a sudden you get a notification that this person liked or commented on your social media photo post. [11]What do you do? [12]Well, most likely you will want to see what they said or what they liked. [14]This is the reverse hoover in action. [15]The goal is to make you believe that there's still a chance to have some relationship with the narcissist should you express interest. [16]As soon as you slip into their DMs, they got you. [17]Even if they didn't want you, they do this to keep you engaged and hopeful. [18]They do it to affirm to themselves that they still can control you.

[19]The hoover by proxy is even more covert. [20]Say you share a mutual friend with the narcissist. That narcissist can reach out to that mutual friend and say that they miss you, or that they screwed up and want you back, but they are accepting of the breakup. [21]They do this knowing that

the chances are pretty good that the mutual friend will pass that conversation on to you. [22]The mutual friend has no clue that they are being manipulated as they play their role as your concerned friend while being the narcissist's messenger in disguise. [23]That is just one example of hoover by proxy but, like the reverse hoover, there are many avenues to accomplish a successful hoover.

33. Upon the Awareness of Narcissism and Narcissistic Abuse

[1]Learning all these narcissist terms and their tactics became fuel to me in this new narcissistic abuse awareness. [2]Every time I learned something new, I was flooded with memories involving Candace that pertained to it. [3]It even went beyond Candace to those I had all manner of relationships with before and after my time with Candace. [4]Candace was not my first narcissist, nor my last. [5]I've had my fair share of phoney-balonies, but now I had the power to see them and sooner. [6]I don't need to see every red flag, 2-3 small red flags are enough for me to say, "sayonara", without calling them out. [7]What if I did call out those red flags as I saw them?

[8]After leaving Candace, I wised up to her tactics without realizing they were actually tactics, and I noticed others using it on me. [9]Shutting a new narcissist down becomes easier and easier to do. [10]There are so many empathetic people out there doing this dance with a narcissist on the daily without the full understanding of what they are actually experiencing. [11]But, when these empathetic people get their hands on a book like mine, the narcissist is in big trouble. [12]It's highly empowering to come into this awareness, and any power that comes your way is a threat to the narcissist in your life.

Beast Mode:

[14]You want more awareness? [15]The Narcissist in Your Life: Recognizing the Patterns and Learning to Break Free is an amazing book by Julie L. Hall. [16]It should be required reading. [17]If only there were a way to explain all this stuff in a fun and unique way. [18]Oh well. [19]Maybe someday.

[20]Why the fuck is narcissistic abuse and trauma recovery not required reading in schools?!? [21]Oh, that's right. [22]Shhhh, keep 'em dumb. [23]Easier to control that way. [24]By controlling the children, you control the future, and eventually control the world. [25]Smart move. [26]Oh wait! [27]Did I just fuck up your plan? [28]Oopsies!

[29]#ISAIDITANDIMEANTIT [30]#DONTBEADUMMY [31]#CLASSISINSESSION [32]#ALLEYEZONME [33]#CENTEROFTHERING

[34]I learned that if a narcissist is married to someone like me, a person who is big on accountability, hardworking, and introspective and caring, that I can be a very irritating husband. [35]Candace was quick to criticize me, but she benefited from being in a relationship with someone who was always striving for peace and stability. [36]I wanted to make sure she felt heard, so I took the time to always try to understand her point of view. [37]This usually meant accepting no validation from her of my own point of view.

[38]I often gave Candace the benefit of the doubt. [39]It's interesting how often we do that to people who depend on us doing it. [40]Want to know what happens when you stop? [41]They rage. [42]Same thing happens when they give their fake-ass apologies and you don't buy into them. [43]Any person that rages when you don't accept their apology, or refuse to believe they are being sincere, feels entitled to your forgiveness. [44]Now who would feel entitled to something like that? [45]I'll tell you who, the one that depends on it fooling you.

[46]A fake apology from a narcissist even causes a self-inflicted narcissistic injury. Yes, they incur it themselves in order to get back into your good graces. [47]Then they eventually punish you for putting them through having to apologize. They can twist that alone into a reason to cheat on you, if you are in a romantic relationship with them. [48]They always get revenge.

Beast Mode:

[49]You can depend on that. [50]If only we knew a way to shut a narcissist down for good, the world would be a happier place overnight.

[51]What took me years to realize was that Candace had absolutely no desire to fix anything. [52]As a matter of fact, I learned from my studies on narcissism that while I was losing my energy and my mind in endless debate, Candace was thriving at the opportunity to exercise her ability to manipulate me. [53]I was some kind of proving ground for new angles on her strategies to manipulate. [54]I dare not lose my patience with Candace, lest that become the new topic to derail from the topic where I was trying to hold her accountable.

[55]The whole point of accountability is to acknowledge the behavior so that we can make the necessary changes to it and grow. [56]Isn't that what makes life beautiful, when we all put in the work together? [57]You will never have an enjoyable marriage if one person is focused on criticizing and/or escaping accountability. [58]Back when I was married to Candace, enjoyable was not the goal. [59]I just wanted to be able to exist in it with a sense of peace. [60]Without any awareness on narcissistic abuse, I was able to escape Candace and create my own peace. [61]I discovered in my studies that being away from the toxic person is a requirement before true healing can begin, and that takes time.

34. Narcissistic Injury/Rage/Collapse/Mortification

[1]If you've ever tried to hold your ground with a narcissist in an argument, then you had to be handing out narcissist injuries left and right without even knowing it. [2]If you bruise their fragile inflated egos, it's called a narcissistic injury. [3]As I mentioned before, they don't handle those so well, and they will absolutely retaliate right then and there.

[4]They yell, scream, or holler in anger. [5]Remember, their fear comes out as anger at first. [6]Congratulations, you've drawn blood with that hit. [7]You can see this happen on reality TV all the time, and that includes the news and political pundits, spokespeople, and the list goes on and on. [8]They out themselves in front of millions. [9]The funny thing about reality TV and news clips, they don't go away…ever. [10]As humanity upgrades its knowledge, all we have to do is rewatch these clips in our new awareness. [11]You'll wonder why you never saw it before.

[12]I was no fan of reality TV shows before, but these days I watch them to sharpen my red flag detectors. [13]Their reality is my game show. [14]How fast can I accurately assess the red flags? [15]Can I catch them all? [16]At what point can I say that I am 100% sure they are a narcissist? [17]The stupid ones are almost eager to give themselves away. [18]It's the master manipulators that truly test me. They are the ones that make the game fun.

Beast Mode:

[19]Want to see what it looks like to see an empathetic man get psychologically abused for several minutes in front of millions of people live, while the audience cheers the abuser on? Watch the season finale of The Bachelorette Season 19. [20]I never saw so much DARVO in my life. [21]I thought Dr. Ramani was going to make a surprise guest appearance towards the end. [22]For a brief moment, so did the abuser. [23]I saw fear of exposure in those eyes for a moment.

[24]Wanna see what a narcissist looks like up close upon their complete unmasking in front of millions of people? [25]It's like all the voices in their head jump ship and all that's left is a mirror showing them their true appearance. [26]Watch Love Island Season 6's movie night episode which aired on July 9th, 2024. [27]But if you truly want to enjoy that moment to its fullest, watch the whole season after reading this book.

[28]#KARMAISABITCH [29]#BACHELORETTE [30]#REALITYTVEXPOSES-NARCISSISTS [31]#ALLEYESONTHEM [32]#DONTLOOKATME

35. Toxic Family Dynamic - The Scapegoat

[1]As I learned more and more, I discovered a haunting connection between my son's situation and that of the narcissistic family dynamic. [2]When there is a narcissistic parent, there is bound to be a child who the narcissist places in the scapegoat role.

[3]The scapegoat is the truth-teller of the family and usually highly empathetic. [4]They pay the price for this by being targeted by the one person who lacks honesty and empathy, the narcissist. [5]When the child individuates, which is showing independence in actions, words, and thoughts, it is seen as a threat to the narcissistic parent. [6]This independence threatens the narcissist in several different ways. [7]Firstly, and in no particular

order, the scapegoat takes the abuse without realizing it. [8]The scapegoat's love for their abuser and desire for approval and love will unfortunately accept this role and all the abuse that comes with it.

[9]The narcissist will convince the family members, including the scapegoat themselves, that the scapegoat is the source of the family's frustrations. [10]The other family members will adopt this perspective because it makes their lives easier. [11]They don't do this knowingly, it's just what happens naturally in toxic family households. [12]There's so much to talk about when it comes to the scapegoat, but my book should not be the one-stop shop on the topic, or for any of these topics. [14]The scapegoat will go through life conflicted with who they believe they are because so much toxicity is projected onto them by toxic family members. [15]A toxic family member could be someone empathetic who enables the narcissist's abuse. [16]These family members are the ones the narcissist will use to triangulate against the scapegoat. [17]The narcissist uses the scapegoat to show the rest of the siblings what awaits them if they defy the narcissistic parent. [18]A narcissistic parent can make any sibling the new family scapegoat if they show signs of individuation.

[19]When the scapegoat reaches the age where they are able to leave the household and do so, they remain in the scapegoat role for the rest of their life. [20]The family will still project onto the scapegoat even if the scapegoat isn't present to witness it. [21]But, if the scapegoat abandons their toxic family of origin or passes away unexpectedly, the narcissistic parent will choose a different sibling to assign the role of scapegoat.

[22]Being assigned this position is an utter culture shock to the newly appointed scapegoat and can result in debilitating levels of stress and anxiety. [23]The immune system is weakened as a result, and the last thing you want to be is sick under the care of a narcissistic parent. [24]Sometimes this role reversal can cause an awakening in the new scapegoat to the reality of what the previous scapegoat endured. [25]I could immediately see that my son Cruz was the family scapegoat in the Sanders household. [26]It was that easy to see.

[27]Most content creators and authors I keep up with have claimed to be the scapegoats of their families. [28]A scapegoat that is healed is one of the most

badass people you will ever meet in your life. [29]A healed family scapegoat, who is aware of narcissistic abuse, is a force to be reckoned with. [30]These people, let's call them empowered, have the ability to completely shut down anyone who attempts to manipulate them, no matter how close they are to them. [31]A narcissist will run from an altercation with an empowered scapegoat. [32]The narcissist truly has no choice but to remove themselves from a confrontation with one. [33]Don't believe me? [34]There's endless content in any reality TV show of scapegoats handing narcissists outside their family dynamic their rear ends with just their words. [35]The truth hurts all narcissists, and the scapegoat is the truth-teller of the family. [36]Because they are the only ones with the power to expose their toxic family system, they are the target of serious psychological abuse.

36. Toxic Family Dynamic - The Golden Child

[1]The golden child is the child who is the ideal extension of the narcissist. [2]The golden child does everything possible to please the narcissistic parent. [3]Not every toxic family has one, but most do. [4]If the family has a good public appearance, the golden child will reflect that to everyone. [5]The golden child can do no wrong, because they have seen what has happened to the scapegoat, they know the cost of being seen as anything separate from the narcissistic parent.

[6]If the narcissist already has a scapegoat, for instance a husband who was once like myself, then an only child may turn out to be a golden child. [7]Regardless, the one who is the best at performing the role of extension of the narcissist will win the title of golden child, and the lack of identity that accompanies it.

[8]A narcissistic mother will sabotage their children's relationships with others, no matter which role they play in the toxic family dynamic. [9]Any relationships external to the family system pose a very real threat to the narcissist's level of control over the child. [10]This persists all the way into the adult golden child's life as the child will be expected to support the narcissistic parent indefinitely. [11]You may notice that some of these adult golden children stay relatively close to where the narcissistic parent lives, if they aren't living together.

[12]A golden child is less likely to do or say anything that would ever disappoint the narcissist. [14]Their self-worth is entirely derived from the narcissistic parent, so causing a narcissistic injury to the narcissist is equivalent to intentional self-harm. [15]See how this works? [16]Both the scapegoat and the golden child are extensions of the narcissistic parent, but the golden child is the only child that sees the narcissistic parent as an extension of themselves too, subconsciously. [17]When the narcissistic parent passes away, the most likely adult golden child may struggle with identity. [18]With the narcissistic parent gone, it opens the door to other narcissists to easily prey on the adult golden child.

[19]The golden child is the epitome of the truest extension of the narcissist. [20]They live for the narcissistic parent and may even revere them, no matter how that parent treats them. [21]A grown golden child will forego a life for themselves in order to serve their narcissistic parent. [22]As bad as the scapegoat has it, it can be argued that the golden child has it worse. [23]The golden child subdues the self early in their childhood.

[24]After enough trauma from their narcissistic parent, the golden child realizes that this is the best chance they have at survival, in the form of validation from the narcissistic parent. [25]The journey to healing after narcissistic abuse is a long and difficult one. [26]But, for the golden child, they cannot recover the self that was lost, so they must create a new one. [27]Theirs is a journey of self-discovery from scratch upon their awareness of the narcissistic abuse they had to endure, and their role as golden child.

[28]It's difficult for the golden child to recognize the abuse due to their position as favored child. [29]Also, to recognize the abuse is to recognize they received special treatment, which can induce an immense sense of shame, especially when they realize their role in joining in on the abuse of the scapegoat. [30]All this makes them highly reluctant to face the truth. [31]True healing can't begin until they separate from the narcissistic parent, and they won't separate if they are reluctant to accept the truth.

[32]A golden child son of a narcissistic father who is a football fan will most likely become a football player themselves. [33]They will do their best to be a great football player but won't realize that this drive does not come from the heart, but comes from a place of longing for the love of

that narcissistic father. [34]The child isn't aware that their father is incapable of understanding love, they are only aware that if they score a touchdown, their father celebrates it and provides them with the validation that they are good enough. [35]Unfortunately, they are also aware that if they screw up a play, they will definitely hear about it on the way home. [36]Since a narcissist cannot let you feel too proud of yourself, you can expect the father to make a comment of the bad play after mentioning the touchdown in the same sentence. [37]If they can add some sting to a compliment, they most likely will.

Beast Mode:

[38]Oh, great! [39]So, this means that when the child grows up, they will most likely be fodder to a narcissist because they've already been trained that validation is the most important thing. [40]Validation seeking also puts the adult golden child at risk of becoming highly narcissistic themselves. [41]Just peachy.

[42]#NARCISSISTICFLEACIRCUS42 [43]#IMTHERINGLEADER [44]#ICALLTHESHOTS

37. Backwards Thinking

[1]After all this new awareness I found myself in, one of the first things that came to my mind were the words my old therapist told me. I saw him while I was still married and trying to make sense of my marriage and work on it. [2]He helped me a lot and I will never forget him. [3]After I gave him the description of what the household dynamics were like over several weeks of therapy, my therapist stated in one of our last sessions, "It sounds to me like Candace is a narcissist." [4]The word "narcissist" went completely over my head. [5]What I thought of a narcissist back then was not accurate. I didn't even bother to look up what it meant. [6]I wish I had. [7]But maybe it was for the best for me to stay in the dark as long as I had been. [8]How insane it was that I had the answer back then right in front of my face as to why the relationship wasn't working, and how it would never work.

[9]It's sickening how easy it is to see this all for what it is now. [10]It's truly a game of control to them. [11]And, to do that to someone who is kind-hearted and caring and oblivious to how insidious these tactics are is

more sickening. [12]It's pathetic to pretend to be what someone is looking for in order to gain their trust and love. [13]It's absolutely shameful to exploit someone's naivety and trust. [14]All those who do this hurt not just their victim, but they hurt themselves more. [15]Keep reading, as I'll go over my thoughts on how and why later in this book.

38. Gameplan

[1]With this new awareness, I knew that I needed to act. [2]I learned from Dr. Ramani that the style of parenting I exhibited throughout the last decade was called parallel parenting because I didn't interfere with Candace's parenting style and choices for the boys. [3]The fact I relinquished all custody meant I had zero say so over anything having to do with my sons.

[4]I used my parenting style to protect myself over the years, and it turned out to be a good strategy because I never threatened Candace's position of being in control. [5]I knew I had attempted many times to spend time with my sons in Virginia at my place of residence. [6]Candace had never allowed it, but my sons did not know this. [7]I didn't tell them because it would just hurt their feelings, and there was nothing I could do about the situation without making it worse for my sons or myself.

Beast Mode:

[8]Anger, and the knowledge of this "disorder", became our superpower. [9]Let's expose the shit out of this disorder, put that word "narcissist" and the word "evil" in the same damned sentence for fucking once, and on every single tongue. [10]I want the knowledge of this book to spread like a biblical-scale virus across humanity for all time. [11]You can't manipulate people or deceive them if they are all wise as serpents. [12]The serpent isn't going to teach its techniques to its prey, so enter the Beast. [13]This is war, bitches! [14]Hoooooah

[15]#SOLONGANDTHANKSFORALLTHETIPS [16]#SHARINGIS-CARING [17]#TEAMWORKMAKESTHEDREAMWORK [18]#NARCISSISTPLAYBOOKEXPOSED

[19]I knew I had to spend as much time as possible with my sons to give them a break from the psychological abuse I believe they were enduring in their home. [20]I also knew that me seeing my sons more often would threaten Candace, so I needed to tread carefully.

[21]My first step was verifying if their mother was indeed narcissistic. [22]According to all the videos I was watching at that time and based off my own memories of being in a relationship with Candace, she was indeed a narcissist. [23]Based on the abuse I endured myself in my marriage to her, my abuse lines up with that delivered by someone with NPD.

[24]An entire decade had passed since the divorce, so I would need to be sure if a narcissist was indeed the case. [25]The only ones who would truly know would be my sons. [26]I would need to be careful not to come off as accusatory toward their mother when approaching them on the topic of how they were being treated. [27]I did not want to take any actions without knowing if I was indeed going up against this narcissist who my sons both loved. [28]I needed to remember my place as the parent who wasn't involved in their day-to-day life. [29]I was at a serious disadvantage, and by proxy so were my sons.

CHAPTER 7
A CULT OF TWO

"Abandon sincere communication when communicating with the terminally insincere."
— Richard Grannon

Insane In the Brain
By Cypress Hill
-
Insane (feat. Moon Holiday)
by Flume

Beast Mode:

[1]Time for things to get interesting. [2]But first, yet more mini-stories.

1. Just What is a Cult?

[1]Before we get into this chapter, we need to understand what a cult truly is. [2]People will throw that word around without truly understanding all the levels in how a cult operates. [3]You want to know what a cult truly is? [4]Google That Shit (GTS). [5]Do your own research. [6]Don't let other people, such as myself, think for you or tell you what to believe. [7]Take it with a grain of salt and pursue what you feel the truth is. [8]In the end, the cult has a shared fantasy version of reality. [9]A cult requires absolute loyalty, in the form of submitting your time, energy, and money. [10]Usually, there's a carrot you chase, a level to attain, a status to receive, or some kind of recognition that makes you something for others to aspire to be. [11]Usually there are also perks for those who achieve the highest levels of attainment and recognition. [12]If you make the cult look bad, by speaking truth about what being in the cult is like, they will attack you. [13]If what you say triggers shame in the leader of the cult, the loyal followers will attack. [14]All cults work this way. [15]It is the same as the household cult. [16]Every master needs their slaves in a cult. [17]The slaves aren't going to be told that they are slaves, or else they'd leave the cult running for their lives.

[18]You gotta be sneaky in order to trick people to stick around in your cult. [19]If someone leaves the cult, they must be destroyed. [20]Now, these days with all the cameras everywhere, it's hard to get away with what cults normally do with the ones who leave them. [21]So, they resort to smear campaigns against those who have left the cult in order to discredit them and maintain the false image of the cult, what they wish to present to the outside world. [22]The only ones who truly benefit from being in the cult are its leaders. [23]The followers pay the price. [24]All leaders of cults are narcissists, or else it wouldn't be a cult. [25]A "cult" that doesn't attack those who attack the cult or its leadership is not a cult, but a movement.

[26]A cult isolates you from those that you love and punishes you for being in contact with those outside the cult, or those who don't align with the

cult's…values. [27]A cult needs enablers operating on the outside just as much as it needs them within. [28]The idea is to keep you from leaving the cult. [29]The concern is that if you left the cult, you would easily see that something was wrong. [30]You'd feel better from being away. [31]You'd dread returning. [32]If you did return, which you might for that feeling of belonging to a group, you may be rewarded for returning, or punished for leaving in the first place.

[33]Cult leaders usually have fear and paranoia. [34]Because of that, they may employ a security entourage. [35]A cult requires a shared fantasy. [36]That said, one could make the argument that every religion has its own shared fantasy. [37]We don't call religions cults, do we? At what point do we call a religion a cult? [38]Maybe that depends on who is at the group's leadership. [39]Pay closer attention to how it operates. [40]Are there golden children? [41]Are there scapegoats? [42]How do members of that religion treat those who have defected from the religion?

[43]Now that you understand some light dynamics of cults, you should be able to discern whether a movement is indeed a movement or in fact a cult. [44]If your movement poses a threat to cults, those cults will attack your movement and label your movement as the cult. [45]This is called projection, and it's the very same projection I mentioned in the previous chapter. [46]All cults operate the same as a single narcissist does. [47]They all are truly just a cult of one. [48]At every rung of the cult's promotional ladder you will find mainly other narcissists or their enablers who are loyal and completely under the cult's control. [49]Narcissists don't trust, but they do value perceived loyalty.

[50]The more you can see narcissism for what it truly is, the more you will see so many of our society's institutions employ the same exact construct. [51]I don't need to rattle off a list of examples. [52]Do you want to know why? [53]I believe you have the God-given ability to think fo yo damn self. [54]Or you could just take other people's word for it. [55]That's what we do best, right? [56]We believe what people say, and don't question it if it aligns with what we already believe…right?

[57]Are you one of those people who read the full article someone posts on social media, before re-posting or sharing it on your account? [58]Are you one of those people who discern the intent of a post on social media

before you join the bandwagon? [59]Hate is easy to spread, those are the stories you see shared the most on social media. [60]When you see a post on social media that makes your blood boil, it makes you want to comment on it, doesn't it?

2. Message in a Bottle

[1]The image of a corked bottle with a scroll inside, floating in the middle of an ocean, holds meaning. [2]We know that someone, somewhere, at some point in time wrote the message, placed it in the bottle, and was hopeful someone someday would find it. [3]The intended audience is the first person who finds the bottle. In this, the message travels through time to its recipient. [4]It could be fate or chance that the message is found and by whom it is found by.

[5]Life sends us these bottles all the time. [6]They come in many forms. [7]We absorb the messages we choose and those then become part of us, not just our memories, but of who we are and who we want to become. [8]I see The Sword that Divides as its own message in a bottle, created by all the messages I received over my lifetime and chose to absorb. [9]Just like the message in a bottle, I cast this book into the sea of time where it may be found long after I'm dead and still carry the power within it. [10]If you found it, was it fate or chance? [11]Only you can decide.

3. Cult-ure Shock

[1]Coming into the understanding that Cruz was being targeted for years by his mother with covert narcissistic abuse as the family scapegoat, I knew that the toxic family dynamic meant that everyone else in the family was enabling it. [2]Unfortunately, I knew that my son Caleb was also part of that system enabling the abuse when his mother would triangulate Caleb against Cruz. [3]Caleb, as the golden child, was serving his purpose. [4]In Caleb's world, as an extension of his mother, I knew the challenge that was ahead for him as well. [5]There was no manual on how to do what I was trying to do. [6]I knew I just had to put one foot in front of the other carefully until I reached the other side, just like a tightrope walker in the fog. [7]I could see the line and the direction to go, but I could

not see how long the line was. [8]I placed each foot with faith. [9]I spent more and more time in prayer.

[10]I had the biggest challenge ahead of me. [11]I needed to learn as much as I could about the legal side of dealing with narcissists. I found the lawyer Rebecca Zung, and retired judge Anthony Bompiani, on social media providing their expertise from years of experience dealing with narcissists in the family court room and I consumed their content religiously. They, like most of my advisors, are content creators that I subscribed to and kept up with. [12]Almost all of my advisors were experts in their fields and have no relationship with me. [14]With their advice came my acceptance of what I would be going through.

[15]I knew I would be going through the most expensive and drawn-out legal experience of my life. [16]I hated the idea of having to go to court period, let alone against a narcissist. [17]The longer it would take, the longer my sons would endure abuse. [18]I knew their abuse would get worse the moment Candace felt fear or shame, because her fear and shame translates to anger. [19]She could not take out her anger on me to get my reaction, but Cruz was accessible to her, and I knew she would throw her shame at him in the form of more abuse. [20]The role of the scapegoat is to be a dumping ground for all of the family's toxic shame. [21]Healed scapegoats are the most badass people on the planet. [22]Who do you think have been my greatest teachers in life? [23]Show me a healed scapegoat, and I will show you a truth-teller that completely devastated their toxic family of origin.

[24]I also knew that if Cruz started to develop his understanding of toxic people, then he may reflect his mother's shame back at her. [25]If the scapegoat does not absorb the shame, the narcissist is left with it and more. [26]I knew that the more Cruz would individuate, the more he would be punished. [27]Additionally, If Cruz wasn't being a good scapegoat, the chances of Candace abusing Caleb would increase. [28]My biggest concern for Caleb was that any added stress and anxiety could weaken his immune system to a point where the earlier mentioned auto-immune disease would become active again. [29]It's a known fact that psychological abuse leads to a weakened immune system through anxiety, opening the door to all kinds of autoimmune diseases and the suffering that comes with it.

[30]This knowing, this understanding of the disorder, led me to tread very carefully. [31]If there's anything I know I'm good at, it's walking on eggshells. [32]It's not easy, and it's a skill I picked up by the threat of physical abuse from my father in childhood, and Candace's abuse throughout the relationship with her. [33]I transmuted my once upon-a-time abuse-born ability to walk on eggshells, avoiding Candace's shame triggers, into a superpower. [34]I was now able to navigate engaging my enemy. I could pursue, I could apply pressure, I could prepare my sons, I could parent them more authentically, and I could teach them how to mentally protect themselves and prepare them to endure the battle. [35]I could also choose which eggshells to deliberately step on to deliberately manipulate Candace into digging her own ego's grave. I could do all of it, but it was going to be difficult, expensive, and time consuming. [36]It was going to be energy draining to me, just like the divorce court battle was. [37]I had the support of my wife and family once I let them know my intentions. [38]Even though I had energy from a decade of peace in post-healing, I knew I would still need more assistance.

[39]I trusted in God and prayed for the power to protect my sons and prepare them for life ahead. [40]I had never been more grateful to God in my entire life. [41]Out of gratitude I committed to myself to improve my walk with God, and that I would honor God's gift of bringing me into this awareness, by using my experience to do the same for others.

[42]I grew stronger, wiser, more compassionate, and became more deliberate with my words, thoughts, and actions. [43]My love of strategy games turned this challenging part of my journey into a sort of game. [44]I never knew how calculating I was until writing this book. [45]It turns out that all my revenge fantasies I had against my bullies while growing up, including against my own father, became a superpower. [46]Now was the time. [47]I would need to be calculating in order to navigate how to protect my sons, consider every factor I could imagine, and every possible reaction to each move I would make, based on my knowledge of the playbook on narcissism.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[48]"Boom! [49]Red flag people! [50]He admitted to being calculating! [51]Everyone

knows that means deceiving! [52]See? [53]He's admitting to manipulating her. [54]This guy's a real piece of work."

Beast Mode:

[55]Yo, asshole. [56]You do know that calculating also means shrewd, right? [57]It says in the Bible to be as shrewd as a snake and as innocent as a dove. [58]To avoid people like YOU!!!

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[59]"Why you getting all defensive? [60]Sounds guilty to me. [61]And look, you swore while talking about the Bible. [62]And you made it personal. [63]You're one of those self-righteous narcissists. [64]Those are the worst ones! [65]Everyone knows that. [66]You are gonna burn in hell for that, bro."

Beast Mode:

[67]Gothca bitch. [68]I knew you wouldn't acknowledge what I just said, and instead attack it. [69]Now, give me more demon screams! [70]I need to show these people how this whole thing works. [71]I'm literally using you to illustrate my point, and you're falling for it. [72]Toodles!

[73]#CHECKMATE [74]#DONTENABLEHIM

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[75]"See?!? [76]Manipulative! [77]You're the narcissist. [78]Admit it! [79]I've already [80]unmasked you to everyone!"

[81]"Hello?!? [82]I said you're the narcissist!"

[83]"You can't defend yourself, you little bitch. That's why you're so quiet."

[84]"Who else knows this guy is a narcissist besides me? [85]I know I'm not the only one."

[86]"This fucker and his weird stupid hashtags. [87]Why does he even do that? [88]I'll tell you why, because he's trying to be cool. [89]Here, I can do it too. [90]"Look, I'm an idiot!""

[91]"#CATCHPHRASE"

[92]I needed to verify that my sons were indeed experiencing narcissistic abuse, as I could not base it on my experience alone. [93]I needed to be sure. [94]Their lack of trust in me was by design with their mother's parental isolation/alienation of me. [95]Up until this point in time, Candace benefited by my visits, and she would ensure that the weekends I visited were by her design. [96]I found it easier to give her options instead of stating which weekend I would be visiting. [97]If I were to ask for a specific weekend, the answer was almost always no. [98]I had learned to either give a range of options or pick a weekend I knew would not work for me as the one I would ask for, knowing it would get shot down anyway. [99]But this was soon to change.

[100]At this point, with all I had learned, I finally saw my situation for what it had always been. [101]I parallel parented for over 12 years with a self-righteous covert narcissist who was enabled by her narcissistic mother, her step-father, and her half-sister. [102]I was upset and knew that my original plan to sweep in to get each child on their 18th birthday would be too late. [103]Not only that, but what would happen to Caleb once Cruz would leave the family dynamic? [104]Cruz had already been through way more than I could ever imagine. [105]I knew I needed to remove them from their environment as often as possible and bring them with me out of state to where I lived to show them what a normal loving household, without anyone arguing and complaining all the time, actually looks and feels like.

[106]Over the phone in February of 2022, I posed the question to them how they would feel about spending time with me in Virginia. [107]They both expressed interest in spending more time with me and out of state. [108]I reminded them that if they had any reservations, due to them not knowing my wife and never having been with me outside a motel room other than at one Airbnb, I would understand. They were still on board.

[109]We continued the conversation over the phone. I told them that I believed I would need to go through court to get those rights. [110]My sons asked me to not include the court and to attempt to ask their mother first. [111]They believed me going to court would make things worse. [112]I told my sons I would first attempt to speak with their mother. [113]What they did not know is that I had already asked Candace so many times for visits to take place in Virginia to which she declined all of them, or gave

me a "maybe" while asking for more child support. [114]I knew she was future faking. [115]My whole relationship with Candace lasted as long as it did because of her future faking. [116]She wanted us to be an example of a Christian power couple back when we were married. [117]There was only one person in that relationship who was a Christian. [118]There was also only one person in that relationship who had power. [119]They were not the same person. [120]My Christian values that there is good in everyone, and to forgive endlessly, and to honor my vows, and love my wife as Christ loved the church, were what kept me trapped with toxicity.

Beast Mode:

[121]Now we know better. [122]Being a Christian means you are a disciple - not just a believer - of Jesus Christ, and that means your fruits of the spirit would resemble his. [123]We learned that forgiveness is not a permit to allow someone to continue abusing. [124]We learned that divorce is acceptable if you discover you are unequally yoked. [125]Being a Christian does not mean suffering through a miserable marriage until the day you die. [126]Being a Christian means trying, until you've decided you've tried enough. [127]If people can't meet you halfway, it's ok not to meet them at all. [128]Being a strong Christian means being both as innocent as a dove AND as wise as a snake…even though most churches don't teach the snake's wisdom. [129]Enter The Sword that Divides, your one-stop shop for all things a slitherin'.

[130]#DOVESINNOCENCE [131]#SNAKESWISDOM
[132]#JESUSFREAKINESS

[133]I knew that Candace would use the opportunity of me asking for more time with my sons and being out-of-state, that she would most likely ask for more child support. [134]I knew that if I agreed to pay more, she would just ask again and again, and use my response to either reward or punish me. [135]Candace had many tools for my punishment at her disposal. [136]These forms of punishment came in the form of taking away my video chats between my sons and I, our phone calls, our ability to play online together, and just generally being difficult with allowing me to see my sons. [137]So, saying all this, I already knew that she would not approve of me having time out-of-state with my sons. [138]I needed my sons to see what I had already known since I left their mother, that doing things the

civil way would not be possible. [139]Candace only understood the language of force and consequence. [140]My leaving her was the first consequence of her treatment of me. [141]I'm good at dishing out consequence, as you will soon see. [142]Does that make me big and bad? [143]Maybe. Or maybe, that just makes me nobody's bitch. [144]Free thinkers get down like that.

Beast Mode:

[145]I am The Beast. [146]I'm nobody's bitch! [147]You…are mine!

[148]#JETLI [149]#THEONE [150]#PYRAMIDSCHEMES

[151]I knew that I would not be successful with just their mother alone. [152]I would need to involve the entire household. [153]I would need to…triangulate the entire family, a move right out of the narcissist's playbook. [154]I needed to see the dynamic play out, and I wanted my sons to be present to witness it, so that they would finally understand that court was always my only option. [155]I would need to confront the entire family together by myself to deliver my message. [156]I was pretty sure that everyone in the Sanders family would be home as Candace's parents were both retired or working from home. [157]I also knew that Candace and her half-sister worked from home and homeschooled my sons, so the chances of the entire family being home felt pretty solid.

[158]I devised a plan to rescue my sons before it was too late. [159]I could not sit on this understanding and do nothing. [160]I had to act. [161]If I did not, I would have to accept the consequences of doing nothing. [162]My sons would pay that price, and I would lose this pinnacle opportunity to create lasting positive change.

[163]Of course, I wanted things to go easy. [164]I knew how difficult things could get. [165]It was going to be a nightmare. [166]I needed a plan, and I would have to create it by myself. [167]I prayed to God for help in guiding me to the right thoughts so that the plan would work. [168]I took my time to think of all the ways it would go. [169]I had always loved the book The Art of War. [170]I was learning at a hundred miles an hour about all things narcissism. [171]Surviving the abuse myself meant I was able to easily understand all the content on narcissism and its abuse. [172]It was second

nature to me, like a world I once knew and had to navigate. [173]I knew how narcissists talk, and how they gaslight and devalue. [174]And I also knew how they think and what they feared most through my research. [175]Of course, I'm going to do recon and run intel before I move on to conducting my psy-ops. [176]I knew I would be going to war again, but this time I was going to be…wait for it…an "army of one".

Beast Mode:

[177]Geez, there are no words to describe his level of cheesiness. [178]He did not get this from me. [179]I was thinking more like this, [180]"I knew I would be going to war. There's something very interesting about war. No matter how much time passes, war…war never changes."

[181]With all things Michael, you get used to it…

[182]#TAKEHIMORLEAVEHIM [183]#NEEDSMOREWATERCHIP

4. Formulation

[1]My litmus test to find the narcissist was set with the letter I was writing for the Sanders family. [2]I was able to discern the narcissists and the codependents. [3]I was already sure about Candace, but my words would need to be crafted in such a way that I would need to avoid shaming at all costs, or anything even remotely close to it, if I wanted to get anywhere speaking with the family. [4]I knew that Candace's mother was not fond of me at all once I left her daughter…back with her…for over 12 years straight. [5]These two bumped heads often, and Candace never left her mother's home since our separation.

[6]In her mother's eyes, I'm sure I ruined both Candace's life, and her own by proxy. [7]And of course, let me not forget, I was the kind of man that abandoned his family and barely spent time with his sons. I knew this had to be her point of view. [8]Candace's mother never talked to me. It was almost as if she knew damn well why someone like me could never stay married to someone like Candace. [9]Maybe I activated her shame or guilt in some way, especially if she was a narcissist herself, as she would see every member of her family as an extension of herself. [10]Candace's mother made it known to even my sons since the divorce that she did not like me and that I needed to apologize to her. [11]My sons truly believed

that if I apologized to their grandma for divorcing her daughter, everything would be alright. [12]I knew better, and I needed my sons to be old enough to see that an apology would never work.

[14]When I focused on my plan to speak to the Sanders, I took some things into consideration. [15]Logically, assuming that Candace was indeed a narcissist, she would've smeared me to her entire family since the separation and again after the divorce when I refused to reconnect with her. [16]Yes, Candace tried to get back together with me around the divorce being finalized. [17]With me repeatedly refusing Candace over the separation, I figured she indeed smeared me. [18]This would mean that her family wouldn't care about anything I would say about my relationship with my sons or spending more time with them. [19]If I removed logic and assumed that Candace did not smear me to her family, my letter would have a chance.

[20]At the very least, I knew I had to confront the family as an entire unit so that no information could be twisted or distorted to fit whatever narrative Candace would create. [21]I needed to take that away from her. [22]I needed her family, including my sons, to see her for who she was. [23]Candace is a mother who never wanted me to have a relationship with our sons once I no longer wanted a relationship with her. [24]This was to be my punishment for abandoning her, or so she so naively thought. [25]I listed my objectives:

1. [25a]Attempt to ask the Sanders family for me to have more time with my sons, aged 13 and 15 at that time, and for us to be able to spend that time out of state.
2. [25b]Show my sons my bravery to face their entire family in person.
3. [25c]Demonstrate to the Sanders family how much I love my sons.
4. [25d]Show my sons that apologizing to their grandma would never have helped [25e]anything.
5. [25f]Prove to my sons that Candace's narcissism would not allow her to give grace to my request.
6. [25g]Show them who their family truly is, people who don't truly care about their relationship with their father.
7. [25h]Allow me to discern each member of the Sanders family based on their response and questions they would ask.

8. [25i]Issue a covert warning that I'm the kind of guy who takes joy in strategizing my victory and seeing it through.

[26]I would need to be clever. [27]I would need to think through every possible interpretation of my words and tone. [28]I knew how to do this because Candace taught me how to walk on eggshells to avoid causing her shame and provide validation as much as possible. [29]Over a period of almost two months, I crafted my message, refined, reviewed with others I trusted, and refined my words some more. [30]Every word had a purpose. [31]I filled every sentence to the brim with intention. [32]The letter was more than just a letter. [33]Just like narcissists can be covert, I too can be covert. [34]I know how to hide layers of meaning, that the right kinds of eyes can see or ears can hear. [35]Yes, I did the same thing to this book.

Beast Mode:

[36]*He's so subtle, isn't he?*

[37]*#THESUBTELIST*

[38]I figured, "who knows, maybe they will be flexible and accepting of my request." [39]I considered the happiest outcome would be if the Sanders family would be open to me taking a more active role in my sons' lives. [40]You know what I'm talking about, the kind of shit you only see in Hallmark movies, where evil is never acknowledged. [41]We don't want to make people uncomfortable with the way life truly is, do we? [42]Of course not. [43]Seriously, look at the rules for screenwriting a Hallmark movie. Talk about walking on eggshells. [44]My book will never be adapted into a movie that will ever air on Hallmark. [45]It's too real. [46]What? You thought only my beast could talk shit? Nope, I wrote this portion after he and I integrated. [47]Hehehehe, I just broke my own rules. [48]I'll be keeping that to a minimum, but after chapter 12 the kid gloves come off. [49]Patience, my friends. [50]Keep reading.

[51]I was prepared for every outcome, and in the best-case scenario, I was ready to invite the Sanders family to my family reunion I was planning for that summer. [52]I wouldn't know for sure unless I tried, and this letter was me giving the family a chance to be part of the solution to finally bring everyone together and start healing together. [53]At the same time, I

wasn't stupid. [54]I knew that the most likely scenario would be a very ugly one. If that were to be the case, that too would work in my favor in time. [55]I wanted my sons to witness first-hand the beast I knew their mother was always capable of being, the Candace I knew. [56]I designed the letter to serve two purposes, a plan A and a plan B so to speak. [57]Plan A was for a peaceful solution. [58]Plan B was a subtle declaration of war. [59]I only did the letter for my sons, to give peace one last chance, but I had one foot in the battlefield already. [60]I had my next moves already planned out, because that's who I am. [61]I picture every possible scenario in my mind, and I create counter scenarios to branch off of them. [62]By the time I actually take action, I've got a whole mental flow chart in my mind with back up plans at the ready, and plenty of seeds planted in strategic places along the way to aid in my success. [63]Everyone does this, right? [64]It helps to not have distractions. [65]I spend a lot of time thinking, even when I'm engaged in chores.

[66]I had a real fear to confront the family, as I knew not what the outcome would be, but I knew what I was capable of…anything and everything. [67]At the very least, my sons would be inspired by my attempt and maybe change the downward trajectory I could see their lives going if I did nothing. [68]Secondly, I would understand what I was truly up against even more if things did not work out. [69]All there was left to do was to wait for the day to approach and to pray…a lot.

5. Freddie Freedom and Obi-wan Kenobi

[1]I was fortunate enough to have an old mentor happen to reach out to me. [2]I'll call him Freddie Freedom, though that's not his real name. [3]I'm choosing to keep his identity secret. [4]It had been 10 years since I last saw Freddie. We talked on video chat. We caught up on the professional side of things and then I asked him for guidance. [5]I explained the background behind my divorce, my life since, and my situation with my sons enduring this covert psychological abuse since I left the marriage. [6]I told him my plans to go to battle in the courts to protect my sons. Freddie highly recommended I seek a real good therapist that understood narcissism and its abuse and related complex trauma recovery. [7]So began my hunt for a solid therapist. [8]I did my research. [9]I searched for their fruits,

and I discerned those fruits, and one stood above all. [10]What do I mean by "fruit"? [11]It's in the Bible, and it means proof at the very least. [12]In this digital age, it's easier than you might think to find the fruit of someone's spirit online.

[14]Even though I discerned this one therapist's fruit to appear good-hearted, I couldn't be sure if I could trust him unless I met with him first. [15]I made contact and spilled my guts about my situation while also asking a lot of questions. [16]I discerned correctly that this therapist was indeed safe and very knowledgeable. [17]He took me on as a client and I couldn't imagine my journey without him and the advice from my friend Freddie. My support group began to grow outside of just my family. [18]I also shared with close friends about what I was entering into. [19]I had their emotional support, and they know who they are, and they know I am grateful for them. [20]My network expanded.

6. My Tribe

[1]The more submerged I became into the world of dark psychology that is deception and manipulation, the more groups I found. [2]There are so many communities out there talking about this and swapping stories and tactics. [3]In those communities are also narcissists schooling themselves on how to do what they do even better and more covertly. Yes, instead of seeing the writing on the wall and trying to come to the realization that their tactics can be easily defeated through the awareness these groups, and this book, brings, they just lean in all the way. [4]They throw away an opportunity for change and exchange it to deceive better.

[5]I found family. I found home. There's a communal consciousness in my tribe, and we are many. [6]We are all on different points along the same path. [7]There's the stage of coming into the awareness, the processing of the anger, the part when you kind of laugh at how easily you were fooled, and the part when you connect the dots in your own life and upbringing and see why you were such easy fodder. [8]That's just the beginning. With my awareness, and I don't just speak for myself, came a closeness with God unlike anything before. [9]I don't want to get ahead of myself. [10]I'm just prepping you in case you too start to feel this closeness grow even now while you are reading this. It's normal. It's healthy.

[11]So, what comes next after connecting the dots on upbringing and how it played you right into the narcissist's hands, arms, between their legs, or in their mouth? [12]It's hard to introspect, process, and heal while you are still with the narcissist. [13]A falling away has to happen to get to true lasting healing. [14]You can fall away without them even knowing it, while they sit next to you. You fall away from them in your mind. But getting far away from these people will serve you the best, if you can stomach what they will do because of your absence…your abandonment of them, an activation of their core of shame. [15]You wanna know how ugly it gets? [16]My story is just one of among so many just like it spanning the history of the world.

Beast Mode:

[17]I told you guys. [18]A tale as old as time. [19]Oh, we just gettin' started. [20]"All of history deleted with one stroke"…of my pen, my sword. 21Maybe the pen is mightier after all.

[22]#MKULTRA [23]#MUSE [24]#ISEEU2 [25]#FATCATSANDHEARTATTACKS [26]#CHRISTCONSCIOUSNESS

7. The Day the Earth Stood Still (29-April-2022)

[1]My letter was ready and so was I. Before I go deep here, I want to add that I had to sell my beloved 2003 Chevy Avalanche which was my first and only vehicle I purchased, due to not being able to afford to fix it. I owned it for nearly 20 years. A good friend was willing to buy it for a modest price despite all the issues, both requiring serious repair and also the annoying issues I would've loved to have been able to afford to fix. The age of the vehicle didn't justify the repairs for me. [2]So, I left Virginia in my truck for one last ride to meet its new owner in Chicago. [3]But first I would pick up my sons and deliver my message in person to their entire family in front of them. The road trip went well, and I arrived safely to Chicago. [4]While driving, I reminisced about all the most memorable moments Big Blue and I shared. That was her name, if you recall from earlier. [5]Big Blue was my Millennium Falcon, falling apart but true, old but still mighty. [6]She was there with me through so many of my toughest moments in life. [7]Because I knew she was going to

be in good hands, I was able to be well with the thought of saying goodbye.

[8]I arrived to pick up my sons. [9]I was made strong through my many prayers and mediation on the nearly 11-hour trip. [10]I pulled up to the Sanders residence in Bolingbrook and readied myself. [11]I felt a calmness around me. [12]My sons exited the house with their bags for the weekend. [14]They did not know my plan. [15]We greeted each other and loaded up the truck. They were excited to see Big Blue again after so many years. I had been renting cars for nearly the entire decade I was living in the Washington D.C. area. [16]It brought back a lot of good memories for them too, as this was our primary vehicle up until the separation of me and their mother. [17]I spoke to my sons about what was about to happen. [18]I told them that I was about to attempt to speak with the family to see if we could come to an understanding about out-of-state trips. [19]I also asked them to accompany me so that they would have a chance to be included in matters that involved them and their wishes. [20]I told them that it was very difficult for me to do, but I felt that it was the right thing to do before going through court to fight for it. [21]This fulfilled their wish of me attempting to handle it without going to court.

[22]I asked my sons if everyone was home. They said their grandma and step-grandfather were not home at the moment and were in separate places as well. [23]I proceeded to call them individually and ask if I could speak to them. I had to leave voice messages when neither answered. [24]Apparently, Candace's mother noticed I called and contacted Candace about it. [25]Candace came out of her parent's home to confront me. She asked why I was calling her mother. [26]I explained that I had something very important to speak to the whole family about. [27]Her eyes relaxed at my response, a look I hadn't seen since way before the separation. [28]She was wrong to drop her guard. [29]I wondered what she was thinking, but I knew it was nothing like what was truly about to happen.

[30]Candace said that she and her step-sister were about to run errands and that both parents would not be home for a bit and offered to do a video call later that evening. I agreed and departed with my sons. [31]We drove to MDW airport to sell my car to my friend and his wife who had flown in to pick it up, as they lived on the West Coast. My sons and I then walked over to pick up our rental car which was also at the airport.

[32]My sons and I made it to one of the two hotels that we had stayed at for nearly 10 years. [33]We actually knew one of the staff members as she had checked us in so many times over the years.

[34]I spoke with my sons about what was about to happen. [35]I told them I would not put them on the spot but that I wanted them to witness and be present, and that their family members may have some questions for them when I was through delivering my message. [36]Later that evening we connected on FaceTime - Candace and her half-sister on one line, their mother on a separate line, Candace's step-father on a separate line, and my sons and I at our hotel.

[37]Here is my message as it was read by me to the Sanders family without interruption:

> [38]*"I am not a perfect person.* [39]*I am here in the hopes to actualize peace.* [40]*I ask only to be allowed to speak without interruption and I'm open to dialogue after.* [41]*Candace and I have already exchanged apologies for everything leading up to the divorce.* [42]*I want to specifically acknowledge that her treatment of me in our marriage before separation was not a deliberate means by her to end it.* [43]*And I acknowledge that at one point, all of what I did to her was a deliberate means to the end.*
>
> [44]*God gave me a second chance.* [45]*And in that chance, in that peace and with time, I had the opportunity to truly reflect.* [46]*I can't undo the damage caused in or by our relationship to each other and those who love us.* [47]*But, where my words were once used as weapons for war, I now wish to use them as tools for peace.* [48]*Where once I may have been your greatest enemy, I now wish to be your greatest advocate.* [49]*And I am done running from my past.* [50]*I have accepted myself, flaws and all.* [51]*To you Chari, Bobby, and Cheryl, and my boys, I know that I deeply hurt someone you love dearly, and I know you felt her suffering and possibly felt helpless.* [52]*And for that all I can do is say to you that I'm sorry and I ask for your forgiveness individually.*
>
> [53]*I know that I burned your family's trust in me, so I don't know how to segue into what I want to say next.* [54]*My sons need*

me. And I need them too. [55]*The relationship we have with each other as father and sons is something just as sacred as mother and son.*

[56]*We need to spend more time together out of state, and we need to sooner rather than later.* [57]*I acknowledge I have not interacted much with Candace regarding aspects of my children.* [58]*This is not because I'm uncaring, but because I care very much and have to become vulnerable if I am to express it.* [59]*Becoming vulnerable with Candace is very difficult for me.*

[60]*God has instilled in me a great sense of urgency.* [61]*My sons and I need time to teach each other and to play together, and experience together.* [62]*I don't want to marginalize anything about you to them.* [63]*I don't want to get in between you and them.* [64]*I'm not here apologizing to you and the family to gain your favor.* [65]*I'm here to ask your blessing to take their time from you, and for you to trust me to leave their hearts with you and to keep my sons safe when they are with me.*

[66]*So why did it take me so long to talk to you all? Many reasons.* [67]*The main one is concern over making myself vulnerable.* [68]*You have no reason to like me and every reason to despise me.* [69]*You have every reason to distrust me.* [70]*I may appear to you to be the antagonist of Candace's story, and unworthy of redemption.* [71]*I can understand that I appear to say one thing and, in my past, did another and that it may lead you to believe that I am not sincere.* [72]*Time has passed and I was able to reflect and grow.* [73]*And I believe, of all of you, my children know my heart best.* [74]*It's scary to be vulnerable in front of you.* [75]*I just believe some things are worth facing your fears for, regardless of the outcome.* [76]*At the very least, I just inspired my sons to face their own fears.*

[77]*I want to demonstrate evidence of my love for my sons and how I know them and of my competency to lead them.* [78]*While apart, I have watched their shows, played their games, and learned about the characters involved and their stories.* [79]*I speak with them about their interests, and I have showed them that I truly care about those interests.* [80]*But I have limited how I share with them about my own interests for them.*

[81]*Usually, I share my interest for them in examples they understand and when the timing feels right.* [82]*But they have proven to me that they are ready to understand more and deeply.* [83]*And so, this brings me to you all now as it is time for us to spend more time together.*

[84]*To Cruz:* [85]*You are highly competitive when you play any game and able to execute with such mastery.* [86]*You live to compete and prove yourself and abilities.* [87]*I know that when you get to play the games you really want to play, they are fast-paced, aggressive, and reward your reflexes and ability to predict the enemy.* [88]*The words ruthless and brutal carry deep meaning for you.* [89]*When you win, you feel great even after a close victory.* [90]*You even don't mind defeat if it's to a worthy adversary, especially if you can challenge them again.* [91]*And when you dominate, you do so with finesse.* [92]*As a fellow gamer, you know I understand and respect that.* [93]*I dare say I was equally as good once upon a time.* [94]*One of your favorite games is Doom.* [95]*The protagonist is the Doom Slayer who slays demons.* [96]*Not a perfect person, he's just a normal guy who has every right to be scared of the near-infinite number of powerful demons pursuing him.* [97]*He is rarely at peace.* [98]*He has courage to stand up to his demons using his many tools.* [99]*Biblically, demons are not "bad people", they are fallen angels who twist the perspectives and states of being of those who mean to do good.* [100]*I too am trying to be a demon slayer, in myself and others.* [101]*I had to start with myself.* [102]*My tools are my words.* [103]*It may seem like we are doomed no matter what we do in life, that the harsh world is out to get us, that we are alone, that we can trust no one and be vulnerable to no one.* [104]*But I promise you that is not the case.* [105]*You and I can talk things through together.* [106]*Your demons are mine too.* [107]*Your sufferings are mine too.* [108]*Because it is important to learn to do things for yourself, I will not defeat your demons for you, and I will not shelter you from them.* [109]*For in that safety, you are at great risk to become weak.* [110]*Instead, I will give you wisdom and help you analyze your demons, sharpen your tools, and strategize with*

you on how to handle them. [111]*There's not a human being on this earth who hasn't been blessed with some amount of suffering.* [112]*God smiles on those who endure and overcome with grace.* [113]*And even more for those who help others do the same.* [114]*Being competitive is admirable.* [115]*Competitive people go far in life.* [116]*Something to keep in your mind is to beware that your self-esteem doesn't come from victory or conflict.* [117]*You must be careful not to pursue conflict where there is none.* [118]*One day, you will be a leader.* [119]*And as a leader, you must always strive to be compassionate and selfless, and sometimes vulnerable.* [120]*Choosing to put your people first, over your personal victories, may prove challenging.* [121]*As you could hurt those you lead.* [122]*This can be in your job or in your household as a man, a father, and a husband.*

[123]*To Caleb:* [124]*You crave stability, discipline, and structure in all things.* [125]*These are great traits, and something I had to contend with when I served in the Army as a soldier.* [126]*I still struggle in my pursuit of improving in those areas.* [127]*But too much of it can also lead to fear of risk or change.* [128]*Because that brings with it the unknown, the uncomfortable.* [129]*In the unknown, before you can appreciate the new things you find there, you may feel the need to first rebuild the structure you are used to.* [130]*Because that is what is familiar and comfortable.* [131]*I know your love of the game Splatoon.* [132]*In that game you are not a hero.* [133]*You play as an inkling or octoling.* [134]*No more special than the other players online, outside of pure skill, which you definitely have.* [135]*Splatoon is a game of control.* [136]*You cover the war zone in your own team's ink fighting for territorial dominance before your time is up, creating opportunities that weren't there before you sprayed ink on it.* [137]*Inside the ink you have the elements of decreased vulnerability and increased maneuverability, speed, and surprise.* [138]*And you are very good at this game.* [139]*I know you also like the game titled Control.* [140]*There's a theme here.* [141]*If you control all that is around you or allow yourself to be controlled, you won't grow as a person.* [142]*And though some*

people can be controlled, it is not good for them or the controller. [143]*People and relationships can be destroyed by control.* [144]*There is more ink in you than you realize.* [145]*And your greatest victory in life will be in winning without abusing your power.* [146]*I want to help you get there.* [147]*There are careers for people like you who have mastery over their power.* [148]*These are the ones who reform, who help startup businesses get off the ground and move on to the next project.* [149]*Many people, like myself and Cruz, can truly benefit from the structure those like you provide.* [150]*Structure at home and at work is so important.* [151]*But you will have to be careful.* [152]*The neurotic version of your power is micromanagement and punishing those who resist your attempts to control them.* [153]*It takes a great deal of energy to attempt to control other people or an environment, and it will come at a cost to you.* [154]*This can be in your job or in your household as a man, a father, and a husband.* [155]*And those you lead may feel that they can't be allowed to take risks or be themselves, or worse, they will choose not to in order to maintain your favor or love.* [156]*And they won't be able to grow.* [157]*They either stay and accept your control over them or they tear themselves away from you in an effort to save themselves and in doing so can cause you great suffering.*

[158]*To Cruz and Caleb:* [159]*You both said to me in front of the other that you didn't love each other.* [160]*We've talked about this a couple times since then.* [161]*Though it hurt to hear it, I sincerely appreciate your honesty.* [162]*I want you to see the things in your brother that I do, the unique struggles and the powers you both have.* [163]*In that, you may find love.* [164]*You should be allies making each other stronger and accepting and appreciative of what makes you different from each other.* [165]*Together, if you champion each other, you could be a force to be reckoned with, unstoppable.* [166]*I look forward to that day.* [167]*You both asked me once, what I wanted for Father's Day.* [168]*I asked you to forgive each other every time you got mad at each other.* [169]*I knew what I was asking for was unrealistic, but I knew that you would do it for me at least a few*

times. [170]*When you don't forgive (whether it's asked of you or not), you resent and maybe act on it.* [171]*When you are resentful, you can't appreciate each other.*

[172]*When you act in resentment, you add to the cycle, inciting revenge upon revenge.* [173]*It doesn't matter who the alpha was in the conflict.* [174]*Be the omega.* [175]*This is why the Bible teaches forgiveness to the utmost.* [176]*When you forgive, you break the downward spiral.* [177]*It can be very difficult to forgive, because you know it will not bring you justice.* [178]*But it will bring you peace.*

[179]*Now, I want to tell you both something about myself.* [180]*You both know that I love games with turn-based tactics like Gears Tactics and X-Com.* [181]*But there is a lesson to be learned in those games and there's a reason those games draw people like me.* [182]*In its conflict, it rewards those who choose to be slow to react, observant, methodical, and deliberate with every act.* [183]*I find pleasure in being able to overcome overwhelming odds.* [184]*But when it seems hopeless, and when the odds are not in my favor, and I stop believing in myself and my abilities, I simply quit.* [185]*It's a struggle to return, to get my bearings, and try again.* [186]*If we were characters in Marvel Strike Force, Cruz, your trait would be the Attacker.* [187]*Caleb, you'd be the Controller.* [188]*I'd be the Supporter.* [189]*And there are more lessons to learn from the ISO-8 ability we choose for ourselves and why.* [190]*There are lessons to be learned in why we choose to put points in certain attributes when we level up.* [191]*There are lessons to be learned in all things, the good and the bad.* [192]*It's time for the lessons to get real, for very soon you will both be men.* [193]*And I want more for you.* [194]*I want you to be men among men and fearless of the world.* [195]*I want you both to thrive and be guiding lights, unable to be dimmed.* [196]*And I will not be here forever to guide you.*

[197]*My point is that I have what it takes to be a leader to my sons.* [198]*I have made the effort to stay connected with them and learn about them from them.* [199]*I learn about myself in this too.* [200]*And I need time with them in my environment to make the most of it for me and my sons.*

[201]*The visitation week in July is also a minor family reunion.* [202]*It's a very big deal to my family.* [203]*They are all flying or driving in from out-of-state.* [204]*This will be an amazing experience for Cruz and Caleb.*

[205]*I'd like to ask you Candace for a month out-of-state with the boys this summer.* [206]*And for the next year's summer as well.* [207]*I'm asking for Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, but I understand if you'd like to wait and see if this summer goes well.* [208]*I'm not trying to take my sons away from you.* [209]*This is about moving forward and becoming stronger and preparing them to be men.* [210]*I'm not a perfect person, but they need me."*

[211]There was a moment of pure silence. [212]I want to take a beat here for a moment. [213]What did you think about my letter? [214]Why do you think I said what I said to each son of mine? [215]Take a moment and write that down. [216]This is one activity you will definitely not want to skip. [217]When you are done writing, return here and we will continue.

[218]Welcome back, now if you are reading this in a group go ahead and show everyone your answers. [219]Take a moment to discuss your reasoning together. [220]When you have decided that you are done discussing, return here.

[221]What did you notice after seeing what others wrote? [222]What stuck out to you during the discussion? [223]Keep these answers to yourself for now.

[224]The first to speak was Candace's half-sister. "When do you need to know by?" was her question. [225]I answered, "I'd really like to know by the time I drop off the boys on Sunday." Sunday was two days later. [226]Then the second to speak was Candace's mother, Cheryl. She stated that she felt I was sincere but that what I just did was incredibly manipulative. [227]She asked if this message was from me or if anyone helped me with it, or something along those lines. [228]I stated that these were my own words and I wanted to be careful in my delivery which is why I read them. [229]I thanked her for her response. [239]Next was Candace who echoed her mother's statement on me being manipulative. [240]I thanked her for her response and asked if Candace's stepfather, Bobbi, wished to speak. [241]He took a moment and then responded. "I only have this to say.

[242]Actions speak louder than words. [243]That's all I've got to say." [224]And then came Candace again, "Boys? You trust me to do what's right for you, right?" [225]Both my sons nodded and said "yes". [226]Cheryl added that she didn't accept my apology over video and that if I really wanted to apologize, I would need to do so to her face. [227]I stated that was what my plan originally was, to do this in front of the entire family in person. [228]But Cheryl did not accept my apology. [229]And with that, we brought the call to a close. It was done.

[230]Looking back to that moment, many things were made clear. I saw where Candace got her manipulation and resentment from, her mother. [231]I started to make some assumptions that Candace and her mother had a lot more in common than I initially thought. [232]I was surprised that the family let me talk for so long without interrupting. [233]I believe they did so only because my sons were present. [234]I had no regrets in delivering my message when and how I did. [235]Because the family did not seem receptive to my request, I knew I would be going to find a lawyer soon after the visit would end. [236]I spent that night with my sons verifying the situation they were in.

[237]I already had the belief that Cruz was the family scapegoat, and that Caleb was the golden child. [238]I believed this because of how Caleb would often speak to me for his mother as if holding me accountable for her reactions. [239]I began the evening with showing my sons some YouTube videos. [240]Together we watched a video from Dr. Ramani about the scapegoat and the golden child. [241]I did this to understand the reality of their situation with their mother so that I could be fully informed before deciding on which action to take. [242]I saw as Cruz watched and told me examples of what he experienced with each point Dr. Ramani went over. [243]As I was verifying, Cruz's eyes opened to what had always been his reality, but what I didn't see was the anger that was rising inside him. [244]I did not think about how the act of verifying would lead to that, because I was so wrapped up in wanting to ensure my own complete understanding.

[245]Caleb shared some stories of how some of what Dr. Ramani said resonated with him about the golden child. [246]Caleb was not fully convinced that his experience was that of the golden child, but he could verify that Cruz's treatment mirrored the scapegoat description. [247]I

came into this video review session with no expectations other than verifying or debunking what was my current belief. [248]The more we watched, the more solidified in my beliefs I became.

[249]We watched a video from Dr. Ramani on co-parenting with a narcissist, and it helped me and my sons understand our situation more for what it had always been, seemingly hopeless to ever be more than what it currently was. [250]Of course, my message to the family would make things worse, because I realized it dealt a serious narcissistic injury to the entire family unit. [251]I knew that the end result was that Candace would tighten her grip. [252]Battle was approaching on the horizon, but I was already watching from the high ground. [253]I already knew that I would be victorious, because I was fighting for what was right. [254]I knew this would be the biggest test of my life. [255]I would need to be the kind of father who has what it takes to protect my sons from those that they trust, while living 700 miles away from them. [256]I prayed to God to watch over them and protect them, because I knew that things were going to get nasty for all of us real soon.

[257]I'm going to take a brief moment here. [258]Why do I always have to be pushed to the edge? [259]Because otherwise I'd never leap. [260]Life forces me to either accept things as they are or simply leap into the unknown. [261]Every time I do leap, I grow stronger, wiser, and more resilient. [262]The hardest leaps are the ones I don't really have to do, that are not forced, those optional leaps when things are comfortable as they are. [263]This book was my optional leap of faith. [264]I don't want to get ahead of myself, but this book is the one leap I did that was not for me or my sons. [265]It was my way of thanking God for the awareness and the timing of that awareness, for guiding me through over a two-year-long struggle in court, and also for being with me every step of the way through all of my life's struggles, including the duration of time when I believed myself to be damned. [266]God never left me alone and has given me so many amazing blessings throughout my life. [267]I also wrote this book for you, so that you too can have the awareness and use it.

[268]Later that same evening with my sons, I reflected. [269]"Actions speak louder than words," I remember Bobbi saying. [270]I knew that nothing I could do would ever be good enough to prove myself to someone who already made up their mind about me. [271]I'm not just talking about

Bobbi. [272]I'm talking about Candace, the one with the power. [273]I knew that Candace would relish my efforts as she would criticize me along the way, just for trying to prove myself. [274]How did I know this? [275]I was married to her; I was able to identify her as truly disordered. [276]After she became self-aware from our divorce, she could've done the real work on herself like several other self-aware narcissists have. [277]But she didn't, because she was surrounded by enablers, including my own sons who had no choice but to enable. [278]It was like I was going right back into the dragon's cave again. [279]It was me against the beast that was Candace's entire family unit, with all the money and connections they had access to. [280]To me, their words that echoed through my head may have well said, "Yes, Michael, come back to us…prove yourself…forever…!" [281]So, when Bobby said, "Actions speak louder than words," what I interpreted that to truly mean was, "How did you like my clever way of saying you're fucked, Michael?" [282]Maybe I'm wrong. [283]But either way, I could see how my plea for more closeness with my sons was being interpreted as a declaration of war. [284]Actions speak louder than words indeed.

[285]To be fully transparent, I did tell the Sanders family what I was going to do in my own way. [286]When I spoke about my love of strategy games and returning after being defeated to conquer, I was speaking of my situation of surrendering decent parenting time rights and custody rights and accepting my role as the inactive father for the sake of salvaging a relationship with my sons at a later time. [287]I was also foreshadowing the coming of war. [288]I had been mentally preparing myself and my wife for a long-term, expensive, and contentiously painful court battle. [289]Candace chose to ask my sons if they trusted her. Not once did she ask them what they wanted. [290]She never asked them, and my sons and I all knew that we all wanted more time together. [291]Candace truly saw my sons as extensions of herself. [292]In her self-centeredness, she cared more for the validation that my sons trusted her in order to maintain her sense of reality that I was not a threat. [293]It was apparent, but only to me, for the moment.

[294]My beastly side smelled blood in the water. [295]My sons may not have noticed Candace's self-centeredness and lack of concern for what my sons actually desired, but if I could apply more pressure, I knew Candace would do all the work for me. [295]I already knew to expect that from the

research I conducted on people with NPD, but Candace was going to make it real easy. [296]I just had to play the long game, but so would my sons. [297]I was thankful that I had the courage to go through with it and that my sons witnessed me give it my best. [298]And I was thankful that I finally got to see the family dynamic play out. [299]This is the way I saw it; tomorrow is not guaranteed. [300]If I died the following day, my sons would remember that I tried for them. [301]My sons would remember my words, or at least how they felt when they heard my words. [302]I knew that if I passed away after that visitation weekend, that delivering my message to the Sanders family would've been good enough to eventually lead my sons to connect the dots between how that went, along with information on narcissism. [303]They knew where to search for answers; they would start with Dr. Ramani.

[304]My letter was from the heart, but it was also so much more than that. [305]It was a covet act of defiance towards the Sanders family. [306]I wanted more and I deserved it because I am my son's father, and I love them. [307]I never did anything to hurt them or put them in harm's way. I had always been so nurturing to them. [308]I had put up with the hotel room visits for ten long years and it was enough. [309]I knew out-of-state visits were not going to happen without court. [310]But I had to try, for my sons. [311]They deserved that. [312]I wanted them to see me as who I am, fearless. [313]If only I knew then what would become of me. [314]Thankfully, it wouldn't take long for me to see who I truly was, and what I was truly capable of. [315]Looking back, I'm impressed. [316]I went from fearless to becoming an absolute beast. [317]So how did that come about? [318]Don't worry, I take you with me through my journey in becoming the man I am today.

[319]I recall hearing Jordan Peterson describe putting the fear behind you as a great propellant to action. [320]The fear of the cost of my inaction, which would be the easiest thing on myself, would mean my sons would pay the price. [321]I could not do that to them. [322]It could not wait for them to turn 18. [323]I had this gut feeling that I just had to act. [324]I felt like Cruz's and Caleb's sense of self were in the balance. [325]I was taking fate out of the equation and replacing it with a destiny of my own design. [326]Of course, looking back now, I see it as God's design. [327]He paved the way for me. [328]I just had to walk down it and deal with the battles as they came. And boy, did they ever.

Beast Mode:

[329]Hehehehe. [330]Blood in the water. [331]Can I rip and tear, or can I rip and tear? [332]Oh, wait. [333]We still aren't there yet. [334]Arrrgghhhh. [335]LET ME OUT!!! [336]Patience is a virtue. [337]Patience is a virtue. Patience is a virtue. [338]Deep breaths. [339]I'm going to go take a walk on the beach. [340]:takes a long slow breath in, holds it for a moment, and slowly breathes out:

[341]#BRB [342]#AFK [343]#ABOUTTOGETLIT [344]#THEY-HAVENOIDEAWHATSCOMINGFORALLOFTHEM

8. Clipped W.I.N.G.S.

[1]So began my campaign, I decided I would invest all that I had, and all that I was, into fighting for my sons as if their futures depended on it. Because, to me, their futures indeed depended on it. [2]I saw several possible futures, all logical, and all but one was bad. [3]I won't go over any of my thoughts and visions of all the bad stuff I felt could happen. [4]Just listen to the many stories out there of children of narcissists and what adulthood has looked like for them. [5]There are so many success stories, but there are way more stories of devastation…for now. [6]The only future I could see where there could be true healing was only possible through my action. [7]I knew that, with Candace being so narcissistic, that she probably had plans to keep my sons from leaving her mother's household, just like Candace's sister who was in her late 30's. [8]Candace had been flying high on her own supply for way too long. [9]Lucky for me, I'd been sharpening my wing clippers daily for a few months. [10]You should see how razor-sharp they are now. [11]You will. ;)

[12]The following morning after I spoke with the Sanders family, I called a helpline for victims of abuse. [14]I called the domestic abuse hotline W.I.N.G.S. I needed to be off the record because Candace happened to be working the hotlines. [15]You heard me right. [16]The domestic abuser herself was working for a domestic abuse hotline. [17]Oh, the irony. [18]Luckily, the agent that answered was not Candace. [19]The only reason I bring up W.I.N.G.S. is because the resources they gave me were not able to help me. [20]Why is that? [21]Well, those resources are only available to those under a certain level of income and seemed to focus on more extreme or physical forms of abuse. [22]Because I had decent income, I

would have to go through credit card debt in order to receive the aid I needed. [23]I was on my own to find my own resources, and this would be the theme for two years of court battles. [24]It's almost as if W.I.N.G.S. was completely unaware of financial abuse.

9. Foretelling the Future

[1]You don't need to be clairvoyant to be able to tell my own future or my sons' when it comes to whenever a narcissist is involved. [2]I learned enough of what to expect from watching so many videos on narcissism. [3]You see, all narcissists act identical when you put the pressure on them. [4]Now they may have their vices, and the things to soothe them that money can buy, but even that can only get them so far. [5]They still follow the same script no matter what. [6]I told my sons that I would be going to court and to expect increased pressure within their household after I would return them and return home to D.C. area. [7]Since Cruz was the scapegoat, I told him that he would receive the worst of it. [8]His mother would take everything out on him; that is the way the disorder works. [9]I prepared Caleb for increased pressure too. [10]I told them that we were looking at six months of court proceedings at the very least. [11]Oh, how naive I was.

[12]I knew that Caleb was bonded to his mother pretty strongly, and so I knew what we talked about over the weekend might leak to their mother. [13]It was a risk I had to take. [14]I had no control over what either child would say when they returned home from our weekend trip. [15]I brought a book for Cruz with me, and I gave it to him. [16]The book was titled Going Mad to Stay Sane - The Psychology of Self-Destructive Behavior by Andy White. [17]I purchased the book used and it had what appeared to be at least three past owners as there were at least three different colors of highlights throughout the book. [18]My biggest concern was Cruz's mental health. [19]Caleb's was a concern of mine too, but Caleb was able to operate in the family dynamic without as much punishment as Cruz, a perk of Candace treating Caleb as her extension and golden child. [20]I then spoke with each of my sons separately and asked them to give me a codeword that they would not tell the other brother. [21]They would use this codeword during any of our phone calls in case things got out of

hand at their house. [22]I told them that if they used the codeword, after the call I would call the police and travel to their city and stay for a while so that I could get them out of the house more often. [23]They never used their codewords.

10. The Blind Leading the Blind

[1]My sons and I enjoyed the rest of the weekend together and we did talk several times about what transpired with the family meeting with us. [2]After I dropped my sons off, the very next morning I visited the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) website. [3]Apparently, the site did list emotional abuse as actual abuse. I was shocked. [4]I thought that maybe, just maybe, if I reported to them everything my sons divulged to me that maybe there could be a finding. [5]Everything they told me checked all the boxes for emotional abuse. [6]I did not tell my sons that I would be calling DCFS. [7]I made the call, and boy, did that blow things up. [8]I gave every piece of information I had to the investigator. [9]My sons were interviewed but did not feel safe to speak their true feelings. [10]Because of this, there was no finding.

[11]My calling DCFS made Candace so upset, as with all narcissists whose cover is about to get blown. [12]She retaliated and made Caleb her mouthpiece. [14]Caleb would lightly chastise me over the phone for putting his mother through the ordeal. [15]What I did not yet know was that Candace or her family were present and practically transcribing our calls. [16]I understood enough about the golden child role and extension of the narcissist to not take it personally or make Caleb feel bad for speaking on behalf of his mother. It would be like this for a little while. [17]Cruz and Caleb both were going through changes both physically because of their age and mentally because of the ordeal. [18]Candace tightened her grip on them. [19]I had to get creative if I were to continue maintaining my relationship with my sons under increasing pressure for all of us, while being eavesdropped on by Candace and her family members. [20]That wasn't enough for me though. [21]I wanted to build them up too, and that would be the trickiest part.

11. The Ballet of Blades

[1]I knew I just had to play the long game, that things would get real nasty for me and my sons, and that I would need to prepare for financial devastation. [2]The thing is I'd already been playing the long game for 13 years, which included the separation. [3]Luckily, my love for games would come in handy. [4]I envisioned that this battle would have to become my game. [5]If I could compartmentalize, keep my emotions separate and subdued, I could successfully navigate it with logic. [6]I added another layer to this game, the challenge of opening my sons' eyes slowly and right under Candace's nose.

> **Beast Mode:**
>
> *[7]Speaking of noses, Pinocchio's nose grew in accordance with how big his lie was. [8]The lies he used to cover up his previous lies would really make his nose grow like a tree. [9]I wonder how long Candace's nose would be if those same rules applied in real life. [10]Maybe we could hitch a ride to the moon on it. [11]I'm serious though. [12]Seriously. [14]Like, I truly mean it. [15]Apparently, every narcissist is also a pathological liar. [16]That's all they know how to do, as if the truth hurt their tongues.*
>
> *[17]#ALLABOARD [18]#BANGZOOM [19]#ONEGIANTNOSEFOR-MANKIND*

[20]My ego, my beast, is all about revenge, but not just any revenge. [21]I crave vengeance, even if it's not my own. [22]I love it when the downtrodden really gives it to "the man". [23]Heck, even narcissists love that. [24]Craving revenge is universal. [25]Revenge is what gets people in trouble, and usually not the inciting incident itself. [26]Sounds fair, right? [27]The judicial system rewards those who have self-control, even if they are the perpetrator. [28]Now that I understood narcissism and was diving deeper and deeper into serious content from those who had made it out of the pit of hell with the wisdom of the snake in tow. [29]I realized I already had the wisdom of the snake by being with Candace and lesser narcissists. [30]But now? [31]I was playing with the big boys, the men and women teachers of the internet who had conquered the narcissists in their lives and were sharing way more information than I could find from most

psychologists. [32]These were the people who knew how to mirror narcissists and toy with them. [33]These cosmic clowns of mystery were next level. [34]They could be referred to as the Daywalkers. [35]They had the wisdom of the snake in the palm of their hand, and still had the innocence of the dove in the other.

[36]A Daywalker is a reference to the movie Blade. [37]Blade is also the name of the main character played by Wesley Snipes. [38]Blade is a Daywalker, someone who is half vampire, half human. [39]The Daywalker has all of the strengths of the vampire, and none of its weaknesses. [40]The Daywalker still has a thirst for blood but has strong self-control. [41]Blade disciplined himself to use a nourishing serum instead of human blood, though it was nowhere near as satisfying. [42]Blade knew the entire underworld of vampires and their entire network. They also knew him. Vampires hated him. To them, he was an abomination. [43]See, the reason he had his powers was because his mother was bitten by a vampire right before giving birth to him.

[44]A Daywalker could also be called the narcissist's narcissist, an absolute terror to those who provoke them and don't stand in truth. [45]To the outside world witnessing an interaction between a Daywalker and a narcissist, the Daywalker would appear aggressive and assertive with their words, but also calm in tone and body language. [46]A Daywalker has no problem with long awkward silences while maintaining direct eye contact. [47]They are absolute beasts. [48]I felt like I was already one of them, an apprentice with a thirst for narcissist blood. [49]I watched, I learned, and eventually I started baiting narcissists and sparring with them online. [50]I didn't have anyone to practice with since separating from Candace. [51]It was like riding a bike with a jet engine strapped onto it. I was a maniac. I couldn't be stopped.

[52]I was having a blast sparring. I wasn't hurting anybody. [53]You can't hurt a narcissist's feelings, because they have none. What they do have is ego. [55]What they call their heart is actually their ego. [56]Your words are the stakes you drive through it. [57]Once you go through the armory in chapter 9, I will teach you how to interpret their screams. [58]Sound a little psychotic? [59]I know it does. [60]That's ok. [61]It will all make sense before you finish reading this book.

Beast Mode:

[62]Good Lord! [63]:Covers face with hand: [64]Yup, he wrote this section after we integrated too. [65]Could ya tell? [66]I told ya. [67]This is just the beginning. [68]LOL

[69]Yo, where did Narc Style go? Did you see him?

[70]Oh, I forgot! Narcissists hate this section.

[71]You out there, Narc Style? [72]Yoohoo. [73]Come on out. [74]I'll give you some validation, ok? [75]Hello?

[76]I'll apologize for something I didn't do, just come back and accuse me of something. [77]Hello?

[78]Look, Narc Style, how about you accuse me of something, and I'll defend myself for a little bit. [79]I promise I will. [80]Won't that make you feel better? [81]Then we can play some more?

[82]No?

[83]See, they know a Daywalker when they see one in action. They can never hang for long.

[84]Anyway, how are you doing? [85]Are you enjoying the book so far? [86]It's different. [87]I know. [88]I'm gonna make a supersonic human out of you. [89]Come on, let's go. [90]I got you.

[91]#THEYALLLILBITCHES [92]#EGOGOPOP [93]#YASQUEEN [94]#AINTNOTHINGGONNABREAKMYSTRIDE [95]#GETWILDER

[96]These back-and-forth sessions with narcissists online didn't take up my energy like it used to with Candace. [97]Instead, it fed me. [98]To the narcissists I played with, they thought that I was just the average Joe, but they all eventually gave up and turned tail. [99]Every damned one of them just got more boring. [100]They ran out of moves and I called them out on it. [101]I even corrected them, as in I told them lines they should've used to be more narcissistically effective. [102]I even had other narcissists rooting for me as I ripped these people apart with only my words doing their job even better than them. [103]I saw that their energy was draining and that it

was me who was taking it. [104]I became hungry for more, but it wasted so much of my time.

[105]I likened these sessions to a warrior sparring with a fellow warrior. [106]I even told the narcissists what I was doing while I was doing it. [107]They would gang up on me and I would ridicule them for needing others to help them. [108]I welcomed it with open arms. [109]Eventually they would leave me alone and go after easier prey, and there I would be waiting. [110]All along the way, those in the community watched me dance with these narcissists. [111]I called it dancing or sparring, and I'd wake up the next morning and request another dance, with respect. [112]We were fellow warriors after all, just on different sides. [113]To them, they fought for their egos while thinking they were undermining my sense of self and self-confidence. [114]They didn't know I was there just to play and sharpen my sword. [115]I was preparing for battle, and I needed to practice. [116]No dummy would do. [117]My dances became entertainment for others. [118]I needed more, I needed master manipulators and a lot of them. [119]If you build it, they will come. [120]Build what? [121]Why, build a grand ballroom, of course. [122]Now, whatever could I mean by that?

Beast Mode:

[123]Well, lookey what we have here. [124]It's the end of the chapter. [125]It's about to get Mad Max up in here. [126]Witness us! [127]Time to shine! ;)

[128]#MUYFURIOSO [129]#LETMESEEYAGRILL [130]#WHOAH-NELLY
[131]#ILIKETHISGUY [132]#WHOSAIDTHAT [133]#ROTFLMFAO
[134]#ISEEYOU [135]#THISISSOMEONESALLTIME-FAVORITEBOOK
[136]#MAKECOUNTERMANIPULATION-GREATAGAIN

CHAPTER 8
DRAGON'S LAIR

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear."
— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Surviving the Game
By Skillet
-
I Don't Need a Hero
by Danz CM
-
Into Free - Dangan-
by B'z

1. Where There Are Whills, There Are Ways

[1]The plan was to free my sons, deliver them to me, raise them in this awareness of narcissistic abuse and trauma recovery, and equip them for their future to be their own trailblazers. [2]While I would be at it, I would attack their mother as if she were a narcissist. [3]I stopped seeing her as a regular human being, for if I did, I would become too merciful. [4]Now that I understood narcissism in order to understand my situation, and then also my sons, I could use it to strategize on how to bring a narcissist to their knees.

> **Beast Mode:**
>
> *[5]"A" narcissist? [6]That's it? [7]Just one, with everything we know now? [8]So hungry. [9]I dunno. [10]I don't think just one is going to do. [11]What would happen if I tasted one? [12]What if it…I mean he or she…tastes good? [14]Once I pop, will I be able to stop? [15]Oh, pop what? Their ego, of course. [16]I wonder how they will act when I take their ego from them and consume it. [17]This world ain't big enough for any ego but mine. [18]But they know that.*
>
> *[19]#LEGGOMYEGO [20]#LETMEOUTALREADY [21]#PRETTYPLEASE [22]#VOLCANOMANCOMETH*

[23]I went forth to create my rules of engagement. [24]I wasn't going up against a regular enemy. [25]This narcissist by the name of Candace also happened to be the mother to my sons. Any attack on her would be seen by my sons as an attack against them and would drive them from me, so that wouldn't do. [26]My attacks on Candace would need to be just as covert as hers had been to me for over a decade. [27]I learned from Candace how to be subtle with punishment. [28]The difference between me and Candace is this, one of us needs supply and validation and the other one does not. [29]One of us fears death, and the other does not. [30]One of us can go into court alone to do battle, and the other one would need an entire cadre of enablers.

[31]I studied the narcissist's playbook further strictly to learn how to destroy them. [32]I wasn't interested in videos that helped to identify the narcissist in my life. [33]I didn't need the videos about how to escape the narcissist, though I enjoyed watching them. [34]It was those videos where I

learned that the way I left Candace crushed her ego completely. [35]If Candace didn't have an entire family of enablers, I believe she'd be dead in a ditch by now. [36]That's how bad I crushed her ego way back when. [37]The ones who love the narcissists the most have the power to destroy them. [38]It's actually quite easy, but we will get there. [39]Keep reading.

[40]Once a prime source of supply abandons the narcissist, it all comes tumbling down. [41]And I didn't just abandon her, I cheated on her long term, and with someone who had a job and that I found much more attractive than Candace. [42]I know this sounds like gloating. The gloating isn't for the cheating. [43]I've already explained how I felt about that. [44]It was just so funny to me that the way I discarded Candace permanently, all of her begging to get me back, even after she discovered that I had another relationship throughout the separation and divorce, I threw her away as if she were nothing.

[45]I was too pissed at Candace back then to care more for her than I did myself. [46]Plus, I was getting my ego massaged by others while I had access to a new circle of friends, which translated to a narcissist's utter loss of control over their prime supply. [47]Candace may have married Michael the people pleaser, but I took a page from her playbook on my way out. I became Michael the Michael pleaser, and that hurt her so deeply. [48]But not because she had feelings for me, it's because I regulated her emotions by being her emotional plaything. [49]My abandonment of Candace is what actually hurt her, hitting her hard in the abandonment fear that all narcissists have. [50]I activated the ultimate feeling of shame within her. [51]My absence translated to Candace feeling completely and absolutely worthless. [52]I didn't feel that way back then, but that's how she took it. [53]I didn't care to correct her when she would make these statements. I was done coddling her ego. [54]I let her stew in her own emotions. [55]She wasn't my problem anymore.

[56]Seeing from these videos on how to destroy a narcissist, I finally saw that I already destroyed Candace long ago. [57]And yet here she was, abusing my sons and trying to isolate them from me and others the whole time. [58]I realized that Candace's attempt to separate me from my sons actually was her revenge. [59]It's all she could do. I was too far away for her to physically reach me. [60]This is why I was so safe being 700 miles away from her. [61]She knew how much I loved my sons, enough to put up

with her abuse of me for several years. [62]She had no clue what she woke up inside of me when Cruz woke me up to who Candace had always been, right under my nose. [63]My beast roared. [64]I had fire in my eyes, with a calm sinister smile. [65]If I was going into battle, and I already knew myself as well as my enemy, I need not fear the end result of one hundred battles. [66]This war would be mine. [67]I won before I even started, and it turned out way better than even I could imagine.

[68]Before I go on, I want to acknowledge something. [69]I had given Candace endless chances while parallel parenting, just like I did when trying to make the marriage work. [70]All efforts and opportunities I gave were like casting pearls to swine to be trampled in the mud. [71]I'm not saying Candace was a pig, but she was not worth my pearls. [72]I see that now. [73]I see a lot of things. [74]When one has eyes to see, much is made clear.

2. Cut the Supply Lines

[1]I had soaked up the majority of everything I possibly could regarding being able to identify narcissists. [2]I had looked at enough videos on healing, but I had already started healing once I left Candace. [3]After Candace, I only had one narcissist to deal with, and I left my indelible mark on her too. [4]Healing was done long ago. [5]I didn't even realize I had done my own healing work. [6]Turns out, I just needed to get rid of every single one of them that tried to latch onto me. [7]I even got rid of the people who allied themselves with those narcissists. [8]My inner circle got smaller, but more solid.

[9]According to The Art of War, my first order of business for taking down my enemy was infiltrating her supply lines. [10]Who were her strongest supply lines? [11]Well, that would be every member of her household. [12]I ruminated on how to best accomplish this. [14]Although my goal was to spend more time with my sons, I truly wanted full custody of them. [15]We only would have a couple years together before they would most likely go off to college or leave home. [16]This would be my one and only chance to have some kind of life with my sons. [17]That said, I also knew that separating my sons from Candace would hurt her deeply due to the loss of supply.

[18]Oh well. [19]I guess she should've changed into a better person when she had the chance. [20]She made her choice to become my enemy. [21]It's what she wanted. [22]Now she can tell the world what it feels like to have someone like me as an enemy. [23]Brace that victim mentality all the way into the grave

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[24]"Do you guys see this? [25]He's the one with the inflated ego. [26]Such black and white thinking. [27]He's so judgmental and a very disturbed human being. [28]I feel sorry for him. [29]Why doesn't he just fight for his kids instead of making this so personal? [30]Healed?!? [31]Yeah, right. [32]He is so beyond wounded. [33]Tell me you guys can see this?"

Beast Mode:

[34]Hey! Narc narc!

[35]Who's there?

[36]Try!

[37]Try who?

[38]Triangulation!

[39]Do you see how Mr. Narcinson brought you into the conversation? [40]He triangulated you. [41]That's right. [42]He tried to get you to enable him so that you both could invalidate me together. [43]He did that because he knows he can't touch me. [44]They always go to their narc friends or enabling co-dependents for help when you hand them their ass with raw truth one too many times. [45]Now you know. [46]What he was really looking for from you, dear reader, was that you'd coddle his fragile ego. [47]I bruised it so many times using him as an example to show you how he operates. [48]He HATES when I do that. [49]Wanna know something else? [50]He's reading this too. [51]He won't respond because he knows I won. [52]His skin feels like it is on fire. [53]My words burn as they cut. [54]And yes, he knows I'm actually taunting him. [55]And he's scared that I know about the burning sensation on his skin. [56]He doesn't understand how I know exactly what he's feeling and thinking. [57]I'm inside his head now. [58]He knows that my self-confidence cannot be broken. [59]And now he's wondering just who the fuck I am. [60]He's never met anyone like me before.

[61]So, what's a narcissist to do here? [62]Actually, what he's going to do is take it out on his family when he gets home. That's right! [63]These narcissists get their asses handed to them all the time. [64]When they can't fire back, and there's several reasons why they will not, they just abuse those that will allow it. [65]There are such things as toxic codependents, people who are so desperate for love and too blind to notice that they are being severely psychologically abused. [66]You can find those abused people as members within their very household, their own young children and spouse. [67]Oops!!! Did I let the cat out of the bag? [68]That's right! [69]Meeeeeooooooww. [70]The funny thing is Mr. Narcinson's whole family is reading this book right now too. [71]He might not want to go back home. [72]He may want to find a hole in the ground to hide in. [73]Soon, all will see him for who he truly is. [74]:yawns: [75]They all will.

[76]#FELIXSAYSHI [77]#LIONSAREBIGGATOS
[78]#FINDTHESCAPEGOATFINDTHETOXICFAMILY
[79]#FREETHESCAPEGOATEXPOSETHETOXICFAMILY [80]#IAM-COMINGTOSHATTEREMPTYVESSELS [81]#YALLPISSED-OFFTHEWRONGONE [82]#TOTHEVICTORGOESTHESPOILS

[83]So, once my sons would be secured, Candace would be devastated from her loss in court and exposure in the psychological evaluator's report that she knew was in my hands just as much as it was in hers. [84]But this would not be enough. Not for me. [85]No, I wanted to write a book about the court battle in order to expose her even more. [86]I wanted her utterly shattered. [87]I wanted to see what would happen if you took one narcissist and crucify them just as they did to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the entire world to see. [88]Why not? [89]The whole world can watch now, unlike 2000 years ago.

[90]Now, I could have the entire world watch as I grind Candace down into nothing. [91]Her family would see her for who she was and see themselves for who they were. [92]I did enough research to know that exposing a narcissist on a large enough scale would obliterate their household. [93]People would come out of the woodwork to expose even more dirt and cause more narcissistic injury to an already mortified and collapsed narcissist. [94]I chose Candace to be this narcissist. [95]Who better to expose than a covert self-righteous narcissist, a perfect example of the Pharisees that publicly ridiculed and nailed my Lord on that cross. [96]Now I could

do the same but only everyone on the planet would be part of it. [97]Even narcissists are known to jump in on the bashing of other exposed narcissists out of fear of their own exposure. [98]You heard me right. [99]You'll see.

[100]I knew people would say that I'm a monster for doing this. Yeah. They can think it, and they can believe it, just like you can. [101]Maybe I truly am a monster, but…being this kind of monster feels real good. [102]It feels right. [103]It's worth living for and worth dying for. [104]This is who I am. [105]I've accepted and embraced myself. [106]I like being me. [107]Can I get shit done or what!?! [108]Can I drive a stake through the heart of my enemies, or what?!? [109]Are you not entertained? [110]I am. [111]I just may die laughing. [112]"Vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord", I would repeatedly think to myself. [113]Just because I could bring a narcissist to their knees and destroy them in front of the world, and show the world just how I did it, didn't mean I had to do it. [114]I thought to myself that I would try to keep myself in check. [115]Maybe Candace would have a change of heart and let me spend time with my sons. [116]I felt like the time I had already given her was me being merciful. [117]Was I not merciful enough? [118]I read my message to the entire family and still was met with disbelief and accusations. [119]Was that not merciful enough of me, knowing that I had the ability to shred Candace with my knowledge? [120]I would remain merciful for some time while I waited to see how Candace would respond to each move I would make. [121]In the meanwhile, I continued strategizing.

[122]I was aware that if a narcissist gets their power from those they are connected with, then I must erode those connections. [123]But I wouldn't be able to do it directly, because then I would be the one isolating my sons from their mother. [124]I needed Candace to be the one to do it to herself. [125]All I needed to do was drive fear and uncertainty into her. [126]I thought that my pressure would lead her to demonstrate to my sons the pathologies that were mentioned in those Dr. Ramani videos. [127]They needed to see it with their own eyes. [128]Now that my sons had a very basic idea of narcissistic abuse, they could now observe. [129]I had faith that they would eventually see things for exactly the way they truly were.

[130]I didn't waste too much time ruminating about the situation as I knew I would only need to do about 5-10% of the work and let Candace handle

the rest on her own. [131]This is how I used her against herself. [132]Every lie she told about me is laid to rest with all the proof I've held on to, her very words in her writing. [133]While the lies are laid to rest, everyone who both knows her and reads this book will also see how they got played themselves. [134]This should result in a bruising of their ego and feeling of betrayal and the knowledge that many of them were manipulated and triangulated themselves by Candace. [135]This would result in more bonds being broken leaving Candace with decreased supply lines. [136]The narcissistic script would require Candace to dump her shame and anger onto anyone left in her supply cabinet who would take it. [137]I believed this would lead to her putting an enormous amount of stress on the existing relationships which would eventually push them far enough to reduce their interaction with her. [138]She would never realize that the loss of her supply was completely by my design and her own doing. [139]I wanted to tell her to just surrender to me. [140]I wanted to tell her that I knew her disorder and that she had no hope, and that the more she fought, the more she would drive my sons away from her and right into my arms. [141]But, because of her disorder, I knew it was best to say nothing at all.

[142]I relished that I had the power to make Candace's greatest fears into reality through my will alone. [143]I did feel grandiose. [144]I would've never even cared had I not had children with her. [145]I would've left her in my past like all those other narcissists before and since. [146]Even in the awareness, I would just believe I dodged a bullet and that's about it. [147]But this was not to be. [148]I was meant to go through these trials. [149]I was meant to be pushed to my erupting point. [150]I was meant for the field of battle. [151]I was meant to be victorious. [152]I felt the intention from God that He chose me to come into this point in time. [153]He gave me a story for the ages. [154]But I still had to finish living it, and man, would it get difficult so many times. [155]But my hope and my faith never waned. [156]As a matter of fact, this whole ordeal boosted my faith into the stratosphere. [157]I rarely made posts about Jesus Christ before this. [158]I'm not ashamed to say that. [159]It's just not something I did as a luke-warm Christian. [160]I believed in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, but I was also respectful to the beliefs of others. [161]I still am. [162]We get to believe whatever we want to believe. [163]Now, I make that statement in a world and time where many can believe whatever they want. [164]You can't call me delusional in a time

when delusions are the latest fad. [165]People who are in cults have a shared reality. It's real to them. But to the outside world, they will be called brainwashed. [166]Every narcissist is a cult of one. [167]Don't tell them they are delusional though. [168]*Shhhhhh*. [169]They don't like that. [170]You can't tell the truth to a narcissist if the truth does not serve their entitled asses.

[171]Sometimes I would daydream. [172]I imagined how intoxicating it would be to witness Candace's downfall. [173]I felt like I was Popeye, beaten and battered by my arch-enemy Bluto, and about to open up my can of spinach. [174]I imagined a narcissistic world under the threat of exposure once and for all time. [175]I loved knowing that my book would be responsible for it. [176]I wanted to advertise to all narcissists that it was one of their own that woke the beast within me. [177]Narcissists love to play the victim. [178]But they would not be able to point their finger at me. [179]Do you wonder how I can say that? [180]I know narcissists. [181]They wouldn't dare blame me for their woes. [182]They all know better, or at least they will by the time they finish reading. [183]I love that all narcissists who read this book know I'm speaking about them. [184]Don't think so? [185]The ones who didn't already know they were a narcissist became self-aware in chapter six. [186]So, if you are reading this with a partner, why don't you give them a nice long emotionless stare into their eyes. [187]Hopefully, if you picked a partner, you picked right. [188]For a narcissist to read my book in its entirety is absolute torture. [189]But if they want to see what it says and see how far I've gone to expose them in ways never done before, they are going to have to suffer through it. [190]I knew what I was doing when I wrote this. [191]Come on, you know I have this dark side. [192]Now it's just for them. [193]They like to play games with people, and now I can too. [194]My games don't have winners. [195]If you play, you lose. [196]Sounds familiar? [197]You'd be surprised how easy it is to get a narcissist to play your game. [198]They think they are so smart. [199]I love that.

Beast Mode:

[200]You can't beat the game master. [201]Who else can design games that expose narcissists in front of the entire world? [202]I've got so many fun ideas. [203]I will be their fear forever and ever. [204]I'm gonna make each one of them famous. [205]That's

what they want, to be the center of everyone's attention. [206]They will have the spotlight on them at full strength. [207]Lol. [208]You'll see. [209]Each day will bring with it a narcissist we will fully expose. [210]I know how. [211]Every day will be a new nightmare for them, and entertainment for us. [212]ROTFLMFAO. [213]This is what they get. [214]All we have to do is watch. [215]Woot woot.

[216]Sorry, Elon, but I'm actually the best player of games. ;) [217]You can be my player 2 though. [218]How about some co-op? [219]Better yet, how about some multiplayer? [220]You got the gaming platform for it. [221]What say you, kind sir? [222]Shall we play a game with these fools?

[223]#TWITTERNAMECHANGE [224]#THEREALREASONITS-NAMEISX [225]#ILIKETOWATCH [226]#BETTERTHANDIABLOIV

3. Feeding My Beast

[1]As I was on the search for a lawyer, I imagined what would happen if I would actually write a book. [2]The hate mail, the trolls bashing, every negative thing said about me or to me will simply fuel me as it informs me that I have truly inflicted a spiritual blow against he who pulls all these narcissistic puppet strings. [3]I'm not some mastermind, I just saw a pattern and trusted in God to involve me in His plan. [4]I played a lot of this by ear with the understanding that I would be victorious by holding my ground and not reacting in anger throughout the battle to come. [5]I knew my reward for persevering would be a future with my sons beyond anything I could have ever imagined. [6]I would be blessed all along the way of this battle, and I would come to realize these blessings and all those that led up to it. [7]In the meantime I'd need to be cautious of what I was feeding my beast. [8]Because, as my awareness increased, I wanted that same sweet, sweet negative energy that narcissists crave when positive energy is not available. [9]But I did not want it from those with empathy. [10]I wanted that potent negative energy that only narcissists had. [11]I didn't understand why at the time. [12]My beast wanted to get high on negative supply, but the time wasn't right.

[14]I had solid friends and family rooting for me and helping me any way they could. [15]I was blessed with the knowledge of this plague upon humanity that so many others have woken up to before me. [16]And those very people blessed me by sharing their knowledge and experience, as

well as content creators on various social channels. [17]With all these blessings it was only natural for me to use my experience as well by writing this book and sharing it with you, dear reader. [18]But I also know that the minions of my enemy are also reading this book. [19]This book is read through one of two lenses. [20]You cannot read it with both, as you either have one or the other. [21]Even I only have one. [22]But I have taught myself how to mimic the other lens. [23]I am teaching you too. [24]We already started. [25]Unfortunately, those with the opposite lens, already know how to emulate ours. [26]That's how they were able to fool us for thousands of years. [27]But that changes with this book. [28]It's time to earn those snake eyes. [29]Don't worry, they aren't physical eyes, although it sounds cool. [30]I'd rather have glowing eyes if you ask me, as I'm not a fan of scales.

[31]There are many reasons for me writing this book. [32]The ultimate reason is achieving absolute victory in battle, which I can achieve from beyond the grave if need be. [33]I can't afford to fear death, and I'm good at planting seeds that never stop growing. [34]Whether I live or die, that will pale in comparison to the impact that the existence of this book will have. [35]You see, these narcissists, every single one of them, all run on a script. They can all be predicted. [36]Look for the ones who must have control and must punish those who think for themselves. [37]I will say this. [38]The greater my suffering in His name, and if I am to die in His name, my treasures (whatever those are) will only be magnified. So, I don't fear this stuff. I don't welcome it either. [39]I used to prefer to live or return to a life of peace, but now I want something different. [40]I don't want what I had before. [41]I want more, and I shall have it when this life is over. [42]But while I'm here, I have a different motive, a new radical direction, one that works in harmony with what the narcissists want. [43]They want to do battle, and I was made for it. [44]Every day that I suffer in His name, there is abundant good that comes with it. [45]This is my sacrifice or gift to He who created me. [46]I will present one of the heads of these damned beasts in my grip and raise it to Him as an offering, and in gratitude for His many blessings. [47]I do want the glory this affords me in Heaven. [48]I am a warrior. [49]I did suffer greatly for it and no doubt will suffer more after. [50]I am ready for all of it. [51]My day of rest will someday come, but until then, I'm gonna enjoy this art of livin', as a warrior for all time.

[52]I planned to triumph over my foe who had tormented me for decades. [53]When I decided to fight against Candace, I knew exactly what I was getting myself into. [54]I knew exactly who I was truly going up against. [55]The time had come. [56]I was made aware of my children's suffering. [57]I saw my own role play its part in their suffering. [58]I enabled their mother's behavior right in front of them by staying married to her and trying to make the marriage work for so long. [59]I was able to see how Candace's narrative of me was a father who abandoned both my sons and their mother. [60]I was able to understand how that narrative fed itself. [61]To my sons, I acted distant from their mother throughout the 2.5-year separation and post divorce. [62]Of course, that would hurt their feelings and hamper trust. [63]I understood. [64]They, with their mother's poisonous words against me, had little trust in me and my capabilities as a father beyond my visits and phone calls. [65]This was my struggle.

[66]I had to appear small and distant so their mother wouldn't get in the way of my visits. [67]This reminded me of how I had to be in order to make the relationship work while married to Candace, by being small and distant. [68]This worked for a decade, but I noticed troubles in my sons. [69]I attributed it to the belief that everyone is different and faces their challenges in their own way. [70]But what I didn't know then, about narcissists and toxic family dynamics, was that the household and people who have access to the children there can become sources of everyone's trauma. [71]Trauma isn't something you can just find within yourself and toss away. [72]It requires serious work. [73]There's no pill you can take, and no one can do it for you. [74]Our trauma is not ours, but only we can release it.

[75]The best way I have found to heal my trauma has been clearing off that altar in my mind dedicated to whom I've placed on the pedestal of my mind, taking the abuser off that pedestal, that life I hoped to have with them, and ensuring that love itself is there instead. [76]I say "love", and that can mean source, God, Jesus Christ, and more names for the same thing, the same person, our beloved creator who is love itself. [777]Jesus was sent as a symbol to us of God's love for all and his blood is there for us to wash our robes in and purify them in. [78]But it is us, at the individual level, that must make the choice to accept that kind of love. [79]For with a love like this, accepting it means to accept the shame of sin. [80]That shame will remind you of the direction you are traveling between the

light and the dark. [81]Narcissists absolutely hate shame, so for them to truly accept Jesus, they would first have to die an ego death like never before. [82]The Bible says that the majority of them won't turn to God in the end times. [83]It's a good thing we have all the time in the world, right? [84]Right…

Beast Mode:

[85]…

[86]*#TIME* [87]*#TIMES* [88]*#HALFATIME*

4. Gamer 4 Life

[1]In the world of video games, the enemy's points of weakness would glow red, or you notice the health bar of the enemy going down faster when you strike a certain spot. [2]Either way, in almost every case, the weakness becomes apparent once you find it, if even simply by chance. [3]The indicators of impact themselves are a helpful tool to guide the following volley. [4]Unlike games, in reality we need to create our own indicators for every toxic person we choose to interact with. [5]Yes, I said "choose". [6]We have the choice to interact with these fools. [7]Let's not lead ourselves astray to believe otherwise. [8]Their indicators of impact are their reactions to the narcissistic injuries we inflict. [9]It's just like a game when you truly think about it.

[10]Games make life fun. [11]We love playing games together, even the narcissists love games. [12]In today's day and age, we care so much about immersion. [14]We certainly have the tools to be able to provide levels of immersion that were only in our dreams 30 years ago. [15]If we are God's creation, and we have the likeness of God, does that mean God is also a gamer? [16]Are we simply God's art imitating Him? [17]I don't mean that in any sense of blasphemy, but as a sense of flattery. [18]Game developers pour their hearts and souls into bringing us an unforgettable and complete adventure. [19]These games, and their stories, become part of our identities in some way. In them, I can see messages from the divine. I see parables. I see life.

[20]I'd imagine that God has to be a game designer if His own creation does the same. [21]Game design is the epitome of creation. [22]You create not

just the environment, but the laws and limitations of that environment. [23]I don't claim to understand God like that, but I see Him in games, movies, and other people. [24]I see the majesty that is His creation. [25]I feel like I can almost see some parts of His design. [26]I see my book, and I know where it's taking me. [27]I can feel where it's taking me. [28]It's the ultimate adventure, a game of all games. [29]We are already victorious; we just have to play it ourselves and give it our all. [30]The rest will be an immersion like never before in the history of mankind. [31]How do I know? [32]I saw the game, I've beta-tested it in a controlled setting, and now I'm sharing it.

[33]The game has always been in play since the beginning. [34]We just needed to wait for the right peripheral devices, the internet and social media, to mature a little. [35]The game is now set and ready for all to enjoy and play. [36]Was this God's plan all along? [37]Did He know that I would write this book? [38]Of course, He did. [39]God has us in His Klein bottle. [40]He can see forwards and backwards. [41]He knew us before we knew ourselves. [42]Just like pieces on a chess board, I believe we have all been placed on the chessboard of time. [43]It is us who move ourselves around the board. [44]We have free will until our end. [45]Some squares on the board offer pleasantries, traps in disguise, to entice and hold on to your piece. [46]Those squares are the most difficult to move away from. [47]Some people leave their piece on certain squares, because they have found wealth there. [48]To advance spiritually may require moving away from that square and losing all the wealth amassed and the power and liberties that come with it. [49]Many stop on these comfy squares, and their piece moves no more. [50]They don't explore the rest of the board because they have either achieved their goal or found comfort in what was supposed to be just a pit stop. [51]What happens when the pawn reaches the other side of the chessboard?

5. Fun With A.I. - My Intro to the Dragon's Lair

[1]I bet A.I., ChatGPT, or whatever else ever comes, could never write a book like mine. [2]That said, I wanted to test it out to see if I could give A.I. a chance to give this chapter a worthy visual. [3]It's not bad at describing

visuals. [4]I kind of wish I gave it a shot myself first, so that I could compare the two. [5]Oh well, here we go.

[6]In the heart of a dense and eerie forest, one can behold a valiant knight clad in gleaming, silver armor. The knight's sturdy armor reflects the hues of sunlight that manage to penetrate the canopy of towering trees overhead. Determinedly, the knight marches forward, navigating through a labyrinth of menacing and treacherous black thorns that reach skyward, their barbs ominously tipped in vivid shades of crimson red as if they were poisonous.

As the knight forges ahead, a hauntingly enormous cave looms ominously in the distance. Its mouth, dark and foreboding, contrasts against the ethereal glow emanating from within. Above the cave, the figure of a monstrous dragon effortlessly soars, its wings outstretched, casting an intimidating silhouette against the dusky sky.

[7]It was Joseph Campbell who stated that the cave you fear most holds the treasure you seek. [8]I spent a lot of time with Joseph, Carl Jung, and Jordan Peterson over the past couple years. [9]Now, obviously, I don't mean in person. [10]I became their apprentices by going through their materials and absorbing what I could. [11]The image of going into the cave you fear most for the greatest treasure allured me as a visual for this chapter. [12]Jordan Peterson would go into this in detail in one of his lectures. [14]I found it fascinating and very timely considering my situation with my sons. [15]I don't see how I would've been able to write a book like this if it were not for all those who came before me and helped to pave my way with the inspiration I derived from them.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[16]"Wow, so this privileged white dude wrote a book claiming inspiration from other privileged white dudes. [17]Typical. [18]No women? [19]No people of color? [20]Someone needs to get woke. [21]Just sayin'."

Beast Mode:

[x22]We are just going to keep ignoring this fool with a crown for now. [x23]If you've read this far, then you know that I have indeed introduced people of color and the opposite gender. [x24]Of course, all the people I mention in this book, all of the

music selections I mention, I did not consider any kind of fairness and diversity and inclusion. [x25]I don't have to. [x26]I'm not going to force myself to research someone, just to check a box on someone else's fucking list.

[x27]Now, what do you suppose would happen if I tried to say that to the fool with the crown? [x28]Hmm, fuck it. [x29]Let's rewind and see. [x30]Oh, you didn't know I have a time machine? [x31]I in fact do. [x32]Let's try it again. [x33]Now, where's that car of mine?

[x34]#OUTTATIME [x35]#88MPH [x36]#1POINT21GIGAWATTS [x37]#REWIND30SECS

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[16]"Wow, so this privileged white dude wrote a book claiming inspiration from other privileged white dudes. [17]Typical. [18]No women? [19]No people of color? [20]Someone needs to get woke. [21]Just sayin'."

Beast Mode:

[22]Yo, did you not see the rest of my book? [23]I did mention women and people of color and other underrepresented groups. [24]And you do realize I'm Latino, right?

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[25]"You only did that because you don't want to be seen as the racist you truly are. [26]By the way, at least one of the songs you've used so far, or stolen, has the "N" word in it. [27]Just sayin'. [28]It's obvious to me, and soon all of them will see you for the white supremacist you truly are."

Beast Mode:

[29]And there you have it, folks. [30]There's no point going back and forth with them. [31]They just want you to keep talking and get mad at them. [32]They love that sweet negative energy. [33]It makes them feel special, and that they are important enough to stay engaged with. [34]Awwwww. [35]Not no mo! [36]LMAO

[37]The ones you let push your buttons will show you who you've handed your controller to. [38]Oh, you like that line, do you? [39]Imagine saying that one hundred years ago. [40]It would've made zero sense.

[41]You know…there's a quote I love from yet another privileged white person. [42]"Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people" is a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt. [43]Now, pardon me as I laugh at being called a racist.

[44]#NIGGAPLEASE [45]#HARDEEHARHAR [46]#THATISALL

6. The Legend that is Hideo Kojima

[1]Japanese video game designer Hideo Kojima created some very memorable games that I've enjoyed over the years, ever since my time spent playing Metal Gear Solid on the Sony PlayStation. [2]His ability to craft unique stories that resonate with the player never disappoints. [3]In fact, it's mind-blowing. [4]For the first time, I played a game that felt like a movie. [5]The magic of cinema merged with the magic of video games and created something very special. [6]Was he the first? I don't know, but this is the first that I remember because of its impact.

[7]Kojima-san has said that being a father didn't make him scared, it made him brave. [8]I get it; only now do I see that fatherhood has made me brave as well. [9]It's why I do what I do now. [10]It's why I fight. It's a battle I have taken on that will last until my last breath. [11]Now that I'm awake and healed, I can bring awareness and healing to others. [12]There are many parents who struggle with parallel parenting with a narcissist who has custody. [13]But if we knew, if we truly knew, the damage these people do to their own children, I'm guessing many would stand up and fight for parental rights.

7. Psycho Mantis

[1]I mentioned Hideo Kojima. Now, I introduce you to one of his most amazing creations, the character of Psycho Mantis from his game Metal Gear Solid. [2]Psycho Mantis is a villain and is one of the most compelling video game characters in the history of video games in my opinion. [3]He is able to warp reality, as in break the fourth wall. [4]He is the first character in history I believe to do so. [5]He reads your memory and understands you via the memory card you would have slotted in the original

PlayStation console. [6]This is meant to let you know you are entangled with a serious opponent unbound by the laws of what used to be the gamer's reality.

[7]Psycho Mantis is able to reach out and touch you, making your hands tremble, or move the controller with his mind. [8]How does this happen? [9]What kind of 1990's video game could break the fourth wall like this? [10]The answer lies in the programming that goes beyond the game and affects the system in which the game is played on. [11]You'd also have to own the very first Dual Shock controller that came out right before the game of Metal Gear Solid.

[12]If you played the game cautiously, or if you set off alarms left and right, whatever the case, the game has been watching you as you play it. [13]The game is tracking everything. [14]Psycho Mantis was programmed to be able to read the in-game player statistics, and he remarked on my specific play style. [15]I can tell you all now that I play games like that very cautiously. [16]I want to get in, get the thing, and get out, just like a thief in the night. [17]I prefer to leave no evidence I was ever there. [18]Here was Psycho Mantis, and for the first time ever, a character in a game who saw the player in me.

[19]Psycho Mantis could even manipulate your eyes by making the screen go black as if the TV channel was changed. [20]He was also able to read your controller input so he cannot be successfully attacked. [21]Every attack is avoided without effort. [22]The more you play with him, the more you lose. [23]He siphons your time and energy in reality until you can figure out his game. [24]Did he truly do that? [25]It's true from a certain point of view. [26]Psycho Mantis will keep you in a loop until you figure out how to hurt him. [27]Repeating the same thing would just lead to your insanity and maybe even the rage quit. [28]But this was a game that demanded more than inside-the-box thinking. [29]Yes, that was a pun for Metal Gear fans. [30]The only one way to beat him is to break the loop. [31]You have to change the game. [32]Player 2 to the rescue! [33]Now, how can Player 2 come to the rescue if this is a single-player experience?

[34]I remember thinking to myself back then how insanely witty this game design was. Since Psycho Mantis could read every move of my controller, I tried plugging it into the second port instead. [35]By doing something in

reality, you affect what happens in the game. [36]Psycho Mantis isn't prepared for a second player in a single-player game. [37]Psycho Mantis was, by design, never programmed or scripted to read anything but the first controller port input. [38]He makes a comment that validates that switching ports did the trick. [39]And with that, your battle is equalized.

[40]I want to take a moment to add one more thing about Kojima-san. [41]Game masters recognize game masters. [42]I love his Beauty and the Beast unit from Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots. [43]He created a villain unit of characters who have severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). [44]The unit weaponizes their PTSD. [45]If only we knew how to weaponize CPTSD. [46]I guess trying to do that would be a bit more… Complex.

8. Yo, I'll Solve It

[1]I've got issues, serious, serious issues. [2]It's almost like people don't want to see narcissism or the effects of its abuse. [3]It pisses me the fuck off, but I get it. [4]That was me once too. [5]If I can wake up to what this is, someone with no credentials or anything, how is it this isn't a topic in schools, religions, politics, the daily news, and not just the not-so-public institution of psychology? [6]How come we aren't addressing narcissism within the ranks of public trust positions? [7]Film has been doing it for about 100 years. [8]Stories about narcissism go back to the beginning of time. [9]Yet here we are. [10]Why? [11]We have a name for it.

[12]Once upon a time, we used the word "evil" to describe the people who exhibited severe narcissistic tendencies. [14]Now, we call that "black and white thinking". [15]Now, what we once called "evil" is considered a mental disorder. [16]When you hear about someone with a mental disorder, what emotion does that invoke within you? [17]What if you found out that someone you loved was "suffering" from a mental disorder? [18]Do you even know what a mental disorder is? [19]If you have the ability to read, I suggest learning about this stuff and coming to your own conclusions. [20]There are no cures for mental disorders. [21]Remember that.

[22]The problem with where things stand right now in child protective services, therapy, domestic abuse hotlines, and the legal systems, is there

isn't anything reliable for these victims to lean on. [23]Many of these systems are not equipped to handle understanding the disorder called NPD. [24]They need to bring in specialists, at immense cost to the victim in the form of legal fees, and even then, it's no guarantee that they can help. [25]Before specialists can get involved, a lot has to take place first in court. [26]Using my case to illustrate my own journey through it, I hope to shed light on what happens when you do battle with a narcissist, and how I designed the victory of victories.

[27]While going through numerous content creators on the topic of court battles with narcissists, I came across many, but two of these creators stood out to me as the most helpful in this area. They are Rebecca Zung and Judge Anthony. [28]I knew from their content that I was going to be going into an uphill battle that would make things worse for me and my sons, that would take several months, that would involve multiple people like a child representative or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) and involve a psychological evaluation. [29]I also knew that it would become quite costly.

[30]I welcome you on my journey through all of it. [31]I hold nothing back while I give you the full account over the next few chapters. [32]I debated with myself about including the court transcripts for full transparency. [33]I'm choosing not to for now. [34]I can't give away all my ammunition. [35]Why is that? [36]Because my battle isn't over yet. [37]My chess pieces are still in play, even post-custody. [38]I told you; I like playing games. [39]It ends when I say it ends. [40]Yeah, I understand how I come across. [41]I'm ok with it.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[42]"He's one of us, and he has no fucking clue. LMAO [43]That narc ex of his made him go cuckoo. LMAO. [44]She broke him. LMAO"

[45]"#ONEOFUS"

Beast Mode:

[46]You know what's sad? [47]When you can pretend to be a narcissist way better than any of them can live it. [48]Oh, that's right. [49]Medusa don't like it when you keep reflecting her ugly ass back into her face.

[50]#MIRRORMIRRORINTHESTALL [51]#NOTMUCHLONGER-TILTHEYFALL

[52]While still on the journey to understanding more on the topic of narcissism and narcissistic abuse and the journey to trauma recovery, I took time to disconnect from that hard-hitting content for the sake of my mental well-being. [53]I found motivational speaking and mediation with Eddie Pinero, mixed with the hard-hitting truths of Dr. Jordan Peterson, to be the escape I needed into another part of myself that needed reinforcement.

[54]Jordan Peterson talks about the hero's journey and how facing what we fear most holds the deepest rewards. [55]I posed the question to myself, "Was I afraid of Candace?". [56]No. [57]But I was afraid of the cost to do battle. [58]I was afraid of what the situation with my sons would be like if I pursued better visitation rights. [59]I knew challenging Candace would come at great cost. [60]She had a family of enablers to back her, with their own networks and law enforcement connections. [61]I feared all those things. [62]I felt powerless to go into battle, that it might not be worth it. [63]But what I feared more than anything was what would happen to my sons if I did not get involved, and soon. [64]This was a different kind of fear, the fear of the results of my inaction.

[65]Fear was one of my favorite topics of Dr. Peterson's. [66]He mentions in one of his talks that fear can be an incredible motivator. [67]I decided that my fear of what would happen to my sons would need to be what would drive me. [68]The mere act of fighting for my sons would show them how important they were to me whether I would win or lose in court. [69]I looked at the worst-case scenario, my sons would know beyond a shadow of any doubt that I take the role of being their father seriously. [70]Whatever they once thought of me, while I was pretending to be small for Candace, would be replaced with this new more accurate image of me. [71]I was also starting to see myself as this image of a father who fights, who protects, and who nurtures. [72]This was the me I've always wanted to be since before I had children.

9. What if…?

[1]I imagined what life for Cruz would be like if I did nothing. [2]Candace was on a mission to prove that Cruz was suffering from mental illness or a disorder. [3]In Cruz's world, he was alone with no one to understand him. [4]He didn't even know how to interpret his own situation. [5]I knew this because I was there once myself. [6]I felt like Cruz was about to embark on a journey of more pain and suffering once he would be allowed to leave his home. [7]Candace would become relentless in her pursuit of finding or creating documentation that would prove that Cruz was the disordered one, and not herself. [8]If she could take his basic human rights and leave him stuck in the house with her, I believe she would do so. [9]It was this belief that sprung me into action. [10]Would that have happened had I not stepped up? [11]I will never know. [12]But I've learned to trust my gut on these things. I learned, because of all the times I got burned for not trusting my gut.

[14]As I learned more and more about narcissism, I received new meaning from so many songs I've heard throughout my life. [15]Once I listened to them through the lens of narcissistic abuse and family dynamics, I could hear and see the scapegoats of the world singing their pain and suffering. [16]My favorite songs just happened to be ones where the scapegoat triumphed. [17]With no other words to describe that they were enmeshed in a toxic relationship with a narcissist, I gathered pathologies from the lyrics. [18]I heard the song Boulevard of Broken Dreams performed by the band Green Day and I thought of Cruz. [19]Could this be his song? [20]I'd be damned if I would let my son feel like he was alone in his feelings and emotions, or alone in this world.

[21]For Caleb, who I saw fulfilling the role of golden child within the toxic family dynamic, I had a different type of concern as equally as complex. [22]Caleb had his own interests, but he would consistently divulge some information to Candace over the years. [23]Whether this was voluntary or solicited by his mother, I don't know. [24]Whether he was rewarded in any way by giving his mother information I also do not know. [25]But I did know that the golden child buries the self in order to become the extension of the narcissistic parent. [26]I did test my sons on what kind of information they would share over the years. [27]I was careful with what I shared. [28]I could tell what was shared based on Candace's emails to me

after I dropped them off. [29]This is how I knew how deep in Candace's pockets my sons were. [30]I had to tread carefully lest I begin to look like the bad guy to both my sons. [31]If they could no longer trust me, they would go all in trusting their mother. [32]I'd be damned if I let that happen.

[33]I can't control whether someone trusts me or not, nor should I want to. [34]What I can control is how I make my approach and put the thought and strategy behind it. [35]I have to be able to put myself into the shoes of both my sons. [36]For putting myself in Cruz's shoes, this was easy for me. [37]I could easily recall how Candace had treated me during the marriage, and it was the exact same. [38]For Caleb, I had difficulty putting myself in his shoes, so I just tried to imagine what I would be like if I trusted a pathological liar my entire life. [39]Obedience would hold more value to me than love. How would I be able to help Caleb? [40]All I could do was pray and keep showing up for my sons.

[41]Being the family scapegoat is a very painful experience that is meant to be lifelong. [42]But, if the scapegoat can manage to get the right kind of help, it plays a vital role in recovery. [43]Understanding the toxic family dynamic must be mind-blowing to the newly awakened scapegoat. [44]Not every therapist can get that far with a client. [45]The scapegoat, as long as they are emotionally attached to the toxic family, will never be able to exist in any other role. [46]It's them playing that role that brings the family some stability. [47]It just comes at the cost of making one child the source of the family's problems, even though the child's behavior is a result of their role, and not a result of who they truly are. [48]With the golden child, their pain is buried along with their true self, before that self even has a chance to truly develop.

[49]I imagined Caleb's destiny to be a lifelong companion, and extension, to his mother. [50]I pictured them going on dates almost as if he were a surrogate husband. [51]This incest-like behavior between the narcissistic mother and golden child son seemed to be a common theme in my studies of narcissism and related family dynamics. [52]It was amazing to me how textbook my son's situation was and the Sanders household dynamic to that of the narcissistic household. [53]Because I believe Candace's mother is also a narcissist, I could see how toxic two narcissists can be when controlling a household. [54]Of course, they would want to control my sons. [55]Homeschooling gives full control to the home-

schooler, who can turn assignments into more opportunities to derive narcissistic supply. [46]Now, how can I say that, as I was never homeschooled? [47]I bet you a ton of stories are going to publish about abusive homeschooling parents after this book publishes. [48]How can I be so confident in making that statement?

[49]The thought of Caleb living as an extension of his mother made me sick to my stomach. [50]It's as if she didn't care about him having his own life. [51]Of course, Candace would think that Caleb was doing just fine. He was afraid to voice his true feelings to her. [52]He shared this with me later, but it explains so much. [53]It validates how the role of golden child isn't as glamorous as it sounds. [54]The mental toll it was taking on Caleb may have played a role in his autoimmune disease that had shown up a few years prior. [55]I learned that stress and anxiety can compromise the body's immune system. [56]Was this the case for Caleb or was it merely coincidence? [57]These types of diseases are considered unexplainable. [58]We wouldn't dare want to make the link between abuse that many households experience, and the medical conditions of the co-dependent members of that family. [59]If we did, what would that mean? [60]I wonder how many people came before me saying this exact same thing from within those institutions of treatment and psychology. [61]Wouldn't the pharmaceutical companies have data to support or deny this? [62]It makes you think, right? [63]Thinking will get you into a lot of trouble if it threatens the control of someone, or an institution, that employs those same narcissistic manipulation tactics.

Beast Mode:

[64]*Hmmmmm. Hmmmmm, indeed.*

[65]*#MABRAINWERKSGUD* [66]*#AHYEUCK*

[67]If a person has to actively bury themselves within their minds, maybe it comes with the cost of suppressing one's own immune system. [68]It's unfair to me that the cost of their suffering is taken out on the one already suffering from the mental abuse itself. [69]I'd be damned if I would let my son Caleb remain buried within himself and at risk of other autoimmune issues. [70]I can't prove the disease came from his mother's

abuse, but I could do everything in my power to give him space to discover himself safely.

10. Defeating a Dragon Requires the Wisdom of the Serpent

[1]I continued my research online. This included finding authors who published books on all things related to narcissism. [2]I watched endless content in order to understand more, I participated in question-and-answer sessions with therapists who were content creators. [3]I consumed so much in order to understand my son's unique perspectives, based on their roles in their toxic family system. [4]I discovered that the ones these narcissists love so much are called empaths, sensitive people who carry light within themselves. [5]When an empath has had enough of being on the receiving end of abuse, whether they realize it as that or not, they just may blow up. [6]This blow up is called an empath supernova.

[7]This supernova is when the empath, for the sake of self-preservation, adopts healthy narcissistic traits for a time. [8]Sometimes, that means that the narcissist is hurt intentionally by the empath speaking their truth to the narcissist. [9]If it's a supernova, then chances are the empath is expressing buried feelings. [10]It all comes to the surface, just like a volcano. [11]These supernovas can be quite epic. [12]Would you believe you are reading a supernova right now? [13]You get to experience my second and most massive empathic supernova. [14]This is the kind of supernova that gets attention. [15]It better, as I designed it to do just that. [16]These truths that come out, especially during this supernova, cause narcissistic injury upon injury to the narcissist. [17]Each blow of shame is followed up with another and another, and the narcissist can't get rid of it fast enough. [18]Nor could they, not to the person delivering it. [19]Sometimes the supernova looks like a complete communications blackout. [20]The empath simply disappears never to be seen again. [21]The narcissist is shaken by the supernova. [22]It's like it sucks the air right out of their lungs at the moment the super nova makes them realize their relationship with the empath is officially over.

Beast Mode:

[23]If you'll allow me to translate into narc speak, the communication blackout is like saying to the narcissist, [24]"I know what you are! A liar, manipulator, and someone who will never understand love or empathy. [25]You are worthless as a human being. [26]The world is better off without you in it. [27]I hope you suffer the full consequence of your actions. [28]Now, later bitch! [29]Watch me as I glow."

[30]Now, do you actually mean all that? [31]Most likely not. [32]But that's what the narcissist hears. [33]Insane, right? [34]All they hear is how worthless they are. [35]Hmmm, you'd think you leaving them would help them see the light, but you'd be wrong. [36]See, you go from being someone they abused, to being someone who truly sees them for what they were the whole time. [37]They don't like that. [38]Tough titty!

[39]MWAHAHAHAHA [40]#SEACABO [41]#GAMEOVER [42]#BREATHTAKEN

[43]The supernova, if performed by a primary source of supply to the narcissist, can be absolutely devastating. [44]The empath will no longer absorb the narcissistic abuse. [45]When a narcissist receives injury, they have to take it out on someone else. [46]Usually, they would throw it right back at the empath who caused the injury. [47]The empath in the past may have normally apologized for the sake of keeping the peace in the relationship. [48]But with a supernova, this isn't the case. [49]The narcissist can't shift things back towards the empath, if they receive additional narcissistic injury when they attempt to do so. [50]The narcissist will try. [51]When the empath shuts down communication lines to the narcissist, the narcissist has lost the one person they needed to regulate them. [52]In turn, the narcissist needs to offload the anger onto the next enabler in the system, their secondary supply lines. [53]This may include their own children, including their favored golden child, if the scapegoat isn't available. [54]They have to offload it on someone. [55]Someone needs to coddle their wounded fragile little ego.

[56]The narcissist views the supernova as a threat to the mask they had worked so hard on presenting to the empath in order to trick them into engaging and staying in the relationship. [57]With the narcissist's mask

broken and halfway slipping off their face, their image is forever tarnished to the empath. [58]This usually ends up in a smear campaign and retaliation unlike anything the empath has ever witnessed before in the relationship. [59]Consider the ensuing wrath of the exposed narcissist your wake-up call. The vitriol that once tormented you becomes more than just words. [60]Now there are actions. [61]Now there is stalking. [62]Now there is triangulation of your friends and family. [63]Now there is financial abuse, like disrupting your job, endangering your employment, making false accusations to law enforcement, and my personal favorite of keeping you wrapped up in court fees as they use the judicial system itself as their own extensions to further abuse you. [64]Boy, can a narcissist sure put on a believable act to law enforcement and to the courts. [65]Yeah, good luck with that. [66]You know they are good at faking because you fell for it yourself if you wound up with one romantically. [67]They are real good at faking, and that's about it. [68]What difference does it make if they are good at anything else if they can't even be authentic and honest people themselves?

[69]You know those nasty divorces you hear about where one person is just raked over the coals, so to speak, by the one person they had done so much for? [70]Yes, these people don't care that you moved far away in order to be with them, or that you put them through college, or that you worked two jobs so they could pursue their dream job. [71]They don't care. [72]They actually feel entitled to all of it. [73]In their world, they are entitled to everything you have to offer. [74]They truly think like that. [75]But they are smart enough to keep quiet about it. They aren't that stupid. [76]Their lies are their power. [77]Why give away their power by speaking the truth? [78]Not just that, but then that would mean that all the shame they had been stuffing into other people, via psychological abuse, was truly theirs all along. [79]And that would mean they would have to do some serious apologizing to those they abused. [80]But, in order for them to do that, they would have to be truly sorry. [81]Asking for forgiveness, to them, is weakness. [82]It hurts their pride too. [83]This is why you aren't ever going to see a narcissist approach you and come completely clean.

[84]Only when you catch them in some act and shove proof in their face do they ever come close to giving you anything resembling truth. [85]And

when they do admit any truth, they will most likely say it was ultimately your fault. [86]I'm serious. [87]What they did to you, why they lied about it to you, whatever it is, it's your fault; this is what they want you to believe, anything to make their shame go away. [88]That's what your purpose is to them, remember? To be their shame receptacle. [89]You ever see what happens in a public space when you take out all the garbage cans? [90]The trash starts to accumulate in corners. [91]Eventually it covers the ground and piles, and its stench reaches far.

[92]All those years of the empath unknowingly accepting abuse won't amount to anything that would protect them when they finally give up on the relationship. [93]This is why it's so sad when I hear about people waking up to the abuse decades into a relationship with these people. [94]The abusive narcissistic cranks up the abuse as far as they can when they have been abandoned. [95]So, it wouldn't have mattered whether you left them after one year or fifty years. [96]The abuse may be even worse, the more dependent on you that they were. [97]The forms of abuse are no different than what I've already mentioned, but you can imagine higher degrees of it. [98]The one thing a narcissist seems to truly struggle with is the ability to introspect and discern how their own actions may be interpreted by others. [99]Because of this, what you most likely will never see is the narcissist who becomes self-aware, doesn't like it, and actively pursues a life-long journey of combating their own narcissism. [100]I've seen it in only one narcissist, and they made it known that they submitted to Jesus Christ.

[101]Going back to the topic of fear and Dr. Jordan Peterson, I began to see my situation more clearly, or at least from a different perspective. [102]Dr. Peterson spoke of the dragon we all must face in life, the thing we fear most. [103]I didn't fear Candace or confrontation with Candace, but I was very uncomfortable with the negative result that would come with the confrontation. [104]I knew the battle would be long and uncertain, and very ugly. [105]It's what I had been avoiding for so long due to the energy and resources I would need to invest into it. [106]I began to think it was probably a blessing, as had I pursued better rights with my sons upon the divorce over a decade ago, it could've potentially blown up in my face. [107]Any financial devastation from court battles would've impacted how often I could see my sons. [108]Me trying to fight for rights would've

threatened Candace, so with me having less time to visit my sons from out of state as a result of enduring financial devastation, she would've surely taken advantage of that time to start alienating me from them.

[109]I saw the dragon I escaped over a decade ago was still there in her cave, her lair. [110]My dragon was big and fat on all the supply she gained from me and my sons. [111]I saw my dragon surrounded by the glimmering gold that was a family system of enablers, a custody agreement that placed her in the role of sole custodian, and the financial stability she could not have achieved on her own. [112]And now, armed with a degree in psychology, my dragon was now educated even more. [113]Candace had power, more than what I originally left her with. [114]Candace's stepfather had access to, and the trust of, the local police department. [115]This also gave Candace an advantage, including the battle itself occurring in her home state nearly 700 miles away from where I resided. [116]My dragon got bigger since I left it. [117]It called to me, smiling, drunk on its own power.

[118]I was at a serious disadvantage, just like the hero who enters the dragon's lair to attempt to defeat it. [119]I was in the dragon's domain. [120]As Dr. Peterson advised, I put the fear of my inaction behind me to propel me forward into the cave. [121]The letter I wrote and read to the Sanders family was my Hail Mary for a peaceful outcome. [122]Seeing how it was not successful at establishing peace, it became a trumpet call. The dragon knew I was coming now. [123]There was no going back, and this was my original plan anyway.

11. Gotta Have Faith

[1]All that was left was for me to continue my training, expanding my mind on all things narcissism. [2]I found several more content creators that spoke to me at my core. [3]Once I got through the understanding of narcissism, I moved on to understanding more of the dynamics, and more of the tactics. [4]I studied the Bible as well. [5]The whole battle, coupled with my endless gratitude toward God for bringing me the awareness, brought me closer than I had ever imagined to God. [6]My spiritual walk grew leaps and bounds, and I was able to overcome many things that were either holding me back or distracting me, whether innocent in

nature or not. [7]I started to read Jesus's own words in the Bible all through the lens of narcissism and it opened up an entire layer of understanding that just wasn't there beforehand. [8]It was as if I was reading the Bible again for the first time. [9]I liken the experience to watching the movie The Twelve Monkeys. [10]It was a great movie on the first watch, but the second watch brings so much more information when looked at through the lens of the first watch. [11]Here we are, 2000 years later, and the Bible makes more sense than ever to me. [12]What I'm seeing today, what I'm reading in the Bible, what I'm writing about in this book, it all feels like a prophecy fulfilled.

[13]The time to strike at my foe was at hand. This was it for the dragon. [14]The more I learned about narcissism, the more I realized that I would win this battle to see my sons out of state. [15]I just needed to exercise the virtue of patience under pressure and uncertainty in terms of how much devastation I would endure before achieving victory. [16]Luckily, I know a thing or two about long-sufferings, like the marriage with Candace and over a decade of me striving for closeness with my sons. [17]Why not add a long and nasty court battle to it? [18]My suffering obviously knows no fucking bounds. [19]I can actually say that my suffering was the last thing on my mind either way. [20]I was too busy imagining my victory.

[21]Not that my own problems weren't the least I needed to be concerned with, but I also needed to help my sons manage the pressure I knew they would be enduring throughout the process. [22]From what I had learned of narcissism, the more pressure I applied to Candace, the more likely she would sabotage herself. [23]I didn't yet know what that would end up looking like. [24]It's hard venturing into the unknown, but half the battle is knowing yourself; I knew myself real well. [25]This was two years ago. [26]I've gone through some significant changes alchemizing all this new suffering I would come to endure.

[27]I traversed into the darkness and I realized that no matter how far I went into it, there was always some light. [28]It was in fact being emitted from myself the whole time. [29]It was always me who had to move my feet to make each step count. I had to face my fears. I had to make the conscious choice and effort to go all in, to give it everything I had. [30]Little did I know even then that this experience would forever change me and my sons and others. By others, I mean possibly yourself. [31]I have to

imagine that my story of triumph through my trials and subsequent transformation has some level of positive impact on some of my readers. [32]It's the reason I decided to write this book, to inform and empower you.

[33]I discovered something else while looking for answers to what I was going through. I discovered that an educated empath is a narcissist's worst nightmare. [34]I was curious to know and understand more about what I was capable of. [35]How could I alchemize this pain and suffering I endured for so long of having to parallel parent with a covert narcissist? [36]The only way I could make this one shot of mine count was to see how far I could take it, and then share my story with the world in the hopes that some change can take place across the board. [37]I began to see the elements of the hero's journey, not just in this battle with my dragon, but also the writing of this book itself is a portion of a greater hero's journey of mine. [38]As I wrote my earlier chapters, I began to see several hero's journeys within my own stories of being bullied and standing up to it. [39]I saw how hearing stories of other heroes' journeys, watching movies, remembering stories in the Bible, all formed parts of the hero within me. [40]All I had to do was act. [41]Instead of waiting for some hero to save me, I would need to become my own. [42]And I would need to bring my A-game like never before. [43]Have I mentioned that I like the new me?

Beast Mode:

[44]I like the new me too! [45]Here, here! [46]To the new us! [47]Ain't inner child integration a fuckin' hoot?!?

[48]#IAMNOTAHASHTAG [49]#TRAVISMANIONSAIDITBEST
[50]#OOORAH

12. Activity Time - Social Media Description

[1]How would you describe social media to the average person from 2000 years ago? [2]Paint them a good picture so that they could understand. [3]Imagine the clarifying questions they may ask. [4]Make the description so good, that they would not need much clarification. [5]Now, what do you know to be the point of social media? [6]How do you personally benefit from using social media as someone who consumes, and also as someone

who posts? [7]How do you use social media? [8]Does how you use social media differ from the description of it you gave to the person from 2000 years ago? [9]If so, how? [10]Sounds like a bunch of the same questions, but they are actually all different. [11]One word can change the meaning of the question, and also your answer.

CHAPTER 9
THE ARMORY

"Nearly all men can withstand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
— Abraham Lincoln

The Power (7' Version)
By Snap!
-
Battle Stations
By Winger
-
Pump Up the Jam
by Technotronic

1. Let Me Entertain You

[1]Hey there! I just thought I'd let you know that it's a real struggle holding my beast back from this chapter. [2]Let's play this by ear. [3]Who knows what to expect? [4]Well, I do. [5]So, let's try something different. [6]I'm going to channel some of my beast here. [7]This is one of his favorite chapters, but this is still my show. [8]So, we are going to do this my way, and he can assist in helping me illustrate my points. [9]Don't worry, you are going to get plenty of Beast Mode soon. [10]The time just isn't right yet. [11]Once chapter 12 hits, it's on como Donkey Kong. [12]Now, on with the show. [13]I'm gonna learn you my philosophy. Are you ready to learn a new tongue?

2. Welcome to My Dark Side

[1]Hello there! [2]If you happen to be one of these narcissists I write about, I want to congratulate you on getting this far in my book. [3]Impressive! Most impressive! [4]Good for you! [5]My words, to a narcissist, are like fingernails scraping on a flaming chalkboard. [6]My words make some of them feel a burning and prickling sensation all over their skin. [7]It's quite flattering actually. [8]How do I know this? [9]Narcissists have confessed this to my face, and that was with me being nice. [10]I don't tell them that I know what they are. [11]What would be the fun in letting the cat out of the bag so soon, when there's so much to learn from them while they think they have you fooled and sized up? [12]Yes, you just have to kill your empathy for them. [14]If you are struggling with that, then you haven't been abused or betrayed enough. [15]Don't worry, they are more than willing to help you learn, while they drain you of your energy and drive you to suicidal thinking.

[16]Maybe you just haven't pushed hard enough to be able to kill your empathy for them. [17]Don't worry. [18]I'm here to help. [19]You see, the more people who read my book, the more that awaken to their own abuse, their own victimhood. [20]Give a victim knowledge and power, and lead them to identify their perpetrator, and you weaponize them. [21]If you refuse to become a weapon, a desperate narcissist will certainly convince you for me. [22]And they will become increasingly desperate, all of them,

the more people that hand them their ass with their absence and shaming.

[23]These days, there's no nice left in me for any of these "disordered people". [24]In a world full of entitled assholes, who cares what I think or how I feel about anyone or any group? [25]Now, I can be an asshole too. [26]I don't care if they say they are on their path to healing, or that they are trying. [27]I just don't care. [28]I don't care if they are hungry, they aren't entitled to my food or money. [29]I don't care if they are homeless, they aren't entitled to my living space and the peace I work hard to keep there. [30]I don't care if they are suffering with an addiction, they aren't entitled to my pity. [31]I don't care if they feel that nobody loves them, they aren't entitled to receiving love if they just turn around and abuse the one sending it. [32]I get to think, feel, believe, and say whatever the fuck I damn well please. [33]I learned that from them. [34]It's funny. [35]When I do what they do, I'm called psychotic or neurotic. [36]Oh fucking well, huh?!? ;) [37]The pot calling the kettle black is what they do best.

[38]I'm no one's emotional tampon, they aren't entitled to my energy for their emotional regulation. [39]Disordered? That's their problem, they aren't entitled to make their "disorder" my problem too. [40]I used to be nothing but kind and loving, a people pleaser, and that made me their target repeatedly until I learned my lesson. [41]I do put them all in the same bucket. [42]They can call that black and white thinking. [43]Good. [44]I love that! [45]The gray is an illusion anyway. [46]I keep saying that. [47]You truly need to be able to see people as they are, and when you strip the shades of gray away you will see what side they are truly on. [48]Still have hope for the one in your life? [49]Good, hold on to that hope. [50]Let your pride in wanting to be their hero to save them from themselves lock you in with them, while they toy with you the whole time. [51]You'll suffer for that kind of pride at their hands.

[52]Am I cruel? [53]Maybe. [54]Am I heartless? [55]Ask those whom I love how heartless I am. [56]But one thing I will never fuckin' be ever again is someone else's fucking bitch. [57]I can give the illusion that I am, but woe to he who I withhold my true intentions. [58]With the wisdom of the snake, we can deceive the deceivers. [59]If everyone was anything like the way I am now, a master of my own universe, all these narcissists would be

abandoned. [60]They would be left alone with their demons, writhing on the fucking ground in absolute agony. And they deserve it, and they know it. [61]You ever seen a narcissist who has been abandoned by everyone who ever loved them? [62]I have. [63]They can't function. [64]They simply crumple like the weak little lying shits that they truly are. [65]They won't even have the energy to wear any of their masks or create a new one. [66]They become like a highly traumatized child. [67]They don't like it when you are on to their game and can play it better and harder than they could possibly imagine. [68]I'm going to make a superhuman out of you.

[69]They don't even know who they are! [70]Seriously. [71]Ask them, [72]"Who are you?". [73]You can learn a lot by listening to their answer. It will most likely be something superficial. [74]I dare you to follow up with a portion of their answer with, [75]"Why do you think that?" [76]They hate when you do that. [77]Watch how it gets a rise out of them. [78]They are seriously that fragile, and this is where the fun comes in. [79]If you can manage to cut off all their supply lines, you've succeeded in being their own personal nightmare. [80]And here I am, poisoning the minds of all their supply: you. [81]Yes, I'm using you to exact my fury on all of them, a mass triangulation if you will, and a tactic I picked up from them. [82]All I need to do is open your eyes, and you will do the rest on your own. [83]I told you that they shouldn't have fucked with me. [84]Thank the one who woke me up. [85]I'm forever grateful, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

[86]Now you may be saying, "But Michael, your book is going to get you in so much trouble!" [87]And to those of you who are governed by fear, I give you this eloquent response. [88]I don't care anymore. [89]I don't care if I get in trouble, whatever happens. [90]I don't care if the world hates me. [91]I don't care if everyone in my life leaves me. [92]I don't care if the world believes me to be evil incarnate. [93]I don't care to be in a world that allows deception and manipulation. [94]If I could, I'd burn the world into a cinder if it preferred the blissful ignorance of the chaos systemic narcissism has brought. [95]I'm certainly not afraid to die. I welcome it. [96]As a matter of fact, there would be no greater honor than for me to be killed or tortured because I wrote this book, my truth. [97]So, if there's someone out there who has the balls to give it a shot, I'll make it very easy for you. [98]They like it when it's easy. [99]They don't have it in them to do the difficult. [100]Pussies, every damned one of them, especially when you separate

them from their flock of beta followers. [101]They are nothing without people to feed their egos.

[102]Ok, now that I got that out of the way, we can begin this chapter. [103]I like to fuck with these narcissists, and that's why I put this section at the beginning of the chapter. [104]It was Beast Mode all along. [105]LOL I tricked you! [106]I had to deceive, because I bet these narcissists skip my beast mode portions. [107]It causes them too much of a narcissistic injury, so I didn't want them to see it coming. [108]I'm not going to let them into the armory without paying a cost upfront. [109]Surely, you understand. [110]Either way, I sincerely apologize for tricking you.

[111]If narcissists are reading my book, and there will be many because they love to hate, then I'm gonna make them suffer for it. [112]It's also a deterrent for anyone who is not a narcissist but is treading down that path. [113]This book may bring mass self-awareness to these people, and with that great fear, which will come across as rage. [114]This will make it easier for you to trigger their red flags and make them easier for you to see. [115]That's right, there's a method to my madness. [116]I'm going to show you how to trigger them and lure them. [117]Don't worry, they can't adjust their tactics. This is as far as their little narc brains can evolve. [118]The tools change, not the tactics. [119]Let's continue.

3. I've Got the Power!

[1]I remember when the first issue of Nintendo Power magazine was published. [2]It had all the tips and tricks to get through the many fun and challenging games. [3]There would be pages upon pages of maps to help the reader navigate these new worlds. [4]To the average person who didn't game, the pages looked like a mess of colors and patterns, but to gamers it was a guide to the path to victory. [5]Well, I present you with the Armory. [6]This chapter combines and condenses the most useful information I've come across in nearly two years of extensive research of books and video content from creators who have proven themselves to be experts on the topic from several different angles and levels of experience. [7]I also connected to self-aware narcissists who openly share their tactics and thought patterns. [8]May God bless them for turning coat. [9]A narcissist coming clean to all those they have wronged and what they did

to their victims, and how they did it, is the only thing I think can actually save them from themselves. [10]But, still, not my problem. [11]The armory isn't perfect, it is not all-inclusive and I highly recommend you do your own research. [12]That's how you grow. [14]Don't wait for the rain, water yo damn self.

[15]Don't rely on this chapter as all you need. Use it more like a quick guide. [16]There are plenty of books out there, and video content, that you will find very useful. [17]I've learned that this is the kind of research everyone needs to do on their own and stay up to date on in order to flex that discernment muscle and protect yourself from manipulation, or at least deter the majority of it that comes your way.

[18]Aside from my regularly scheduled daily deep dives into all content on narcissism, I supplemented my research by revisiting Sun Tzu's The Art of War. [19]Only this time, I read the book through the lens of narcissism. [20]The Bible says to avoid such people, but what about when you have no choice but to face them? [21]For this, I turned to war tactics for answers while continuing to rely on my faith to pull me through. [22]A little help from the aforementioned content creators on court battles with narcissists helped me better apply the war tactics I picked up from Sun Tzu and allowed for the creation of this chapter.

[23]My time spent in the U.S. Army as an infantryman gave me the battlefield's perspective and aided me in applying the grunt's level of understanding. [24]The role of the foot soldier I knew well. But now I would also become my own General. [25]The Bible says that, when you are following God, no weapon formed against you shall prosper. [26]Sun Tzu says that if you know yourself and the enemy, you need not fear the end result of a hundred battles. [27]Not only did I know Candace, but now I knew her disorder. And with that, I was able to quickly understand the playbook on narcissism. [28]I think you should do the work just as I have. [29]Yes, I'm being repetitive on purpose. [30]I don't care if it annoys you. [31]If you are going to war, wouldn't you depend on multiple resources to determine your next steps?

[32]I know I said I don't pity these narcissistic fools, but Candace is special. She's the mother of my children. [33]She didn't have to become what she was, but it was her choice. [34]She chose to deceive and manipulate me,

and in that, I feel sorry for her mainly for one reason. [35]She made me her enemy. [36]I know myself better than anyone, and I would never want to have me as my enemy. [37]I don't think I'd be able to sleep a wink. [38]I'm just as calculating as the most malignant narcissist or sociopath, but I am in no rush to see the end as glorious as I'm sure it will be. [39]I have patience to play the long game. [40]That's where the fun is. [41]I also get to know my enemy and their weaknesses. [42]I watch how they attack. I watch what they defend. I watch for where they derive their sources of power. [43]I see how they choose to regulate themselves, and in that, I can predict them. It's what allows me to be several steps ahead. [44]I imagine I will have my challenges upon publishing. [45]Let's see what happens. [46]Let's see who comes out to play with me. [47]Let's see who wins. [48]I'd sure hate to be the first one to lose to me because it will be in the public space. [49]I'll make it a spectacle. [50]I'm a strong believer in making an example out of someone. [51]We learn through examples, don't we?

4. A Word of Caution

[1]I've taught you how to recognize psychological and emotional manipulation. [2]I taught you how to recognize deception. [3]Now, I will show you how to counter each tactic. [4]Are you ready for the training? [5]Right now, if you are waking up to the reality of your abuse and can now identify your abuser(s), you may be pretty pissed. [6]Your goal should be achieving understanding so that you may begin to heal. [7]Giving into your hate is exactly what your enemy wants. [8]Vengeance is the Lord's. [9]You do not want the kind of divine correction that comes with acting in anger. [10]Instead, I show you another way. [11]I will show how to engage them in ways that help build you up and drive them into the ground using nothing but truth and exposure. [12]Truth and exposure can be interpreted as revenge by those who don't know your heart. [14]That's their fucking problem, isn't it? [15]For you, only you and God know your heart.

[16]You know your true intentions. [17]I would be very careful with what you do with this information. [18]You will be tempted to use it for revenge, and that is completely on you as well as the consequences associated with it. [19]Don't be like them, drunk with power. [20]For many of you, this will be the first time you taste it yourself. [21]God is watching what you do

with this book. [22]If you don't believe in God, well then I guess you have nothing to fear. [23]The tactics will still work whether you believe in God or not. [24]Believing in love is great, as long as you believe in evil too. [25]And if you believe in evil, you might want to question its origins. [26]You wanna go toe-to-toe with these fuckers? [27]You better be prayed up and fireproof, otherwise leave it to the professionals.

5. Tactics Ogre

[1]In games like Tactics Ogre, Final Fantasy Tactics, Fallout Tactics, and X-COM, there are so many factors that work either in favor or against the player and enemies. [2]The direction your selected character is facing, the type of land they are on, the altitude of their position, their affiliations, their weapon systems, the enemy's position and capability, all these things play a role in the outcome of a confrontation with the enemy. [3]Just as I used video games to illustrate many of my points, you may benefit from looking at your interactions with these toxic people as a game. [4]To them it's a game anyway. [5]They are all thinking, [6]"How many can I fool into giving me what I want from them?" [7]They hate when I put words in their mouth that are true. [8]How do I know? [9]I've been down this road before. [10]Call me Mad Max.

Beast Mode:

[11]OK, and now that he made his point that he considers all these factors, maybe we can get on to the good stuff already.

[12]#CANTHARDLYWAIT [14]#HESALLTHAT [15]#BAGOFCHIPS

6. Play the Game

[1]To remove the emotions you are most likely feeling, lean on your faith and logic. [2]This is not the time for your heart to be in control. [3]This is the time for taking time to choose your words and actions. [4]This is a time to be more observant. [5]If you want to win this game, if you want to get to the next level, I suggest you follow me. [6]Otherwise, at least be aware of the game. [7]You can also win by refusing to play it. [8]But that next level is something reserved for only the brave and true, with its own higher level

of suffering and reward. [9]I will teach you how to become fireproof if you seek that next level, just keep reading.

[10]Imagine these interactions with narcissists as if it were a grand battle. [11]Two gladiators are in the arena, with the entire world watching. [12]Before, you may have been getting your ass handed to you over and over again for years. [14]But this time, something is different. [15]This time, there's a shine in your eyes. [16]You know something. [17]Victory can be seen in your eyes, and you will teach the opponent how to recognize their pending defeat as you make your approach and ready your position. [18]You will know that the battle is yours before you unsheathe your weapon. [19]Smile, and have some fun with this new confidence. [20]The world is waiting to see your display, of seeing just who you truly are. [21]Maybe you are waiting too. [22]Only you can show you who you are through action.

7. Beast Forward for the Armory

[1]Now, for a little grandiosity channeling my beast. [2]This is not full Beast Mode; this is a post-integration section. [3]Me getting my hands on all this information on narcissism was the worst thing that I can imagine happening to not just Candace, but all narcissists, every damned one. ;) [4]Narcissists operate on a playbook, just like an AI script, their emotional intelligence being what is artificial. [5]They have no choice but to operate in a certain matter. [6]This means that they can be pretty predictable. [7]Some may argue that their narcissism makes them unpredictable. [8]I disagree, and my story and this book shall be proof of it. [9]There's nothing to fear from a narcissist, once you truly understand them and how and why they operate like they do.

[10]Once I had a full understanding of what I was dealing with, the first part of my dark quest to destroy the narcissist was to uncover their fears. [11]Fear is something I know well, because of how much I used to fear becoming my beast. [12]If I could uncover the narcissist's deepest fears, then I could begin to strategize so that I achieve manifestation of their fears. [14]Embracing the darkness within me, I found content to feed it. [15]I would partner with my beast. [16]My beast was always looking for revenge and I would never give in. [17]But this, this was different. [18]I

needed to make sure that my motivation to pursue building those fears into the narcissist didn't become my own undoing, an ongoing challenge of this personal struggle of mine.

[19]I wanted to destroy Candace by making an example out of her. [20]I wanted to take every ounce of suffering I ever endured by the hands of these people all throughout my life and dish it all out to the one like them who hurt me the most, the one who took away my opportunity to prove to myself that I could be a better father to my sons than mine was to me. [21]It was like I was not allowed this experience in life. [22]I took that very personally. [23]I had already radically accepted it. [24]That acceptance is what put me in a place of healing. [25]Indeed, I was lacking in boundaries back then, but that doesn't give anyone permission to manipulate me. [26]I was able to develop boundaries, but only after years of trying and suffering for my efforts, and that's when I truly became Candace's bad guy. [27]The cost of building those boundaries was losing any life with my sons I had always hoped for. [28]I don't think that's fair, and I know I'm just one of millions with this story. [29]Maybe I'll get mine for sharing my story, but these narcissists will all get theirs. [30]Look what they made me do. [31];)

[32]Partly, awakening to what my life experience of all my entanglements with narcissists, it took some of the sting away from Candace being mean. [33]She was just playing her part. [34]They all did. [35]They all are. [36]How can I be so angry with someone who was just real good at lying? [37]How can I even be angry with myself for being duped for so long? [38]I believed in love, and I was naive to how evil people are. [39]That was something beautiful about me. [40]But that part of me is not gone. [41]I still have the innocence of a dove, and I prove it by letting that fun inner child of mine out to play in the pages of my book.

[42]I didn't regret all the years of trying. [43]I needed to see it for myself. [44]I needed to understand that nothing I could ever do would change Candace. [45]And that would mean either accepting the marriage as it was and burying my authenticity or deciding to choose myself and suffer for it. [46]Just as I dipped into narcissism in my empathic supernova, it was time to go back into the fray and see how I could apply the narcissistic playbook how I wanted, to achieve my goal - Candace's ego death, a supreme narcissistic injury, subsequent mortification and finally her utter

collapse. [47]I also wanted to wake up her family members to their own abuse in that household. [48]This book will do that part for me. [49]With Candace's enablers awakened, they would no longer feed her ego. [50]After the devastation of losing the court battle, and hence custody of our sons to me, this is when my book will do the rest to separate Candace from those who would come to her rescue.

[51]This is me using the narcissistic playbook my way, with strategy. [52]This is playing with fire, and I acknowledge that. [53]What I'm doing could be considered as the most aggressive psychological abuse campaign mankind has ever seen directed to just one person. [54]If I played with fire, would I myself be burned? [55]There's only one way to find out if I would be immune to the fire. [56]I would need to plunge myself into it and bring Candace with me. [57]It would be the only way. [58]Just like she was trying to drag me into the pit of her misery with her, now it's my fucking turn. [59]She got away with it. [60]Will I? [61]Of course not, I'm the bad guy remember? [62]I'm gonna suffer for writing this book. [63]Good thing I'm no stranger to it. [64]Now, I suffer on my terms. [65]That means I am in control, doesn't it?

[66]I present to you my take on Sun Tzu's teachings as applied to narcissists as the opposing force. May it serve you well. [67]If you can learn the rules for playing a game, this should be no different. [68]The more you apply anti-narcissist tactics offensively, the better you become at delivering it and the more protected you can be while doing so. [69]It's also fun. [70]Well, it becomes fun once you get good at it. [71]It makes me happy. :)

8. Reinforcing the Mind

[1]As with any battle, you need a cadre with reinforcements at the ready or en route, and a support network of allies who want to see you succeed. [2]Allies could be other empathetic people who you've allowed into your inner circle. [3]They are people you can be vulnerable with without them trying to pressure you on what to do or how to do it. [4]You need support and validation for feeling the powerful emotions that you are contending with.

[5]Back when I was going through trying to escape the relationship with Candace, I had an amazing cousin who was able to hear me out without judgment. [6]I believe God put him in my path, because until then he and I didn't have an established connection to each other. [7]Our closeness grew and he brought me into his circles with him. This got me out of my apartment and socializing. [8]I had become so isolated by keeping all my troubles with Candace to myself. [9]Having others I could speak to and befriend made things easier to begin my mental separation with Candace. [10]It was a gradual process. [11]And I didn't even realize how beneficial it truly was to have my cousin and his friends in my life until later. [12]They were all good people.

[14]On top of this, I found female companions who were more than willing to share bodies with. [15]I'm not proud of it. [16]I think almost all of them were in their own relationships. [17]That said, it was validating to receive so freely the very thing that blew away the breadcrumbs of intimacy I was receiving from Candace. [18]I hated being so grateful for those rare times when Candace expressed interest. [19]It was emasculating. [20]Seeing that others saw me as attractive let me know that I didn't have to settle for breadcrumbs anymore. [21]But I want to stress that this is not a good way to see your worth. [22]It actually leads towards narcissistic behavior itself. [23]Sex can become an addiction and brings so many problems with it. [24]It was intoxicatingly validating however. I was wanted. I was craved. And I was preferred. I had power.

[25]My masculinity came back one hundred-fold, with a little charisma and self-confidence to boot. [26]Ok, it was actually a whole lot. [27]I had fun flirting and seeing how far it got me. [28]The more successful I realized I was at flirting, the more confidence I had. [29]The more confidence I had, the better I became at flirting. [30]It was a dark cycle of empowerment that I could have easily succumbed to, and I believe I was close to it. [31]I went from one extreme to the opposite, and that's dangerous. [32]I felt like I was being reprogrammed or reborn. Reprogramming the self in an unhealthy way, placed me in dangerous territory.

[33]I want to revisit for a moment the fact I was sexually active outside the marriage shortly before actually separating and filing for divorce. [34]This happened shortly after I stopped caring about the marriage. [35]I thought myself to be damned for my choice to want to leave the marriage. [36]I

seriously expected the damnation of my soul and accepted hell as my consequence simply for giving up on the marriage. [37]This made my decision to sleep with other women easier. [38]Why feel guilty for cheating when you've already accepted damnation for dissolution of the marriage? [39]I felt little guilt. I felt little shame. [40]If anything, I felt highly empowered. [41]I wasn't trying to be good anymore. I was embracing my bad. I was good at it.

[42]The one person who had me surviving off of breadcrumbs of affection, I myself was bread-crumbing. [43]I used sex with Candace to keep her enmeshed with me and oblivious to my true intentions so that I could continue to access to my sons. [44]One time she told me with one of her stupid corner smiles, right before intercourse, that I was playing with fire. [45]Her little narcissistic mind thought she was running the show. [46]I let her believe it. [47]I wanted her to believe that there was hope for the two of us staying together. [48]She had no clue it was I that was manipulating her the whole time. [49]What an idiot! [50]I mocked her power back to her, and she didn't even realize it. [51]The cost of me being entangled with other women was that I played a role in their own sin for forsaking their primary relationships. [52]That said, we all understood what we were doing. [53]I never thought that I would ever be this kind of person. [54]I used to judge this kind of person. [55]I took my scarlet letter. [56]I cared and yet I didn't. [57]Don't fall for the trap of losing yourself in the bedsheets of other people as a means of coping with the pain associated with these relationships. [58]You will most likely just find another narcissist who is ready to make you believe they can give you everything the last narcissist didn't give you. I speak from experience.

[59]I want to mention that I've come across a few people in my narcissistic abuse circles who have committed themselves to finding narcs and making them fall in love, just so they can leave them at the height of the narcissist's application of love bombing. [60]Yes, these people really do exist, men and women. [61]Yes, that behavior comes from a place of deep pain. [62]It's not a healthy coping mechanism, because that's what it truly is, a way to cope with the abuse by abusing other people. [63]All that leads to is a high body count, the number of people you have slept with, and a slew of other potentially dangerous problems. [64]The more you expose yourself to toxic personalities, the more you place yourself in danger and

sacrifice your well-earned peace. [65]You will destroy your chances of ever entering into a healthy relationship. [66]This is what it truly means to play with fire. [67]Don't sabotage a bright future for yourself, by delivering suffering to these people for the sake of delivering suffering. [68]Do not make yourself unclean by rolling around in the mud with these pigs. [69]They don't even deserve your time.

[70]After being in a healthy marriage for a decade, I can now say that a healthy marriage is the most rewarding experience with another human being one can truly have. [71]A child born into this marriage is beyond blessed. [72]Why sacrifice that for anything else?

9. Tighten Your Inner Circle

[1]We just went over leaning on those in your inner circle. Since we are on the topic, let's go over how to tighten it. [2]You may have people in your inner circle who are there for their own interests outside of your friendship. [3]I invite you to introspect on each connection you have in that circle. [4]Is this someone who you can speak to about the deep stuff? If not, then get them out of your inner circle politely. [5]If you want to test that connection, now is not the time. [6]Put them in the outer circle, and maybe that means removing them from having visibility of your social media. [7]It's nothing personal. [8]You will have more time to yourself and those you care about most if you do some Spring cleaning of your inner circle. [9]You can still stay in touch with those in the outer circle and hold space for those deep conversations with them. [10]You are not excommunicating them, just refining your ties. [11]They just may be part of your inner circle someday.

[12]Here's the benefit of doing this on social media. [14]No one is entitled to know about your personal life. [15]If your social media isn't that personal, then I guess removing access isn't that big a deal. But if you are someone who puts a lot of yourself out there on social media, you'll benefit from this the most. [16]There's this unexplainable inner peace you will have after you tighten your inner circle.

[17]If you have a friend who complains about someone they never want to leave, then that person may be someone you may want to remove from

your inner circle. [18]Sounds cruel, I know, but this is why. [19]Their misery and decision to stay in it does not benefit you at all. [20]You enable their misery by being a dumping ground for their negative emotions, so they can have the energy to go right back to the person making them miserable. [21]This eats away at your inner peace whether you believe it or not. [22]Take them out of your inner circle for a month and you will see how much better you feel. [23]You can still pray for them. [24]You can still be there for them when they reach out, but you are no longer their emotional dumping ground so make sure you convey that. [25]Be direct with it. [25]Don't waste time sugar coating, that's just more eggshells to walk on. [26]The days of walking on eggshells for me is over. [27]It feels amazing, let me tell ya.

10. The Best Offense is a Good Defense

[1]You may remember me bringing up the benefits of radical acceptance through my earlier chapters. [2]Radical acceptance is basically a shield for your heart. [3]Radically accept that the narcissist cannot or will not treat you with honor, respect, truth, and real empathy. [4]With this acceptance, you no longer need to take anything they say or do personally. [5]It's just lie after lie meant only to control you. [6]Their power is their ability to control you, to dictate what you say and how you say it, to dictate to you how you should think and interpret things they say as law, and how they can make you sad or happy at will. [7]All of this feeds into the power they seek and that dominates their mind and every action, word, and intention. [8]No control over others means they have no power. Having no power means that they never truly ever had it. Never truly having power means they are nothing. [9]This is the narcissistic injury that makes them go cuckoo. [10]Narcissists are "The Nothing" from The Never-ending Story, a gap, a cavity, an emptiness that cannot share space with anything else.

[11]Radical acceptance has helped me to separate from that which I cannot control and that which also brings me suffering. [12]Unfortunately, to detach from a narcissist is also to detach from the dopamine drip attained with their limited love bombing sessions. [13]Radical acceptance will keep you from trying to make the square peg fit into the round hole. [14]You accept that it will never enter through the hole, so you just stop trying.

[15]Need an example of what so many are doing every day? [16]Watch Mike Judge's movie Idiocracy, a truly prophetic movie for our time. [17]Watch the intelligence exam the main character takes. [18]Watch as those around him struggle with trying to make things fit where they cannot. [19]Was that you? [20]Is it still you? [21]Let radical acceptance bring you the peace that it has brought me.

[22]The narcissist, upon seeing these changes within you, will realize that something is off. Yeah, they aren't that stupid. [23]They will up their game and intensify all their tactics. [24]Your new nonchalant demeanor will threaten the narcissist's ability to manipulate and control you. [25]This will trigger their abandonment fear. [26]If they can't control you, they are at risk of losing you. [27]Isn't that funny? [28]You ever wonder why Elmyra, that Elmer Fudd looking monstrosity from Tiny Toons Adventures, never lets her pets out of her grasp? [29]They would run for their fucking lives! [30]That's why narcissists have to be so damned sneaky and only go after those without boundaries and the naive. [31]Luckily, their narcissist brain counters the thought of the possibility of losing control over you with an ego that can't see you possibly ever leaving them. [32]And if you do, their ego lets them believe they can easily get you back. [33]Let them believe that. [34]Let their ego be their undoing.

[35]You can use radical acceptance also to accept and heal the wounds from previous traumas as well. [36]I had radically accepted that my dad either did not realize the impact of his physical abuse on me throughout my childhood, or he didn't recognize it as abuse. [37]Either way, I radically accepted I would never receive an apology from him at the age of 19. [38]It's a good thing too, because I never got one. [39]With that radical acceptance, I unknowingly embarked on a journey that would open the door leading to becoming the narcissist's worst nightmare. [40]We can turn our trauma into our sword and shield. [41]A narcissist doesn't know how to heal from trauma. [42]They themselves are responsible for the majority of what they refer to as their trauma. [43]They embrace victim mentality once they are defeated or discovered, so they can never heal. [44]They don't want to. [45]To heal, would be to lose the power connected to being seen as the victim and all the negative energy of pity that comes with it. [46]They will use hate and vengeance as Band-Aids while letting their wounds fester. [47]Find that abandonment wound and slug them hard in that

wound with your absence. [48]You'll knock the breath out of their lungs. [49]You were the breath of life to them. [50]Leave them to breathe in the full scent of their own rot.

11. The Ability to Discern by Fruit

[1]Speaking of rot, this leads me to the topic of fruit. [2]Discernment is key. [3]Not to be confused with judgement, the ability to discern means to be able to see things for exactly what they are. [4]We usually give passes to the red flags that pop up. [5]Why not? [6]When we are enjoying the many positive aspects of being in a relationship, why risk ruining that by pointing out something that the narcissist said that bothered us? [7]Narcissists are quick to do this to establish dominance. [8]We choose not to call them out for things they do or say in order to keep a good thing going, or to keep a bad situation from becoming worse. [9]I say let it.

[10]The Bible mentions discernment on fruit. [11]It is how God judges us. [12]Now, we may not be able to see into the hearts and minds of other people, but we can see a lot of their fruit. [14]Where can we look? [15]Their relationships with their friends and family are one type of fruit. [16]When they engage in conversation with you, let them lead. [17]Does the person search for your vulnerability or do they allow you to go at your own pace and simply enjoy your company? [18]Do they rush you into the bedroom, where an evening encounter can quickly turn into them casting a tether onto both your heart and nether regions? [19]Do they act entitled to your forgiveness or simply your attention? [20]These are their fruit.

[21]Look into their social media. [22]What kind of posts are they making? [23]Do they play into divisiveness? [24]Do they take sides which require completely invalidating the side of the other? [25]Do they attack the person, and not the behavior? [26]Do they spend their energy invalidating others or lifting them up? [27]Do they post a ton of selfies showing off their jiggly assets or muscle, but nothing else of any substance? [28]Do they make jokes or side-comments at your expense? [29]Do they give the silent treatment when you say something they don't like? [30]These are all fruit to discern by.

[31]Don't overlook bad fruit just because the packaging is pristine, fresh, and taut. [32]An attractive sex-addicted narcissist is hard to let go of if you are a slave to your lust yourself, no matter how abusive they are. [33]If you are a slave to greed or the comfort of sloth, the narcissist's money could be another tether to your heart that's difficult to get rid of. [34]Your discernment should extend to yourself as well. [35]Do you have a weakness that the narcissist can exploit? [36]What are you doing about that weakness? [37]You better be doing something. [38]If I can find your weakness, best believe the narcissist you know already has. [39]Know yourself or be like the other fools and be narc fodder.

[40]Whatever you value that is not Godly, will be weaponized by a narcissist to form the bars of your customized cage. [41]Each bar they place to make your cage is made of whatever you are weak to. [42]They are experts at crafting mental prisons because they are subtle with their approach. [43]It shows intention from day one once they see you as a potential supply line to validating them. [44]Don't think for a moment these narcissists won't try to twist scripture to meet their agenda of controlling you. [45]They will totally abuse the scripture in order to keep you from escaping their cycle of abuse. [46]I accepted burning in hell for all eternity as the price to pay for choosing myself and deciding to leave that toxic marriage to Candace. [47]That's the cage bar I broke to set myself free, choosing the dissolution of the marriage. [48]Twisting the Word of God in order to abuse one of His children, there is no greater evil I can think of. [49]Yes, the narcissist will use scripture to be your prison and keep you with them so they may continue to abuse you.

[50]Tell a narcissist your greatest sexual fantasies and they will fulfill them if they deem you as a high potential form of supply. [51]They know how to get you addicted to them because you tell them everything they need to know in order to accomplish it. [52]Anyone who goes out of their way to give you exactly what you are looking for, and quickly too, is looking to make an impression on you. [53]Maybe the intention behind it is innocent, but it's something you should discern as being a possible red flag. [54]Discern enough red flags and you will come to the conclusion that you are playing the narcissist's game. [55]You determine how many flags are too many, or how serious any one flag is (or a combination of flags). [56]It doesn't hurt to pray for, or mediate on,

discernment if you are ready to make the tough choices that come along with using it.

12. Boundaries

[1]A boundary is something that protects you. [2]Candace brought up the topic of boundaries to me and asked me what I thought about them. [3]This was about 18 years ago. [4]I had no clue what boundaries meant, but Candace was more than willing to help me understand her version of it. [5]She articulated it in a way that I found to be very controlling of me, and I pointed this out to her. [6]She never brought up boundaries again. [7]That said, I've witnessed more than one narcissist try to use boundaries in this twisted fashion against people I know. [8]I knew a narcissist who tried to impose a boundary on her boyfriend of responding to her texts in less than five minutes. [9]Boundaries are not something you impose on other people. [10]A boundary is to protect yourself.

[11]A narcissist will attempt to impose a boundary on you, which isn't how boundaries work. [12]For example, their "boundary" may be, like aforementioned, that you respond to their text messages within five minutes. [14]Please know this twisted version of a boundary is pure manipulation meant only to control you more. [15]Don't fall for this. [16]I wanted to tell you what a boundary isn't before telling you what it actually is, because a control tactic disguised as a boundary is a great way to trap a victim into a cycle of abuse. [17]See it for what it is, or it will become your cage. [18]If it is already a cage, then see those cage bars as the illusions they are. [19]You are free when you want to be free.

[20]A good example of a boundary is no tolerance for disrespect. [21]You don't need to tell someone what all of your boundaries are. [22]If they disrespect you, and this is one of the boundaries you already have, you have the option of informing them. [23]But you also have the option of ending the relationship with them, with or without explaining that the lack of respect was the reason. [24]Alternatively, you could stay in the relationship and admit to yourself that you actually don't have this boundary, because a boundary is nothing if not enforced. [25]Are you willing to walk away never again to interact with the person that disrespected you? [26]What if this is your adult child? [27]Your boundaries should apply to you

no matter who you interact with. [28]They should not be specific to only certain people. [29]A boundary is a boundary no matter who walks up to it. [30]If you allow certain people the ability to cross your boundary, you never truly had that boundary in the first place. [31]No one gets a pass because of their status. [32]No one is that special. [33]That's a fucking boundary right there.

[34]Another boundary is against being devalued. [35]Being devalued can look like someone deliberately choosing not to listen to you speaking about your concerns or feelings, or acting as though they have something better to do than to give you their attention. [36]This could also look like them downplaying your emotions as being overly sensitive. [37]Another form of devaluing can be jokes made at your expense or hyper-criticism directed toward you as a person, and not whatever action the criticism is based on. [38]If it feels devaluing, then you should understand that maybe that was the exact intent of their words or actions. [39]Do you allow it? [40]Or do you make your walk-away game speak for you? [41]You don't need to explain yourself to a narcissist. [42]Someday, maybe that person may figure it out, but not on your time. [43]Your time is sacred. [44]Treat it as such.

[45]Both of the boundaries I've mentioned are mine. [46]I've made a narcissist or two regret their actions that led to my demonstration of how I can completely sever myself free from a "soul mate". [47]I mentioned in the chapter Green Light that these people try to make you feel that you are soul mates. [48]When you have the ability to discard a "soul mate" at the first sign of being devalued or disrespected, you will see just how fear-based these narcissists are as well as how truly powerful you've always been. [49]Feel your power surge when you give these people the business. [50]You'll never forget that feeling or interaction. [51]You will shake them to their very core with a solidly placed boundary. [52]Maybe you just created it out of thin air. [53]That's how boundaries are born, out of thin air, whenever you want them, whenever you decide to put your foot down and theirs into their mouth. [54]Good for you.

[55]They will use all their tactics to breach your boundary and will definitely attempt to gaslight you out of it too. [56]If you persist and hold your ground, you will never forget the day you handed these people their asses with just your words and a little bit of dead space, meaning your

silence, and confident eye contact. [57]Sometimes the narcissist needs to hear that you can indeed end it with them. [58]If you did it right, and you truly believe in your ability to cut them off completely, they will be convinced. [59]Ever had a narcissist beg on their knees before you? [60]Don't believe it. [61]You can kill the king who lets you get close enough to kiss the ring; so can they. [62]You can let them believe they've apologized their way back into your good graces, until it's time to ditch them for good so they can't easily retaliate, which they totally will.

[63]Enforcing a boundary with this ferocity is not easily done, at least not the first time, but it is effective. [64]This may be the first time this narcissist has seen such a stern side of you. [65]That's ok. [66]It should enhance the effect. [67]If you choose to stay with the narcissist after this, please know that you have caused them a devastating narcissistic injury. [68]If they have a backup supply line at the ready, then you may notice that the narcissist is spending less time with you and more time with them. [69]If they don't have a supply line ready, then your discard is just around the corner. [70]They will take just about anyone over you at this point, because their standards have to drop for them to get quick supply elsewhere to coddle them after that ego injury. [71]If you don't discard them, they will assume you are still game to being one of their lesser supply lines. [72]That's right, your not-so-agreeable-anymore attitude made them downgrade you from greater supply status, down to lesser supply status. [73]Yeah, they don't tell you this, but they think it. [74]If they told you what they were thinking, that they are about to shelve you until they get desperate, then you'd go from lesser supply to, "Hey, where did they go?" supply. [75]Show them how to respect you by respecting yourself that way first. [76]And then let them get acquainted with the you-shaped dust cloud you leave behind in the wake of your hasty exit. [77]That's right, beat feet!

[78]Lastly, once you put your foot down and create or enforce the boundary, then you can expect the narcissist to refer to your boundary as manipulation. [79]Your boundary, to a narcissist, threatens their ability to control you. [80]So, they feel that you are trying to control them by stopping them from controlling you. [81]Clear as mud? [82]The narcissist projects onto you the very purpose that the narcissist themselves would use a boundary for, to manipulate you like in my earlier example. [83]They tell on themselves with their projection. [84]Just switch the "I", "me", and

"my" to "you" and "your". [85]Once you do this, their projection can get a little creepy. [86]The more you understand about narcissism, the less you'll want to engage with it, or at least that has been my experience. [87]Ain't nobody got time for that bullshit. [88]Time is precious. [89]Don't waste it speaking to, or explaining yourself to, a narcissist. [90]Not a single one of them is worth your time, no matter how much money they have or how beautiful they are. [91]Well, unless you are using them to spar with. [92]More on that later.

Beast Mode:

[93]I LOVE SPARRING TIME! [94]It's my favorite. [95]I'll be quiet for now. [96]No spoilers for you.

[97]#RIPDONCASANOVA [98]#THATSHOWITSDONE [99]#NOTSOSTOICANYMOREHUH [100]#KEEPINGITTHISMANY

13. Self-Love

[1]Just as a ship without a compass is at the sea's mercy, a person without a healthy amount of self-love is easy fodder for a narcissist. [2]You can learn self-love from the one person who taught it best, through his time here, that we are all indeed worthy of love. [3]His name is Jesus Christ. [4]Maybe for you he has a different name. [5]I'm no holy roller. [6]You do you. [7]I'm just sharing what I did and who I turned to for support. [8]If you are reading this book, then you know how successful I was in achieving my goals. [10]I know people who have healthy self-love who are not Christians. [11]I'll leave it at that.

[12]Self-love will keep you from drowning in the energy-draining sea of sadness that is felt when yoked with a narcissist. [14]If you love your children more than you have love for yourself, you will choose to endure suffering at the hands of the narcissistic parent so that you can be present for your children. [15]That is admirable. [16]But what you are also teaching your children is that the institution of marriage is toxic. [17]It requires one person to do all the giving, while the other person does all the taking. [18]My sons witnessed a little bit of this from my enabling of their mother while she and I were still married. [19]Granted, my sons were quite young but old enough to remember that if daddy doesn't do what mommy says,

he will be punished. [20]That's all it takes to plant the seed in your children of what is acceptable in the family dynamic.

[21]You teach your own children, by accepting your abuse, that abuse is to be expected and that it's normal. [22]That sets your kids up for failure well into their adulthood, and possibly all the way to their final breath in old age. [23]Is that what you want for your children, to suffer for the rest of their lives for what you showed them as acceptable? [24]Don't feel guilty for your ignorance, and don't feel too proud to come to your adult children and let them know how you played a role in the toxicity. [25]Own it and leave that bullshit victim mentality to the pathetic ones who need to cling to it, those filthy nasty narcissists. [26]Show your adult children you got the balls to admit where you were wrong. [27]You do that, and there's nothing to feel guilty for. [28]You can't go back in time, but you can right the wrong.

14. The Cure to Reactive Abuse

[1]You may recall me going over reactive abuse in the chapter Green Light and even in earlier chapters before I named it. [2]The goal of reactive abuse is to bully someone into a reaction. [3]The reaction can be interpreted as permission to engage in a fight. [4]When you allow a narcissist's actions to lead you to lose control of yourself, and your integrity, then know that your virtue is up next on the chopping block. [5]They use your pride, your ego, to lure you into an engagement. [6]It's a trap.

[7]The narcissist uses reactive abuse to lure you into a trap of your own making. [8]Your reactions to their abuse will form the basis behind your punishment. [9]I'm positive there are many in jail for succumbing to reactive abuse, while the narcissist laughs from the other side of the bars. [10]The narcissist can even use the dog whistle tactic to impose reactive abuse on you while surrounded by witnesses who won't have the understanding behind the dog whistle. [11]You may remember that the dog whistle is when the narcissist says something to you that was designed to target your vulnerabilities in a way only you would truly understand. [12]The point of which is to get you to react or lash out in a public setting that will play a role in the existing smear campaign that you didn't even realize they were already running on you. [14]These people have narratives

for you, and they will do everything in their power to get you to react in a way that aligns itself with that narrative. [15]If it doesn't completely align with their narrative, they just twist it until it does.

[16]This is further proof that the narcissist knows exactly what they are doing. [17]It takes foresight and some amount of planning. [18]I'm sure when they pull off reactive abuse successfully, they must be fighting back a huge sinister grin. [19]Who knows, maybe they do so in front of the mirror when they get their first chance. [20]Think a narcissist won't be recording your response? [21]Think again. [22]Narcissists are notorious for recording your reaction to their reactive abuse and forgetting to include the part from before your reaction where they were verbally or physically shoving you toward it. [23]Yes, I was being sarcastic about them "forgetting", they know what they have to edit out in order to keep from discrediting themselves. [24]See? [25]They know exactly what they are doing every step of the way. [26]Don't let them fool you into believing they are oblivious to their own deceptive nature. [27]They know. [28]It is you who was never meant to know this. [29]Oops! [30]I guess those days are over, huh?!?

[31]You absolutely cannot fall for this trap. [32]They will play victim as soon as you play your part. If they are doing this to you, the relationship is over. [33]Anything that looks like reactive abuse should be handled with the utmost care as you carefully plan your exit. [34]People's lives have been ruined because they gave in to the reactive abuse. [35]The narcissist will use your reaction to their abuse as a source of shame that they can poke at whenever they want to remind you of the nastiness you are capable of. [36]Additionally, they can threaten to use your reactions against you if you ever decide to leave them. [37]This is coercive control at its finest. [38]It's blackmail, and it was by their design. [39]To them, that's what you get for being stupid enough to not see them for who they are. [40]They are entitled to treat you that way, after all, because you allow it.

[41]Those who know me, know there is one book about a couple thousand years old that I'm a super fan of. [42]I didn't just read Sun Tzu's The Art of War, I studied it. [43]I did so not just to gain understanding of the field of battle, but also in the context of interpersonal relationships, in spiritual warfare of the world outside and my world within. [44]If I've identified a sin I have trouble letting go of, that is keeping me in a relationship with

the sin itself, you cut off the supply line that leads to you feeding that sin. [45]Starve the sin, and you will gradually drive its hold from you away. [46]Sin can control you just like a narcissist can. [47]Sin can blind you to the damage you do to yourself by feeding it. [48]If you are in a relationship with a narcissist, ask yourself what sin is keeping you locked into them. [49]Maybe there isn't one, but you better make sure first. Right? [50]Isn't that the smart thing to do?

[51]I taught you how to defend against reactive abuse. [52]Now it's time to learn how to use it yourself. [53]You don't need to lay hands on the narcissist. [54]You can get it going with just your words. [55]Attack that ego. [56]Tell them how worthless and pathetic they are. [57]Shame the absolute shit out of them. [58]The more they try their tactics to try to make you feel guilty for hurting their feelings, which translates to calling them out for their shit, the harder you lean into it. [59]Again, like I've mentioned before, you need to be healed before you do this. [60]This is truly playing with fire, but if you do it right, you can lure them into reacting, which is all they know how to do. [61]They won't believe you are capable of using this tactic, so they may not even believe they are locked into your crosshairs.

[62]Don't forget to hit record from multiple devices and multiple angles. [63]You'll have something to control them with. [64]You can even let them know you recorded it, and they will most likely try to get you to delete the recording. [65]That's what the backup devices are for. [66]When they believe the evidence is deleted, they will lie about the fact it happened to anyone you tell. [67]In their pea-brain mind, they had no clue that the recording they deleted was one of many. [68]Let them lie to their friends, family, and anyone willing to listen. [69]And then, when the moment is right, you expose the recording. [70]Yeah, they won't like that. [71]Yeah, it makes you look like you intentionally provoked them. [72]In the end, you will have exposed them to their network and destroyed that fragile little ego of theirs, but you've placed upon yourself the biggest red flag for future relationships. [73]That's just part of the cost of using their tactic. [74]This is deception. This is manipulation. [75]It's your soul, not mine. [76]But now you know that this is a tool you can use yourself. [77]You'll do more damage if you just abandon them. [78]It's easier. [79]Their own narcissism will drive the rest of their suffering without you needing to be involved.

15. Combating the Smear Campaign Against You

[1]Since I touched on the smear campaign in the previous section, this is a good segue into the topic of how you combat the smear campaign. [2]Any narcissist will see your defiance of their tactics against you as a threat to the reality they are trying to get you and others to believe in, their mask, their false self. [3]They will feel exposed as the liar they know themselves to be and will have to destroy your reputation so you don't discredit them. [4]You will be a threat to them. [5]I believe if they could get away with killing off the person who can see under their mask, they totally would. [6]I'm guessing many died because of that. [7]That doesn't seem fair.

[8]It's easy to become upset by the smear campaign. [9]Even though you may no longer care what the narcissist thinks about you, you may care what they are saying to the people you still care about. [10]There is nothing you can do. [11]The narcissist is doing this to protect themselves from the possibility of your exposure, to punish you for being able to truly see who they are under their mask, and to isolate you from others. [11]Isolation makes your healing journey difficult and is meant to keep you quiet while the narcissist awaits the moment you return to them in desperation, or to get them to stop the smear campaign. [12]Do not go back. [13]They know you can see through them already, so your treatment will get worse over time and fast too. [14]If you go back, that reactive abuse will be waiting for you as punishment for your ignorance. [15]Of course, now that I've informed you, you now know better. Right?

[16]A narcissistic parent will use the smear campaign against the empathetic parent who is wise to their game in order to slowly alienate that parent from the child(ren) they share. [17]Living authentically, not feeding into the drama of that narcissist, will be your best defense. [18]You may lose friends and family members to the smear campaign. [19]The ones who are more independent thinkers may not give in to the smear campaign and may want to form their own perspective. [20]These are the people who will usually distance themselves from the narcissist once they see through the manipulation. [21]The more power or influence the narcissist has, the more effective their smear campaign will most likely be.

[22]If you maintained a higher moral standing for yourself and kept your nose clean by not giving into the reactive abuse, then you have a good

chance of surviving the smear campaign with little to no losses in connections. [23]Just know that an expert manipulator can turn your own children against you. [24]I've heard of it, and I've seen it, and that's a level of pain I cannot comprehend.

[25]I've taught you how to endure and protect yourself against some amount of smearing. [26]You don't need to smear them back. [27]That makes you look just as bad as they do. [28]You know, I've seen so many political ads where one candidate endorses the smear campaign against their opponent. [29]I see through that shit. [30]I don't vote for anyone who resorts to smearing. [31]It's a coward's move. [32]Roll around with the pigs, and you will get muddy. [32]Exposing their deception is not smearing, but deliberately exposing it with strategic timing in order to manipulate election results is pure manipulation. [33]See it for what it is or be a slave to manipulation. [34]Be better.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[35]"Uh, isn't this book just one giant smear campaign against your ex-wife? [36]You are such a hypocrite. [37]You are a narcissist, and you don't even see it. [38]That said, bravo."

Beast Mode:

[39]OK :expressionless:

[40]#UGETTOBELIEVWHATUWANT [41]#YAWN

16. Shame Shame Shame I Know Your Name

[1]Let's take a ride in a magic time-traveling telephone booth and listen to what our friend Socrates has to say. "When the debate is lost, insults become the loser's tool," is a quote from him. [2]Remember this. [44]If they insult you, know that you won. [3]You can exit the battle at that time. [4]You probably said something that provoked the shame within those narcissistic fools. [5]It doesn't matter how much you sugarcoat that shame sandwich. [6]Feed that shame to them, and if they react with an insult, you just may have found one of these narcissists. [7]It's truly that easy. [8]That said, unhealed people who have been on the receiving end of narcissistic abuse may be loaded with narcissistic fleas and may lash out as if they

were a narcissist themselves. [9]The tactics do rub off in a negative way. [10]Pay attention. [11]Be discerning.

[12]Think of a narcissist's armor being made up of nothing but lies, a self-deception of holding power. [13]Shame cuts through their armor like a hot knife through butter. [14]It shows them just how powerless they truly are. [15]They will let you know that they felt the blow by insulting you. [16]If this is someone you know, then they may instead try to trigger guilt within you for "making" them feel bad. [17]Their shame, and facing it, is not your problem. [18]If you were a primary supply, this shaming of them will make you taste bitter to them, as if you've been tarnished. [19]You will no longer be a person they go to for positive supply. [20]Now, they will only go after that negative supply. [21]You must be punished for seeing through their mask until the end of time.

[22]You are not responsible for how these people "feel". [23]No one truly makes anyone feel anything. [24]No one should have the control to make you feel anything you don't want to feel. [25]Shame is designed to feel uncomfortable. [26]Shame is designed to lead you to repentance and self-correction. [27]Constructive criticism will be considered as shame if the other person doesn't want to be in the wrong. [28]So why is doing this so difficult for many of us? [29]We've been conditioned to fear someone's reaction to shame or healthy criticism. [30]We've been conditioned to expect some kind of retaliation and aggression. [31]This is why we stay quiet. [32]This ends now. [33]Now is the time to weaponize shame towards those who do the same. [34]It hits different when the shame is loaded with truth.

[35]It is their own shame that leads them to anger, not you. [36]The thing is this, when they shame you, it may be completely baseless. [37]When you do it to them, you call upon the truth while you shame them. [38]When they shame you for something you know is incorrect, let it bounce right off. [39]Why spend the energy defending something you know is not true about yourself? [40]Why spend the energy trying to convince someone that they are wrong about you? [41]Fuck 'em. [42]Who cares? [43]Well, you do, of course. [44]The narcissist knows you are speaking the truth, but if they can banter back and forth with you, it coddles their ego. [45]It shows them you still care about what they think about you. [46]If you care about what they

think about you, then obviously you must care about them. [47]This is how you still serve in the role as supply by giving them validation.

[48]So, shame them for what they do and say that is wrong and hurtful, and then depart. [49]Don't give them access to you. [50]Shame them with the last word and straight bounce. [51]They will have to have the last word. [52]Let them have it, but it doesn't feel as good to them if they have the last word and you simply remain silent. [53]They will have to sit with it until they can find someone to vent and lie to about it. [54]They are totally getting that ego coddled as soon as you shame and depart from them. [55]Seriously, they do it like clockwork. [56]They need to feel better about themselves, and they can't do that on their own. [57]This brings me to my next point.

17. The Shield that Reflects

[1]Did you see the shield on the cover of this book? [2]That is the shield that reflects. [3]It's blue on one side, and a mirror on the other. [4]Guess you couldn't tell when you only get to see one side of it. [5]When the narcissist comes at you, show them the mirrored side of your shield. [6]The shield will protect you from everything the narcissist will throw at you with ease.

[7]You need to know yourself before you can wield the shield that reflects. [8]You need to know that you are on your path to healing and that nothing can stop you. [9]Words bounce off you like toothpicks thrown at you. [10]If you are being true to yourself, then there is nothing to defend against. [11]Your defensive posture, your words defending your position, and your thoughts and feelings, are unnecessary. [12]It tells the narcissist that you are someone who can easily be attacked. [14]Beast, help me show them what being defensive looks like.

Beast Mode:

[15]Oh, Mr. Narcinson! [16]Yoo-hoo! [17]Where are you?

[18]Hmmm. I wonder why he's so quiet. LOL

[19]Oh, right. [20]Let's shame him. [21]That will get his attention. [22]Works like a charm every time. [23]Ahem…

[24]You know that narcissistic motherfucker who pops up here? [25]I bet you he stopped showing up because he's envious of our light.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[26]"Ha, you came to go toe-to-toe with me again? [27]Didn't get tired of me handing you your ass left and right apparently. [28]Sad. :(…"

Beast Mode:

[29]There you are. [30]Wait, what did you say? [31]You beat ME?!?! [32]I was handing you your butt the whole time, and even…

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[33]"Oh, here you go again, talking about how you are all that. You are so full of yourself. You…"

Beast Mode:

[34]I'm just going to cut him off here, as he's already illustrated my point. [35]See how fast that was? [36]Him cutting me off is his own permission for me to do the same back…and permanently, if I so wish. [37]It's not revenge, it's more about you not wasting your time entertaining their baseless words.

[38]I defended myself with a statement trying to illustrate that he was incorrect in his defeat of me. [39]I tried to illustrate to him that he was the one who lost. [40]I was about to start providing examples of how I have been repeatedly victorious. [41]This is when he cut me off.

[42]You see how he cut me off with his words? [43]They do that to get you to stop shaming them, or if they see that your words are leading toward shaming them. [44]They see it coming and that's why you have so many people interrupting each other in arguments. [45]No one cares what the other has to say, only about winning the argument and escaping the shame. [46]It makes their blood boil if they have to sit and endure listening to you finish whatever shaming thing you are telling them. [47]Not only that, but if they allowed you to finish your statement, they would feel the need to defend themselves. [48]And defending is what you are

supposed to do, not them, in their mind. [49]This is why they cut you off, to avoid the shame and the optics of guilt for having to defend themselves. [50]If they can cut you off, they save their energy for the following volley of accusations. [51]See? [52]They don't care what you have to say, but they do care about how their ego feels if you shame them. [53]There's a difference.

[54]Narcissists only react like this when the shame is real. [55]They know when they are truly in the wrong, otherwise they would let your shaming comment bounce right off them. [56]This is how you know what they are ashamed of, and you can use this as a system of self-validation that you have them right where you want them. [57]The moment you let them speak, it shows them you care about what they are saying. [58]It lets them know that you are still playing their game and completely blind to it. [58]Now you know why they cut you off. [59]They feel entitled to not hear anything that doesn't match the narrative they want you to believe.

[60]If the narcissist knows you can't be convinced, that you indeed can see through them, they will depart the argument on their own accord and smear you. [61]Because if people see what you see, then their fabricated and inflated ego goes pop forever.

[62]Now, let's thank our entitled friend for assisting us in understanding how us being defensive only feeds the narcissist. [63]And we got to learn a little bit about how they cut you off…because it hurts their feelings to be seen for what they truly are.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[64]"Fuck you. [65]Go to hell. [66]You are the most conceited, judgmental, and hypocritical narcissist I've ever met."

Beast Mode:

[67]Been there, done that. [68]Got the fucking t-shirt and the stupid souvenir cup, and I'm still smiling. [69]What else you got? [70]And nice try trying to get me to defend myself against what I know to be lies. [71]Aww, you want me to defend myself so that you feel special and heard? [72]I see through you and am using you. [73]I'm manipulating the manipulator. [74]How ironically simple it is to do! [75]Anyone who is egocentric can be easily manipulated. [76]Stroke their ego, and they like you. [77]Shame them, or simply try to correct them, and they hate you. [78]Expose them in front of the entire world, and they crumble. [79]Hold that expo-

sure over them, and they fear you. [80]If you choose to use fear to manipulate them, then the puppeteer becomes your puppet.

[81]Hello? [82]:sighs:

[83]I guess our little friend is taking a break. [84]He's probably gone off to abuse others in order to build his ego back up for the next round. [85]Seriously, this is what they do. [86]If they can't get someone empathetic to coddle their ego, they will resort to going to another narcissist to coddle them. [87]If they can't find coddling for their precious bruised egos, they will punish those they have control over. [88]Those victims will have no clue that their punishment has nothing to do with them. [89]Think narcissists would never do that to their own children? [90]Think again. [91]Now, where did I put that pin? [92]Oh look, there are a bunch of toothpicks on the floor around me. [93]How convenient! [94]LMAO

[95]#POP

18. Copycat

[1]We already know that mirroring is a tactic the narcissist uses to get you to think they are your soul mate. [2]They use your words, your mannerisms, your expressions, and they mimic them back to you to lull you into that false sense of thinking the planets have aligned so that the two of you could meet. [3]It's ok, we all fell for it. [4]But I want you to take something very important away from that mirroring of you.

[5]The narcissist mirrored you so that you would fall in love with a copy of yourself. [6]That's why you feel so connected, they are pretty much a light copy of you in the physical form you are attracted to. [7]Strip away that physical part, and what you are left with is an aspect of yourself that the narcissist found very pleasurable. [8]They most likely envied that part of you. [9]If they complimented you on how attractive you are, then chances are they were truly super attracted to you, but that's just lust. [10]Your true value is not in your looks, but you already know this. [11]My point is, they will tell you what about you draws them toward you. [12]That's usually the only time they tell the truth, when they themselves are falling into limerence with you. [14]They are idolizing their relationship with you, and those qualities of yours they wish to capture as their own. [15]And they allow you to join them on top of their own pedestal. [16]The same things they idolize you for in the love bombing stage, with

all the mirroring, they will envy you for later, and eventually devalue you for it.

[17]The narcissist truly valued what they mirrored back to you. [18]So, take a walk in this newfound confidence that someone found that part of you so endearing that they wasted so much of their energy trying to simply mimic it, just so they could be close to you. [19]Take your flattery and flatten them with it by never letting them see that beautiful side of you ever again. [20]Give that to everyone else but them. [21]It'll break them. [22]Don't be afraid to shatter their egos like pottery. [23]That's nothing compared to what they did to you and everyone else in their life.

[24]You were once their pleasure. [25]Now your absence can be their pain. [26]Now it's you who does the pushing and the pulling…except you have no interest in the pulling part. Right? [27]Don't be like them, just because you can. [28]They don't play like we do. [29]If they know you are onto the game, do not return to a relationship with them. [30]I cannot stress this enough. [31]You will regret it. [32]Ask anyone who has abandoned the narcissist, but then fell for their hoover attempt while in a place of despair and loneliness. [33]They want you back so they can use you, and then destroy you. [34]You shall be punished for seeing them for who they are, but more so if you are stupid enough to return to them.

[35]So, what about you did the narcissist mirror to you? [36]How hard did they have to try to build that fake mask for you? [37]My ex jumped out of an airplane to get my attention. [38]She would've been better off being a human pancake, compared to the utter flattening of that ego now. [39]Oh, I can be ice cold now. [40]Make no mistake. [41]The wisdom of the snake is not without its unique temptations. [42]Be on your guard, you do not abuse this wisdom. [43]It's intoxicating playing this game, and you are the one in control whether you play it or not.

19. The Art of Asking Questions

[1]If you have to engage with these narcissists, and you are trying to get them to answer your questions, don't allow yourself to be satisfied with vague answers. [2]Listen to what exactly the narcissist says and what exactly they don't say. [3]Ask them questions to open up those vague

answers of theirs. [4]Call them out for being vague. [5]If they try to go off-topic and try to derail the conversation, and they certainly will, be wise to it. [6]Cut them off the moment you sense it and redirect them back to your question. [7]Say their name to them when you do this and give a slight pause. [8]They hate it when you say their name. [9]And they hate when your reaction is not instant. [10]Combine the two to truly make them squirm. [11]If the topic was something having to do with the garage, for instance, and the narcissist starts to derail the conversation in any way, then bring immediate attention back to the topic. [12]For example, you could say, "John…the garage. I asked you about the garage."

[14]Every time the narcissist tries to evade, repeat the same thing, "John… the garage. We are talking about the garage." [15]Keep it short. [16]You don't need to explain how they try to derail and evade. [17]You could, if you want to get under their skin, but the narcissist will then make it about you or whatever else you said. [18]If you want answers, put the pressure on them. [19]Just know that the answer is most likely a fabrication anyway. [20]It's fun because you can actually see them getting annoyed by your staying on topic. [21]Enjoy!

20. The Sound of Silence

[1]Back in Chapter 6, titled Green Light, I mentioned how the narcissist uses the silent treatment as a way to punish and manipulate. [2]You can call it immaturity, but It's a very mature form of dark psychology and falls under the category of psychological, mental, and emotional abuse. [3]Children who are bold and attempt to exercise their authority over a parent may say, "Fine, well if you don't buy me that toy, I'm not going to talk to you." [4]As a parent, you don't cave into this manipulative behavior from your child. [5]The child may give you the silent treatment in defiance, and possibly because you are a weak parent who cares what your kid thinks about you more than what is good for your own child. [6]Some parents appreciate the quiet time from a child like this, and that's not healthy either if you show your child how much you love the sound of their closed mouth. [7]That's manipulative in itself. [8]You play your child's game. [9]Be careful with that. [10]Narcissism starts early, and you have a chance to squash it as a parent through holding them to

account and applying discipline from the onset, age-appropriate of course.

[11]A narcissistic parent will totally use the silent treatment on their own children. [12]It will resemble neglect to the trained eye but will most likely go completely unnoticed by anyone on the outside. [14]The one experiencing the neglect will not see it as neglect, they will see it as something that is wrong with themselves, something to be ashamed of or angry with themselves about, a feeling of unworthiness. [15]The child will be eager to get out of the silent treatment by changing their behavior to something the narcissistic parent desires, which ultimately requires sacrifice of the true self. [16]All cults require you to sacrifice who you are to the cult leader, and usually don't tell their membership about this requirement. [17]It is meant to be a deception.

[18]A child can decide to remain punished for being themselves, which brings with it the role of scapegoat I mentioned earlier. [19]Alternatively, the child can completely submit to become the image that parent wants them to be, which brings with it the role of golden child. [20]Additional children will try to find a middle ground, escaping the wrath of the narcissistic parent, and possibly joining in on the parent's abuse of the scapegoat in order to avoid that role for themselves. [21]This is purely for survival in the toxic family system and puts incredible pressure on the scapegoat to endure the toxic shame coming from every family member in their system and absorb it into themselves. [22]Scapegoats who have healed are absolute beasts. [23]While I'm on that subject, a healed golden child can blend in easily and can destroy a toxic system from the inside covertly. [24]Maybe toxic families implode because the healed scapegoat wakes up the golden child. [25]A golden child that turns against the toxic family that just lost its scapegoat can do serious levels of damaging exposure. [26]The toxic family lay completely exposed and turn on each other in a desperate attempt to create a new scapegoat. [27]The problem is that it's too late for that. [28]Implosion is the only thing that can happen next.

[29]It appears from the stories I've heard in my circles that siblings who have joined in on the abuse of the scapegoat in order to not be abused themselves, carry immense buried guilt for doing so. [30]Acknowledging and confronting that kind of guilt is very difficult. [31]If you think a narcissistic parent can't drive their own child to suicide, you'd be surprised to

find out how wrong you are. [32]Many can attest to this if they were not afraid to speak up against their toxic families of origin. [33]For the suicidal child, they wouldn't even see their abuse as abuse. [34]They would see the abuse as possibly a treatment that they deserved because they believed themselves to be unlovable.

[35]The dead can't speak, and any letter they leave behind that brings the narcissistic parent shame you can expect to never make its way into authority's hands as evidence. [36]It would never see the light of day as it would shatter the false image of the narcissistic parent and the false image of a healthy family dynamic. [37]Their pride in their false image means they would need to bury the true reason behind their child's suicide. [38]They may be able to bury it from the public, but in the household, you can expect that narcissistic parent to place blame onto other members of the household for the child's suicide. [39]Since the narcissist is adept at being able to place their shame onto others, they can escape its shame, while the enabling family members absorb all that shame. [40]Those with empathy will most likely carry the shame that is not their own, as if it were theirs. [41]An enabler doesn't realize they are an enabler, not until they wake up to their role. [42]That awakening is super painful for the empathetic enabler. [43]Pain is the greatest teacher.

[44]The goal of the silent treatment is to inflict suffering pure and simple, and it is used mainly to punish as a form of enforcing control. [45]It is dehumanizing to act like another human being does not exist. [46]To a child who has communicated their feelings to a parent, and then experiences this silent treatment from said parent as a form of punishment, they are being prepped for further abuse later in life. [47]The child seeks the validation of the parent in its most basic form, an open line of communication. [48]With the silent treatment, the punisher controls the line of communication, and hence controls the victim. [49]This trains a child who receives this silent treatment to find their worth in others who are willing to spend time communicating with them. [50]If that adult version of this child finds another narcissist and shares their dramatic stories of receiving this silent treatment and how it made them feel, then they just handed tools for their control right into the narcissist's hands. [51]They might as well say to them, "Hi, nice meeting you. [52]If you want to control me, just give me your attention and make me feel special and

loved at first. [53]Then later, I will do anything you say for you to keep giving me that."

[54]I wanted to include that the silent treatment can also be represented as a withholding of affection. [55]So, maybe the narcissist still speaks with you, but holds back a nurturing element. [56]This is meant to make you question if you are deserving of that affection. [57]The goal for the narcissist is for you to come to the conclusion that the reason for their withholding of affection is because you are the problem, and that the narcissist is your solution. [58]Smart little fuckers, aren't they? [59]No, you don't need to play that game. Not anymore. [60]Affection does make one feel special and loved. That is the intent. [61]But when affection is twisted to serve selfish purposes, then the act of affection is nothing but deception. [62]Yes, this person that you loved and trusted, who has deceived you for so long, had been deceiving you to your face from day one. [63]They don't care how starved you are for their affection; they need you to be. [64]That's the whole point.

[65]In the narcissist's mind, they aren't concerned with how the silent treatment or withholding of affection makes you feel. [66]It is simply one of their tools to get you to do or say the kinds of things that feed their false image. [67]They have no empathy. [68]They don't feel sorry for you or bad about what they are doing to you. [69]They need you to be empathetic in order to control you using your empathy against you. [70]So how do you defeat the silent treatment? [71]You have to see it for exactly what it is. [72]Your empathy is turned against you. [73]The only thing you can do is kill your empathy towards that person, and the ones who are blind to that person's abuse (the enablers). [74]We have all enabled the abuse of others, and even our own abuse. [75]This is not something to be ashamed of, for we were all deceived. [76]If you are bonded to those who the narcissist has influence over, you will still be controlled by the narcissist through their enablers, their extensions, their tentacles. [77]This killing of your empathy towards a toxic individual is a severing of the trauma bonds. [78]It is those bonds that the narcissist uses to control you. [79]Think of them as tendrils attached to your heart.

[80]I want to speak to sexual intimacy for a moment. [81]The silent treatment is right up there with the other manipulation tactic of withholding sex. [82]Deliberately withholding affection, in an attempt to control, is

emotional abuse. [83]Of course, you can't tell if it's deliberate, unless the narcissist makes a comment about how maybe they would be more interested in you if you _____. Fill in the blank. [84]Whatever you put there means they are withholding it deliberately to devalue, manipulate, and punish you. [85]The love is gone or never existed in the first place. [86]Congratulations, you are in a relationship with a manipulator and deceiver! [87]If they accuse you of doing the same, let them. [88]An accusation means nothing if it's untrue. [89]Don't defend.

[90]I can understand how difficult it is to hurt someone you are bonded to by abandoning them. [91]I've done it many times, but none as hard as the first time I severed with Candace. [92]Candace wasn't the reason it was difficult to cut the tie, it was the fallacy of my sunken cost of the self I invested into the relationship and the fear of what detaching from Candace would do to my sons. [93]I say this so you understand that I know how difficult it is to do this the first time. [94]If you detach your empathy from the narcissist and their enablers, you won't make yourself sick with hate for how they treated you. [95]That is resentment and will work against your healing and ability to detach from them. [96]You won't drive yourself crazy trying to understand why they gave you the silent treatment, if you no longer care about them. [97]And eventually, you'll want to make your safe exit from this relationship.

[98]Once you are able to mentally cut that emotional bond that ties you to someone else, you become the one with all the power. [99]Enjoy. [100]You will drive fear into the narcissist when they see that you are serious about cutting them out of your life. [101]Don't fall for their pleas, if they beg, for it is still manipulation. Yes, they are putting on a show to convince you not to leave. [102]Expect to be further gaslit if they see that you are starting to question your decision. [103]Maybe fake it like you are reconsidering. [104]Watch as they embrace your possible return. [105]And then pause and give them the impression that you truly are going to leave, and now enter the gaslighting. [106]It is a desperate act that will prove to you they are opportunistic as fuck.

[107]The narcissist's goal isn't to give you the silent treatment forever. [108]If you show you are not fazed by the silent treatment, the narcissist is going to eventually end the silent treatment on their own. [109]They will all of a sudden act like they never gave you the silent treatment. [110]They may not

even acknowledge it even happened. [111]If they know they can't gaslight you into believing they did not give you the silent treatment, they may offer a fake apology to end the silent treatment. [112]They may even treat you better than they had before giving you the silent treatment. [113]That is the push-and-pull maneuver of every narcissist. [114]It's the carrot hanging from the stick held in front of the donkey. [115]You see, while the silent treatment is in place, the narcissist believes they are making you suffer. [116]That is the entire point of using the silent treatment outside of using it to put distance between you…so they can access their other supply covertly. [117]If you show them that you are not suffering, and maybe even possibly thriving in their absence, they will end the treatment so they can abuse you further using different tactics. [118]If they are the ones to break their own silent treatment of you, they are not pleased. [119]They may wait a bit before doing so, but they will make you pay the price for making them be the ones to stop the silent treatment. [120]You make them question how much power they have over you, and that hurts their ego. [121]How dare you make them question how powerful they are? [122]How dare you make them feel small by thriving without their attention?

[123]Now that you understand the silent treatment is in fact manipulation and punishment, you can now use your own version of it. [124]The silent treatment you produce will take on new meaning. [125]Your silent treatment is not to punish, although it will feel that way to the narcissist. [126]Your silent treatment is not to manipulate the narcissist, although to the narcissist they will see it as manipulation. [127]You have to understand that when they see you using their own tactics, they will call it out for what it was to them. [128]This is them projecting onto you their own motives behind those tactics. [129]Use their response to your silent treatment as affirmation that it's indeed working as intended and that they are indeed narcissistic. [130]Their reaction to you using their own tactics will be your validation of who they truly were all along.

[131]Your silent treatment is to protect yourself and not to control anyone, although it will do damage to the narcissist. [132]If the narcissist feels you are fair game for silent treatment, then you can show them the epitome of silent treatment. [133]Take a page from the narcissist's playbook, that dark psychology, and cut these fools out once and for all from your life. [134]You don't have to tell them that you've decided not to speak with them.

[135]You don't have to tell them why you don't want to talk to them. You just stop talking to them, just like they do. [136]Let them try and figure out how someone so powerful as themselves feels so desperate for your attention, of all people. [137]If you've cut that empathetic bond to them and their enablers, then you will be able to deliver a permanent silent treatment to anyone who resembles toxicity. [138]This is how you create your peace. [139]You can't be abused if you are not accessible to the abuser or their enablers.

[140]If you are the one to use this tactic on the narcissist, you can anticipate they will try repeatedly to end your treatment of them. [141]They will try just about anything you can think of. [142]They will do the love bombing tactic. [143]If that doesn't work, they will shame you in order to get you to react in self-defense. [144]If that doesn't work, they will guilt you for manipulating them. [145]If you react, they will use gaslighting next in order to erode your confidence in yourself. [146]If you hold the line, without reacting and by maintaining silence or non-reaction, they will eventually get the picture. [147]They will then move on to your smear campaign, which most likely already started in full force once you issued the silent treatment yourself.

[148]Your biggest weapon in fighting against their attempts to end their treatment is a solid sense of self, and the self-confidence that comes with that. [149]Once they see anything that resembles you being completely off the script they prepared for you, they will imply that you are crazy. [150]This is that devalue I keep mentioning. [151]You see? [152]They have no choice but to call you crazy for seeing right through them. [153]They don't share this, but your silent treatment supremely fucks them the hell up. [154]It shows them that their power over you was an illusion. [155]And that illusion makes them question if they are able to be deceived themselves. [156]That's when their pride comes to the rescue, to make them believe that no one can get one over on them. [157]The narcissist's pride keeps them from expressing how afraid they truly are. [158]You can capitalize on their ability to deceive themselves, but that's in a later section here in the armory.

21. DARVO - When They Make the Issue About You

[1]Responding, and not reacting, to DARVO is going to be your saving grace. [2]At the end of DARVO is the reverse of the victim and offender roles. [3]Your bringing up of your concerns that shames the narcissist hurts them, as I mentioned before. [4]It doesn't matter if you sugarcoated how you felt when they said or did something to you. [5]If there's shame in there, that's all they will notice anyway. [6]You waste your time dancing around the issue or sugar-coating things. [7]Be blunt. [8]Don't be afraid, as being blunt gets easier and easier, as long as you don't mind losing some people in your life. [9]Not everyone can handle bluntness. [10]The time for kid gloves is over. [11]They will see you as an offender because you have caused them a narcissistic injury. [12]And they will claim to be the victim in order to get you to rescind the shame, and even apologize for it yourself. [13]When the narcissist is moving the onus from their behavior onto you as a person, then let them know exactly who they are tangoing with. [14]Let 'em see that fancy footwork. Ahhh…

[15]Instead of your natural inclination to defend yourself and your positions, you can call out the fact they just used DARVO. [16]You can even explain what DARVO is, how it works, and why it is normally effective. [17]If you start describing this tactic, they will most likely cut you off by interrupting. [18]Since they can't interrupt you without having something to say, the whole time you are explaining DARVO their mind is focused on trying to find the angle to counter you. [19]They do this because you are indeed on track with your explanation, and it drives deep fear within them that you can actually describe what they may have never put words to. [20]A narcissist who is not self-aware may not have heard of DARVO, but if they are reading this book, they know I am describing the very tactic they use in fine detail. [21]And now, the narcissist reading this is thinking how everyone who reads this book is someone who could possibly expose them. [22]Yeah, their time has come. [23]Bye bye stupid narcissist who is reading this!

[24]If you choose to counter DARVO like this, by explaining how they are using DARVO back to them, you will push the narcissist to lean harder into their narcissism to provide them their strength. [25]Let it inflate their ego. [26]The bigger their ego gets, the more fun it will be to shatter it later. [27]This is how you take not just the power from the narcissist, but also the

control, and you expose them a little. [28]You show them that you are in control of yourself completely. [29]This shatters their image of you as an extension of their control. [30]Without control, they will feel powerless and become fearful. [31]The fear will show itself in the form of rage. [32]If they rage, you win. [33]You have made them lose absolute control of themselves simply by controlling your reaction and responding with confidence and directness.

[34]Hopefully there is an audience to witness you do this to the narcissist. [35]Maybe you wait until you are in front of a group of witnesses to call them out and call out the DARVO tactic as they use it. [36]If you want to severely wound a narcissist, then that is what you do. [37]When you do it in public, others learn that the tactic exists and will be able to recognize it better. [38]That witness becomes strengthened and inspired by your actions and bravery. [39]It's contagious. [40]You can play along with their DARVO now that you know when it is used on you. [41]Just pretend to defend yourself. [42]Pretend to let them derail the conversation. [43]Pretend to let them show you how you are the offender. [44]You can even pretend to offer them an apology for how you hurt their feelings with your words. [45]We all know how to pretend. [46]We did it as kids when trying not to fall into the pool of lava in our living rooms. [47]We do it as adults in plays and on film. [48]Narcissists do it 24/7. Now, you can too. ;) [49]Play along to get along until the moment you wish to show them who you truly are, the one who had all the power the whole time.

[50]You may fear the narcissist's retaliation. [51]If you are someone who can be controlled by fear, then instead respond with, [52]"You can believe whatever you want about me. [53]I'm done with this conversation." [54]This is my way of illustrating what Dr. Ramani describes as the DEEP technique. [55]DEEP stands for Don't Defend, Don't Engage, Don't Explain, and Don't Personalize. [56]My explanation of DARVO to a narcissist attempting to use it would be considered as me engaging the narcissist. [57]Get ready for battle if you choose to do this. [58]As long as you are mentally prepared for a physical confrontation, your confidence will convey that to the narcissist. [59]They are fear-based. [60]Remember that. [61]They fear unshakable confidence because they know theirs to be pure fabrication. [62]If you see through their BS confidence, it puts real fear "deep" into them. [63]LOL.

[63]No matter how you respond, you simply remove the power from the narcissist. [64]They may still rage. [65]You enable their rage by enduring it and being present with their rage. [66]This is why narcissists love to rage at you while you are a captive audience, like in a car or in a room where the narcissist is blocking your exit. [67]They need you to feel afraid so that you fuel their ego as them being someone to be feared. [68]Feeling brave? [69]Laugh at them trying to be tough. [70]If they want to hit you, they will hit you. [71]If they do that, you got them. [72]Call the police privately and report the violence. [73]I advise against doing anything that makes you feel unsafe. [74]That said, you'd be surprised how you putting your foot down only needs to be performed once to drive home the reality that you are not one to be fucked with anymore. [75]You may be one black eye away from bidding the narcissist goodbye. [76]Is that worth it? [77]A bruise heals, but your good-bye can last forever if you want it to.

[78]Life is more than just living or surviving in fear. [79]I'd rather die unafraid, thank you very much. [80]You do you. [81]Guess how many narcissists have the guts to rage at me? [82]None. [83]I shut it down, and you can too if that's what you want. [84]Laugh at them and mock them for acting all big and bad. [85]If they hit you, don't stop smiling. [86]They will fear you more. [87]They will see and feel your power. [88]Don't attack them back unless it's for survival. [89]You can also dodge their blows, though that will show them that you fear being hit. [90]If you turn that other cheek and smile, you will scare the crap out of them. [91]They will call you crazy, but the police won't. [92]In the police report, your smiling after being hit by an abuser is of no relevance to the infraction. [93]You got them, and now they are going to go to jail. [94]Use that jail time of theirs to change the locks, or to move your shit out of that dwelling and disappear. [95]File a protective order. [96]Go all out. [97]Do not hesitate. [98]Make the blows they landed worth it. [99]If you know this person to be prone to physical violence, then you know what to expect if you push their unstable asses. [100]Personally, I'd be ready to defend my life by any means necessary.

[101]Remember, when the narcissist is accusing you of anything, they don't care what you will say as a response. [102]They may in fact believe that their accusation is entirely baseless. [103]The purpose of them using DARVO is to get you to defend yourself to try and change their mind. [104]Their mind cannot be changed, but they will allow you space to

defend yourself because it means you care what they think about you. [105]To them, your defensiveness just proves you can still be controlled. [106]This is providing them with the lowest form of validation. [107]They won't interrupt you while you are defending yourself, but watch how they cut you off and interject the moment they suspect their poor behavior is about to become the subject of your next sentence. [108]They can detect incoming shame before the words can escape your mouth. [109]This is because everything they hear is either in support of, or against, their false image, their ego. [110]The fact they are using DARVO shows how desperate they are for validation. [111]If you do engage in defending yourself, you are officially letting them know that you have been caught in their loop and are still under their control. [112]That's all you are doing by defending yourself. [113]Don't fool yourself into believing that you are making any headway at all. [114]The narcissist's false sense of self is their priority.

[115]So, why would you defend yourself knowing what you do now? [116]Well, it is to continue to blend in of course. [117]As long as the narcissist believes you can be manipulated with DARVO you can use that to your advantage to buy yourself time to plan your escape. [118]Giving them compliments that feed the image of themselves they put out in the world will make them believe that you are under their control, and may improve their treatment of you for a short while. [119]Use that to your advantage if you must, but don't personalize anything the narcissist says. [120]Just pretend, like I've mentioned earlier.

[121]For those of you who ever wanted to pursue the career of acting, now is your chance to prove you got the chops to fake it with the best of them. [122]Treat it like a game. [123]Have fun with what once tore you apart. [124]Now that you know the game, you can sport a poker face. [125]If you let them believe they have control over you until the moment you disappear for good, it absolutely destroys them. [126]That should not be your goal, but I thought you should know. [127]Can you be even sneakier than them? [128]You can, because they all lack the capacity to believe in their victim's ability to evolve. [129]They don't believe you can evolve, because they cannot. [130]If they cannot, surely you cannot. ;) Let them believe it until the end, if you so wish.

[131]So I went over the following responses, not reactions, to their use of DARVO. I listed how to manipulate the narcissist into believing their DARVO worked, how to use DEEP to protect yourself, and how to engage with exposing their tactics to them in order to cause severe narcissistic injury. [132]No matter how you respond to DARVO, you are the one in control if you wish to be. [133]DARVO ends when you say it does.

22. Giving Criticism and Withholding Forgiveness - A Narcissist's Only Real BFFs

[1]The narcissist loves to devalue their victim when they become envious of their victim's power. [2]Yes, they envy your power, the light that's within you, that empathy they no longer possess. [3]They can't have it themselves, so they envy you. [4]It's hard to believe that this highly criticizing individual is in fact highly envious of you. [5]Now you know. [6]They start small, especially in interacting with those they've identified as potential new sources of supply. [7]It's all going great with these narcissists until that envy in them shows up. [8]Maybe you accomplished something great. [9]Maybe you did something creative that required a lot of skill and are being recognized for it.

[10]When you rise, they need to be the one that makes you fall a little. [11]Here comes the narcissist's unsolicited feedback. [12]If they are narcissists with some amount of sense in them, they will put a little sugar on that shit sandwich they are about to feed you. [14]In the workplace, they may say to a coworker, "That was a good presentation you gave, but I saw a lot of the executives had a confused look on their face." [15]If you did not notice the confused looks, or if the executives chose not to ask questions during a presentation, then you can make the valid assumption that the narcissist is just trying to devalue you. [16]You in fact gave an amazing presentation, and that is the thing of the narcissist's envy. [17]They wish they had the ability to build that kind of presentation and to deliver it with the same eloquence, if not better. [18]Isn't it sad that these people have held us all back for so long with comments like these? [19]We are out there nailing it, and yet we let them diminish our successes. [20]Not anymore.

[21]"I thought you were smarter than that," or other subtle comments are meant to erode the foundation of who you believe yourself to be, or who you are working towards becoming. [22]Maybe you made a mistake, but the narcissist will use that mistake to mean something about you as a person, and less about the mistake itself. [23]If a narcissist can get you to believe that there are no such things as mistakes, then they have you completely under their control. [24]They wish to use your honest mistakes against you in the form of guilt. [25]They will have great difficulty doing that if they allow mistakes to exist in their reality. [26]They must pull you into that reality to better control you. [27]Once they do, they get to define what the mistakes are, and that will be defined as failure to follow their specified and highly rigid instructions.

[28]The narcissist actually needs you to make an error. [29]They need the instructions to be complicated so that you fail. [30]They need you to fail, so they can weaponize your failure to follow their control and so they can make you feel guilt. [31]Then they use that guilt to enhance their ability to manipulate. [32]You are then trapped in a cycle of control. [33]As a child under this type of punitive control, their adult life is in jeopardy of being completely sabotaged. [34]The sad thing is the victim may live a long life while being none the wiser to their reality. [35]That doesn't seem far, does it? [36]Someone's obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) does not give them the right to impose their disorder on you. [37]If you can't fall in line with their self-imposed requirements, that's not your problem. It's theirs. [38]OCD is not permission to punish or control others.

[39]They will withhold forgiveness of your mistakes, or failure to follow their instructions. [40]After all, to the mind of a narcissist, forgiving someone gives away their power to use the guilt to control them with. [41]A narcissist does not forgive. [42]If they offer it, it is only a deception meant to manipulate you. [43]If you care whether or not they forgive you for a mistake, then you are under the influence of their ability to control you. [44]Their control over you is not for your protection, as many will have you believe, but is in fact to ensure you remain an extension of their ego. [45]Your role as servicing the narcissist by becoming nothing more than a mere extension of their false ego, a simple mask, is yours if you wish to have it. [46]Slavery is yours if you wish.

23. Isolation - A Denial of Your Independence

[1]The goal of the narcissist is to make you question yourself and to keep your self-esteem low, but other people who care about you will get in their way. [2]The narcissist can only allow those who believe their mask to have access to you, especially if that person is considered as loyal to the narcissist. [3]There can be no outside sources of validation, otherwise the narcissist risks losing control over you. [4]This cannot be allowed to happen, and so you are isolated from any and all who have the ability to see psychological abuse and have the power to help you see it as well. [5]Therapists that cannot be controlled are a threat to that power.

[6]If in couple's therapy, the narcissist will try to control the therapist or the victim's perception of their therapist. [7]Therapists who are narcissists themselves, and indeed there are many, or are blind to manipulation tactics will become the narcissist's enabler. [8]And that's when you are in real trouble. [9]This causes so much more damage to the victim. [10]Couple's therapy with a narcissist is a waste of time and money. [11]A master manipulator can easily triangulate an ignorant therapist against you. [12]Don't believe this happens? Watch how many people come out into the open saying this after reading my book. [13]It's all coming out. [14]That's a "them" problem.

[15]I've already identified isolation as a problem, so what is it doing in the armory? [16]Well, how do you combat your own isolation when the narcissist is controlling all who have access and influence over you? [17]You have to put in the work to put yourself out there and make friends. [18]That's an incredible ask of someone who has been psychologically and emotionally abused. [19]The victim is usually too embarrassed and ashamed to open up to anyone about what they are truly feeling. [20]The loneliness of this kind of abuse is crushing. [21]Not just that, but if the victim fears their abuser, they will be afraid to pull anyone else into that storm with them. [22]Avoiding people protects the victim and those who could help them, or so the narcissist would have you believe.

[23]The narcissist can be cunning in how they actually turn you against your own family. [24]If the family ties are weak, a narcissist can certainly erode them the longer you are with them. [25]They will not want you spending too much time with family. [26]So, what do they do? [27]They will

twist the words of your own family members to suit the narrative they need in order to slowly separate you from them. [28]So, this could look like them saying they don't feel safe around that certain family member of yours. [29]They could say they don't like the looks that family member of yours gives them, even though you've never seen the looks yourself.

[30]To separate you from your loved ones, the narcissist may become agitated whenever you talk about wanting to see them. [31]They make it seem like you are seriously inconveniencing them. [32]This may not sound like too big a deal due to how subtle this is, but over time you may gradually stop bringing up wanting to visit your family members just to avoid an argument. [33]This is how the narcissist isolates you covertly. [34]If a friend or family member of yours calls out the narcissist's behavior, whether you witness this or not, that person will be public enemy number one to that narcissist. [35]So, if the narcissist all of a sudden won't stop talking shit about one of your friends or family members, that person most likely called out the narcissist's behavior in private. [36]You can test this by asking the narcissist, "Why are you all of a sudden harping on my mom with all this negativity?" [37]Now comes DARVO or gaslighting to the narcissist's rescue…again. [38]Boring!

[39]In my case, Candace would use my wanting to visit my family as collateral so she could be her abusive self while I just absorbed all of it. [40]Once a date was set, I would give into her control for weeks leading up to the visit. [41]Eventually I started calling her out on that tactic. [42]I didn't need to understand narcissism back then in order to see some shit for exactly what it was. [43]I know I'm not alone in this. [44]Needless to say, her reaction was to not go through with the visit and blame it on me for upsetting her. [45]And then she would keep my sons from coming with me to visit my family, which I would let control me. [46]I didn't want to visit my family if I presented an unhealthy marriage. I can finally say that now. [47]My pride of wanting to believe we were a whole family, kept me isolated. [48]I should've just visited my family without my sons. It would've woken everyone up to the real problems that were going on, including myself maybe.

[49]This illustrates how a narcissistic person erodes your ties to others. [50]You don't want to even bother, and the ones who could benefit you the most are kept at arm's length by your own actions. [51]This causes psycho-

logical and emotional suffering to those people as well, as people who you were once so close with may not understand why you are becoming distant. [52]If you are in a relationship with a narcissist, you have lost friends. [53]If you leave the narcissist, you will most likely lose even more with their smearing of you. [54]It's the nature of their beast.

Beast Mode:

[55]Hey! That's my cue! [56]Pretty fucked up, right? [57]Don't you just love these stinky rotten fuckers? [58]Yeah, me neither. [59]I'll tell you what I do love, though. [60]I love how easy it is to see through all these people. [61]You will eventually too. [62]You just gotta finish your boot camp first, silly. [63]Come on, damn it. Get it!

[64]#HOOOOOAH [65]#PAINISTEMPORARY
[66]#PRIDEISFOREVER [67]#PLAYTHEGAME [68]#ISEEDEADPEOPLE
[69]#DONTSTOPGETITX2

[70]Let's take a step back for a moment. [71]Of all the people who have come and gone from your life, who are the ones the narcissist despises the most? [72]Chances are it could be an estranged parent or relative of yours, or perhaps even theirs. [73]Don't think for a second that these fuckers can't push good-hearted people who once loved them, or who love you, far away. [74]They absolutely can and they do. [75]Anyone who the narcissist hates is most likely the healthiest person for you to connect with and is able to see behind their mask. [76]Anyone you once hated, because your hate of them made the narcissist happy, may not have been yours to hate. [77]Think about that. [78]Only you can pull yourself out of isolation. [79]No one else can help you. [80]Even if help was sent, if the narcissist still has control over you, you may not recognize that help. [81]You may even refuse that help. [82]You may even jeopardize the ones who come to help you by telling the narcissist about what they did or said. [83]That is the toll the psychological and emotional abuse of a narcissist is designed to take. [84]So much self-sabotage can be because of years of narcissistic abuse.

[85]The more alone you are, the easier you are to abuse and the more likely you are to remain silent about the abuse. [86]If isolated successfully, you will never even recognize the abuse yourself. [87]This book is the last thing a narcissist will ever want you to read. [88]I mean it. [89]I can't wait to hear

what people say about how the narcissists in their lives hate this book. [90]I bet if a narcissist is reading this book, and made it this far, they are truly freaking out. [91]But, not enough to change who they are. [92]That would require serious work. [93]Why work on yourself if the world accepts your mask as real? [94]Well, maybe the whole world won't be so accepting anymore.

[95]I dunno bout you, but I'm beyond tired of all the dirty rotten lying cheats of this world. [96]But, you know, who am I to say anything? [97]Right? [98]I'm just one person after all. [99]It's not like I have the ability to manipulate the masses. I leave that shit to the professionals. [100]We can trust them, obviously, because they've done such an amazing job so fucking far. [101]Imagine a world where all narcissists lived underground with the rats and cockroaches. [102]Up top on the surface things would be pretty fucking amazing, a world of love and respect and celebration of our authenticity. [103]No one around that devalues others. [104]It would be an era like nothing the world has ever seen before. [105]But I guess that's impossible, or maybe that impossibility itself is also a deception. [106]If I were a narcissist, I would totally want everyone to believe that a world like that is not possible. [107]Until then, a kid can certainly dream...

24. Gaslight Extinguisher

[1]"Your memory isn't what it used to be," is something you will hear a gaslighting narcissist say to you when you start reciting back to the narcissist an account of what they said word for word. [2]You having that good of a memory does not serve the narcissist if you keep bringing up things that cause them shame, or does not feed their ego. [3]The idea is to erode your self-confidence. [4]Yes, that's a common theme when it comes to all things narcissistic abuse. [5]Narcissists never simply build you up, unless they want something from you. [6]Instead of apologizing for a possible misunderstanding or a miscommunication on your part, try saying that your memory is fine and bring the subject right back to that shame. [7]They will attempt to evade the shame again through DARVO or another attempt at gaslighting.

[8]If you hold your ground and show a higher level of assertiveness, not aggression, it will put fear into the narcissist. [9]They will then resort to the

final stage of a failed gaslight attempt. [10]When they refer to your level of sanity or need for mental help, or something like that, it's because they are trying to erode your foundation of self-confidence. [11]They do this because they know you are not crazy. [12]Shocker. :| [13]They are absolutely horrified and are doing everything they can to hide that from you. [14]A smile, a yawn, or a chuckle from you while maintaining eye contact with them increases their fear. [15]Play into their fears that you see them for who they truly are. [16]Watch every reaction, every word, and every facial expression. [17]You will see your victory play out in their performance reacting to you. [18]Have fun. [19]Journal about it. [20]These journal entries will be your favorite to reread throughout your life. [21]Feel your power surge. Once you get that surge going, it lasts forever.

[22]Remember, if they can get you to question your ability to remember things, then they can rewrite the past anytime they wish, how they wish. [23]They want to make you accept their intentionally altered version of reality over your own memory. [24]They know the truth, but what matters is that you believe their lie. [25]If you find yourself documenting like crazy in order to prove to them in their own words, you've wasted your time. [26]All you are going to do is piss them off. [27]If you want to put the fear of God into a gas-lighter who is accusing you of being crazy or unstable, you can just come out and say this one phrase as long as you mean it and in your own words: [28]"I've never thought I'd have to be the one to ever say this, but I have the power to completely emotionally cut myself off from someone I deem as unworthy of me. If you don't come correct right the fuck now, maybe I'll show you how I do it. Maybe I'll just do it right now, just to show you I have that kind of power." [29]If you do this right, they will bend to your will in that moment. [30]I've seen it. [31]I've done it. [32]Show them that their power over you was their own delusion. [33]Stomp the fuck out of their ego. [34]Force feed all their lies to you down their own throats.

[35]If you've put that out there to the narcissist, they will distance themselves from you just enough to squeeze out any supply from you when you are willing. [36]But make no mistake, if they are a romantic partner, your relationship is already over in their heads. [37]They just aren't going to tell you this. [38]If you threaten the cut-off, you better be able to pull it

off and never speak to them again, or else you play the same self-deception game as the narcissist.

[39]Let your goodbye game be permanent. [40]How do you do that? [41]You need to see them as a waste of your precious time. [42]Appreciate the benefits that came with the experience of being connected to this person, and then execute the final blow to that tendril connecting them to you. [43]They don't even need to know it's coming. [44]You can do it whenever you want. [44]You don't need to communicate that you did it. [45]Just ghost their sorry asses. [46]They do it all the time to us, with the intent to keep us on the hook. [47]Do it to them, and they will never fully recover if you were a primary supply. [48]They won't tell you that though. [49]But now you know. [50]They will search for you in every new connection, but they will never find anyone like you ever again. [51]That is why authenticity is so huge.

[52]There is truly no one in the world like you. [53]Though, now, you may find that many have your story. [53]There is still only one of you in the entire history of the world. That makes you special. [54]The narcissist chases a replica or elements of your authenticity ever more, and they die before finding it. [55]Become that rising phoenix you were meant to be, and you become iconic. [56]Scream your battle cry loud, and you just may become the stuff of legends. ;) [57]This is a time for warriors, a hailstorm against the snowflakes. [58]The shredder of egos must first be the shedder of their own. [59]Yes, you can quote me. [60]Your ego is your enemy more than any narcissist.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[61]*"Uh, speaking of egos, you do realize you are the epitome of an egomaniac by virtue of you writing this book."*

Beast Mode:

[62]*I know, right? LMAO* [63]*I'm a maniac! I can't be stopped.*

[64]*#LOOKATMEWHILEYOUDIE* [65]*#ICANDOTHISALLDAY*

25. Clipping Flying Monkey Wings

[1]Master manipulators can turn potential allies of yours into flying monkeys, a minion of the narcissist and an extension of their ability to control you. [2]They do the act of spy work. [3]The flying monkeys can later be weaponized via triangulation by the narcissist to assist in either gaslighting you or smearing you. [4]In most cases the flying monkey is completely unaware of their position and may be someone that you love. [5]Narcissists truly don't care about other people, beyond their usefulness in service to them. [6]Pathetic!

[7]The flying monkey could also be codependent on the narcissist's validation. [8]So, if the flying monkey holds the narcissist as a love interest, they may be willing to bend their own morals for the sake of getting closer to the narcissist. [9]It's all manipulation. [10]Anyone in your life that a narcissist can turn into a flying monkey is someone you do not want to remain in your life. [11]It is beyond devastating to lose very close friends and family to the drama these narcissistic fools create. [12]If that flying monkey takes the side of the narcissist, you are better off discarding those relationships. [14]These narcissists can get into the heads of your own parents and children, and manipulate them against you, especially if you have a narcissist in your home of origin. [15]Man, these people can really team up when they want to fuck with you. [16]Have you heard of gang stalking? [17]Tada!

[18]Get rid of any friends who are monitoring your social media and are in contact with that narcissist of yours. [19]They are your friends no more. [20]They chose the narcissist's side. [21]It is what it is. [22]If you harbor resentment for that loss, you are beholden to it. [23]Letting go of these flying monkeys sends a package of clipped wings to the narcissist. [24]Once you discard these wingless monkeys, you've freed yourself from that extension of the narcissist. [25]It hurts to lose these people, but it hurts more to keep them in the long term. [26]When they wise up to this manipulation game, they will come to you with humility. [27]The choice to reconnect is your decision, but you can leave them in your past and be just fine. [28]They aren't entitled to return to your life. [29]If they do feel entitled to return to your life after gaining an understanding of their role, then they may be a narcissist themselves. [30]Some lessons are best learned the hard way. [31]You owe these people nothing, though reestablishing a connection

is admirable. [32]It's up to you. [33]You're in control of who has access to you. [34]Sure, life might be a little lonelier for a while, but a life without these people is a great one no matter how many problems you have.

26. Diffusing the Love Bomb

[1]Let's say you've identified the person you are dealing with as a narcissist. [2]If you are going to break up with them strategically, do it when they are love bombing you. [3]It's hard to break up with someone when they are giving you everything you wanted from them, whether it's sex, somatic stuff, attention, flattery, apologies, or gifts. [4]It's all manipulation. [5]They are doing it out of desperation for your attention. [6]They need you to make them feel better about themselves, which can never be sustained. [7]While they sport their mask and are giving you what you've longed for from them, while their ego is inflated by their belief that they have you fooled, that's when you strike. [8]They have no empathy, just ego. Attack the ego with your words and actions.

[9]If you find them very attractive, you can say that you are losing interest in them or that you no longer find them attractive. [10]Their selfish nature makes them less attractive overall, so technically it's not lying. [11]Yes, that's a terrible thing to say…to someone who isn't a narcissist, because it is a devaluing statement. The narcissist may want to know why. [12]They love asking the why questions. [14]Anytime a narcissist asks you why you think this, or why you did that, or why you feel this, it is simply to get you to explain yourself. [15]They aren't even listening to your explanation. You can tell by the fact that they will barely, if at all, validate whatever your response is. [16]You may even catch their eyes moving around as if they were visualizing your words and placing them into little mental buckets. [17]One bucket is labeled "words said that matches my perception of myself, another is labeled "words to twist and send back", and another bucket is labeled "reverse victim and offender role based on these words". [18]Seriously, watch their eyes dart around while you speak to them. [19]Not all of them do it, but you can see them analyze every word you say looking for anything that either shames them or builds their ego. [20]Their darting eyes are also trying to analyze where your words are leading. [21]What a shame how much energy they waste communicating

from their ego and not their authenticity. [22]Oh, that's right! [23]They have no authenticity. They are all fakers.

[24]If you crush their ego while they are putting on their performance to get your attention, you will create a deep narcissistic injury. [25]Do this right, and they will whip out DARVO. [26]Once they label you as the offender, you can comment like, [27]"If I'm the bad guy, I'm going to do the honorable thing and get out of the way of your personal development. [28]I don't want to impede your success by making you feel so bad. [29]It's best for you that we part ways since I feel so sorry for you for having to endure my treatment." [30]I'm just being a little condescending here, but you can literally be that. [31]It's fun being mean to them once you see them for what they are. [32]It's just their ego you are attacking. [33]Smile and have fun with it. [34]They sense fear, so if you have any in you, maybe don't crush them mid love bomb. [35]It's up to you.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[36]"Yo, that is cruel. [37]Surely your readers are intelligent enough to see you as someone who has completely lost their grip on reality. [38]You think this is a game? [39]You are so delusional. [40]And you are manipulating people to believe it. [41]Why? [42]So they can dish out your revenge on society on your behalf? [43]Pathetic. [44]You need serious help!"

Beast Mode:

[45]Now you are getting it! [46]You are so smart. [47]I knew you'd figure out my grand scheme eventually. [48]Can't get one over on you, huh!?!

[49]#YESTHEYAREALLTHINKINGTHIS

27. Probing - "Why" It's Not Just for Assholes

[1]Remember all those "why" questions the narcissist asks you in order to manipulate you better? [2]I touched on it in the last section. [3]Watch what happens when you ask them a "why" question that you know leads to something shaming for them. [4]For instance, "Why didn't you let me know that you were going to be out all night with your friends? You promised you would be home by 11pm?" [5]The narcissist feels the shame before you are done asking the question. [6]Watch how they cycle through

all the typical tactics to weasel out of an answer that exposes the truth which would cause them shame. [7]A devalue is just around the corner.

[8]If you ever want to piss them off, ask them "why" questions like this. [9]They see it as an attempt by you to take their power. [10]Isn't that pathetic? [11]You can't even have a real conversation with these people to address any of their toxic behaviors. [12]So, use those questions just to fuck with them and witness how they operate to evade it. The more you do this, the more they will not want to engage with you. [13]It exhausts them when they can't gain ground in a conversation.

[14]You are in control of every conversation with any narcissist now. [15]Think of your interaction with these people as if it were a whole different language. [16]In Bulgaria, shaking your head "no" is the equivalent to nodding "yes" in the USA…and pretty much every other country in the world. [17]Weird, huh? [18]My point is this. [19]The narcissist speaks a different language. [20]When they rage, it means they are afraid of you seeing them. [21]If they increase their control over you, it means they are afraid of you leaving them. [22]Learn the underlying meanings behind everything they say and do, and you will be able to interpret their tongue better. [23]What? [24]You want me to put in a section that is just a translation of things narcissists say and what they truly mean? [25]That would be pretty cool, wouldn't it? [26]Why don't you do that yourself after reading this book? [27]Put your narco-speak on social media. [28]This is your game now too. [29]I don't want to take that creativity away from you. We all get to play this game together now.

28. No Contact and Closure

[1]Don't talk to they ass. Don't even think about they ass. Don't look for they ass on social media. [2]Erase them from your mind as if they were just your imagination and nothing more. [3]It was all a deception anyway, just a dopamine drip. [4]It wasn't real to them, so it should not be real to you. [5]You were duped. [6]Once you accept that, and humble yo ass, you can go all in on no contact like no one's business. [7]No cap!

[8]Let their treatment of you be the closure you can give yourself so that you can implement no contact and shut that relationship down for good.

[9]If you harbor resentment towards them for duping you, then they still live in your head rent-free. [10]They ain't payin' no damn rent tho, so make they ass kick rocks. [11]Hurting them should not be your goal, but if it makes you feel better, no contact suffocates the shit out of them. [12]They abhor it. [13]They fear it. [14]They can't even believe it when you do it. [15]If you were their primary source of supply, they will try repeatedly to get you to interact with them. [16]Let their pathetic attempts be your new validation. Let their failed attempts be your new supply. [17]See? [18]This works both ways now. [19]They done fucked with the wrong one.

[20]When they try to hoover you with the love bombing, they will try pulling all your empathy strings. [21]Can they get you mad enough to engage with them? [22]Can they smear you enough to get you to reach out to them in anger, which is referred to as the reverse hoover? [23]Can they triangulate someone in your circle to reach out to you on their behalf? [24]Can they get you to pity them? [25]Can they threaten you with their own self-harm or suicide? [26]Please document that if they do and file it under "C" for coercive control. [27]It's all lies. [28]And if they go through with any of it, that's on them, not you. [29]It's not your job to coddle your abuser, unless you appreciate being in the role of codependent and being one of their enablers. [30]Threats of suicide keep many under the control of the "suicidal" person. [31]We know we need to treat threats of self-harm seriously. [32]Just discern their nature first. [33]A manipulator will totally resort to this to keep you from leaving them, but they sure as hell ain't gonna put in the work to repent and work on themselves. [34]As long as you are stupid enough to fall for it and stay by their side, they will never change, and you show them exactly how to manipulate you using your empathy and guilt. [35]Congratulations, you're the dumbass.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[36]"You gonna stand for this asshole calling you names? [37]Why you even reading this shit?"

[38]"I see you are still here. [39]I guess you really are a dumbass. [40]Just like him."

[41]I get it. You may feel dumb upon coming into this awareness. You weren't, you were just taken advantage of. [42]Though, if you fall for it now however… I mean, what's your excuse? [43]Think all of these narcis-

sists won't play the suicide threat card to the last one who decides to abandon them? [44]Think again. [45]It doesn't matter how much money or power or influence they have when the ones closest to them finally wake up to who they were all along and ditch they sorry ass. [46]They all crumble when exposed or seen for what they are.

[47]The last ones to leave a narcissist will see a side of them that no one will ever get to see, the truly pathetic broken traumatized individual they spent all their time, money, and energy trying to hide from the world. [48]This is who they really are. [49]Think they won't threaten your life for being the last to leave them? [50]They would. [51]The moral of this story is this, "don't be the last one to leave a narcissist, as it will be the hardest and most dangerous thing you may ever do."

[52]I'm going to get back on the topic of no contact. Got a little derailed for a moment, but it needed to be said. [53]For me, I had to leave communication channels open for the sake of my sons. [54]Coparenting, or parallel parenting, with these people is not for the weak. It's such an insane experience that I wrote a massive book about this shit. [55]Wanna read it? [56]You are. [57]It's unbelievable the shit these fools put people through. [58]You wanna know what else is unbelievable? It's the fact that it's still going on in 2024. [59]It's almost as if no one wants to acknowledge how seriously fucked up these people are and how damaging they are to the fabric of society. [60]But what do I know, right? I obviously have no right to have that opinion. LMAO. [61]But last time I checked, this was the land of the free and home of the brave. [62]I'm exercising that bravery right now.

[63]Let's see what the American people have to say about my little expression of my idea of freedom. [64]Let The People tell you what they think when they witness a human being that thinks for themselves. [65]I'm the crazy one, remember? Everyone else is sane. [66]I'm just that weirdo who won't shut up about narcissism until everyone gets it through their skulls. [67]Hate me for being eccentric and repetitive, but you'll thank me for it later.

29. Don't Open the Door

[1]When you are exercising no contact, many of these desperate narcissists will try to get you back. [2]Everything out of their mouth will be a lie or twisted truth. [3]Their goal is to get you back, have their fun, and teach you a lesson by discarding you shortly after. [4]Maybe you are lonely, or maybe you are horny if they were a partner. [5]Maybe that narcissist of yours knows their way around the bedroom or maybe they were blessed with a beauty you find irresistible. It's all a show. [6]The name of the show is called, [7]"Let's See How Thirsty This Sorry Fuck Is." [8]Everyone is a winner. [9]Seriously, chances are you weren't the first winner that day, nor the last. [10]Sex can be the highest, or only, form of validation to so many of these narcissists. [11]If you are with a narcissist who is an obvious sex addict, you may not be complaining much, until you get a sexually transmitted disease out of nowhere. [12]These people can have a body count in the triple digits. [14]Yes, you heard me right, a history of over a hundred sexual partners with several ongoing and overlapping. [15]They aren't going to be stupid enough to tell you that's what they are up to. [16]No, it's better to keep you ignorant of the reality of your situation.

[17]If they are a parent, then they will pull on all those strings about what they did for you throughout your life, or how much you owe them for the act of carrying you in their womb for nine months. [18]They will use guilt to control an adult child who is attempting no contact. [19]If you care about what they think of you, then they have you right where they want you. [20]See? [21]It's easy to manipulate the gullible. [22]I want more for you. [23]Don't wait for someone to see you, someone to save you. [24]This is all on you. [25]Be your own damn hero. [26]Isn't that what we truly want? [27]We don't want to be the one being saved from the foe; we want to be the one who overcomes and triumphs on our own. [28]That's empowering! [29]You don't want someone coming in to save your day. [30]That would be disempowering, wouldn't it?

30. Quick Tip - Arguments with Strangers

[1]In an argument, if the other person is more interested in feeding the conflict instead of feeding clarity, then you have yourself a situation with

a manipulator. [2]Their goal is control, and to do that they will need to make you the subject of the matter, not the conflict itself. [3]You can't resolve a conflict with someone like this unless you take onus of whatever happened to cause the conflict. [4]That's what they want, to be the one who is right no matter if they are wrong, and no matter what proof you had. [5]These are the people who love alternate facts. [6]I believe Kellyanne Conway coined the term "alternative facts". [7]Of course, it would be her. LMAO. [8]You want to watch someone play out every narcissistic tactic I mention? Watch CNN interviews of her. [9]It's so obvious it's hilarious.

[10]Watching Kellyanne run circles around a dumbfounded Anderson Cooper made both of them look stupid on live national television, including CNN and the White House. [11]In the end, systemic narcissism and the government's failure to combat it made the USA, my country, look dysfunctional to the entire world. [12]On January 6, 2021, the USA looked like a dysfunctional country. [13]A house divided against itself will fall. [14]OK, tangent over.

[15]Right, back to arguments with strangers. [16]These strangers get a nice little mini rush of ego trip by screwing with people. [17]These are also the kinds of people who will road rage, even if they were the ones in the wrong. [18]LMAO. These entitled fucks. [19]They will cut you off when you are the one with the green traffic light, and then give you the middle finger as they honk like crazy at you. [20]Of course, I want to run them off the road and scare the shit out of them when they act like that. [21]That is exactly what they want you to do, to act out so they can report you. [22]These are the kinds of people who will lure you into a lawsuit against you, and win. [23]Don't lose your cool. [24]As a matter of fact, the cooler you are, the more they lose theirs. [25]Weird, huh?

31. The Power and Fallacy of Forgiveness

[1]Forgiveness does not necessarily equate to a second chance. [2]Do remember that. [3]Forgiveness is for yourself. [4]You can forgive the narcissist in your mind alone. You do not need to tell them they are forgiven. [5]They never have to know. [6]As a matter of fact, a narcissist who asks for

forgiveness is pretty much looking to escape the shame they deserve. [7]Watch what happens when you don't say you forgive the narcissist. [8]They will become upset and then do the usual tactics I keep mentioning. [9]The reason they expect your forgiveness is because they truly believe they are entitled to your forgiveness endlessly. [10]That's how important they think they are. [11]Show these retards that's not how it works.

[12]Forgiveness protects you from the corruption of resentment. [14]You can't heal or truly enjoy peace if you harbor resentment. [15]Let it go through forgiveness. [16]It's easier said than done. [17]Seek therapy and coaching to help you if you need it. [18]That's your work to do. [19]Just know that a narcissist will continue the same behavior every time you tell them they are forgiven. [20]You letting them know they are forgiven enables them to continue the behavior. They don't tell you that. [21]They are stupid, but just not that stupid to give away their power to you. [22]Their power is the deception. It is the only power they have. [23]Why tell you the truth if they know you'll abandon them in a heartbeat upon hearing it?

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[24]"He said "retards"! [25]You see? [26]He has no shame. [27]Think of all the poor mentally disabled people. [28]How offensive. [29]You, sir, are an imbecile."

Beast Mode:

[30]Ahh, Mr. Narcinson. [31]You never cease to disappoint. [32]Of course, you would read all of that great advice and only pull out that one word. [33]You are so predictable. [34]I did that on purpose to prove this point. [35]Thank you, for walking right into my trap, like the retard you are.

[36]Dear reader, when I say the word "retard", I only speak about narcissists. [37]Remember when Trump mocked that disabled reporter? [38]The retard was Trump. [39]A retard to me is someone who has placed an imaginary crown on their heads and think they run the show. [40]THAT'S a retard. [41]All narcissists are retards. [42]They think they are the most important person in the world. [43]Give them enough power, and they will show you exactly who they are.

[44]Yes, in their world, only they matter. [45]They are not stupid enough to say that out loud, but just stupid enough to believe it themselves. [46]They truly are…what

was that word Mr. Narcinson used? [47]Oh yes, they are the epitome of imbeciles. [48]Narcissists are retarded. [49]Think about it. [50]They don't listen to reason. [51]They always have to be right. [52]They don't like you if you don't pretend they are right. [53]They only like you if you like them. [54]If they don't get their way, they throw a tantrum. [55]They are mean to you one moment, and nice to you the moment you start walking away for not taking their shit. [56]These are the only fuckers who should've been riding the short bus to school all along.

[57]These short bus riders are out here running the show, from government to major corporations. [58]Why? [59]Well look in the mirror. [60]Are you doing anything about it? [61]Are you the kind of person who calls out bad behavior? [62]Probably not. That's why we are in this mess. [63]We, as humanity, let this happen. We continue to enable it. [64]It's not all the retards' fault. Someone enabled them. [65]How many retards have you enabled? [66]How many have you enabled so you could collect a paycheck? [67]How many have you enabled out of fear of what they could do to your career? [68]How many have you enabled, because you didn't want their crosshairs on your back? [69]How many have you enabled so you can maintain access to them cheeks? [70]You know the answers.

[71]A narcissist would totally make fun of a disabled person. [72]Don't believe me? [73]Why don't you watch that clip on Trump mocking the reporter again. [74]Maybe that will refresh your fucking memory.

[75]#MINDOFMENCIA [76]#NARCSARETHEONLYRETARDS
[77]#DRAINTHESWAMPMYASS [78]#SWAMPTHING2024

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[79]"Oh, you are gonna get it for fucking with Trump, you half-breed. [80]You'll see. [81]They are all gonna come after you hard for that. [82]I feel sorry for you. Not."

Beast Mode:

[83]Oh, is that because I gave their retard god a narcissistic injury? [84]Awww, and here come his little retard extensions of himself to his defense at a chance to prove their loyalty to him? [85]OH BOO FUCKING HOO. [86]LMAO [87]You don't hear me praising Biden or democrats either do ya? [88]That's because both parties in the House and Congress are fucking corrupt. [89]Not all democrats, not all republicans, just the retarded ones, and both sides pay the price, hence we pay the price

as citizens. [90]The other ones in the House and Congress know exactly who I'm talking about. [91]Just watch C-SPAN, these people are too fucking busy coddling each other's egos and straight wasting time talking about, and fighting over, bullshit. [92]It's toxic as fuck.

[93]Yeah, them short bus riders made it all the way into politics. [94]Of course, that's where the power is. [95]Just look for wherever there is power and little to no accountability, and you will find a cesspool of retards. [96]Or maybe it's a swamp full of imbeciles. [97]Whatever you call it, a government will fall who empowers and promotes retardation. [98]Maybe it's time we just let ourselves fall? [99]Why not? [100]Why are we struggling to keep broken systems afloat? [101]Watch what happens when all the people in government, who give a shit, take a month-long mental health vacay. [102]Utter chaos will ensue. [103]Narcissists can't operate on their own. Nothing would get accomplished. Too many egos. [104]It's the retards we need to get rid of from places of power. [105]Our founding fathers knew this and did a lot to prevent that, yet here we are, Idiocracy at its finest. [106]But yeah, let's keep telling ourselves that the other guy is the problem, that group on that side is the problem, that group with that color is the problem. [107]Yo, fuck this victim mentality bullshit!

[108]Oh yeah, by the way, I fuckin' loved the Obama administration! [109]That's right, I said it. [110]Now what, mother fuckers? [111]Open your retard mouths now. [112]The days of having a badass president are obviously over. [113]Guess we couldn't handle a black president who actually nailed it better than most…while so many retards tried working against him. [114]He still killed it as a president. [115]That speaks volumes to his character beyond all the volumes there already way before he became president. [116]There, I said my piece, so I guess that means I must be a dumbass democrat or far left socialist something or other. LOL. [117]I'm going to let you believe that. [118]And yes, I also promoted Obama because retards hate that shit. [119]More on that later.

[120]Wow, so this was one heck of a detour. [121]Hope you enjoyed it. [122]Now, back to business.

32. Devalue Via Triangulation

[1]Whenever the narcissist wants you to compete with someone else for their validation, they will triangulate a third party into a conversation.

[2]This can happen with that third party completely unaware that they are being triangulated. [3]This could be in the form of a narcissistic partner comparing you to one of their exes. [4]These lucky exes who were able to see through the narcissist's mask and ditch their sorry ass now become someone you wish you could become. [5]You better not think that. [6]That's the design of the triangulation. [7]Don't buy into it. [8]Maybe the narcissist is being honest in what they prefer in that ex. [9]If they truly cared about you, then they wouldn't be saying stupid shit like that to you, huh? [10]Be wise to this. [11]Don't stoop so low as to try and chase the narcissist's short-lived validation. [12]Have some self-respect.

[14]The narcissist, in the role of your parent, loves to compare you to your siblings who are better at being extensions of the narcissist. [15]As a child, this is one of the most fucked up experiences to have. [16]As a child, it's understandable for you to resent that triangulated sibling. [17]That's the point. [18]Turning siblings against each other is what narcissistic parents do. [19]Aren't they just a hoot? [20]You know what's funny? [21]As an adult child, once you leave that relationship with your toxic parent, watch how they turn all your siblings against you. [22]How dare you change your role from being their scapegoat to being completely independent of them! [23]You aren't allowed to have your own fucking life. [24]Don't you know that?

[25]Narcissists feel entitled to everything you are and everything you have. [26]Oh, you thought slavery ended? [27]Naw. [28]It never did. [29]It exists at the household level now. [30]*Shhhhhhh*. Don't tell anyone. [31]And definitely don't tell the parents of a narcissistic adult child. [32]Imagine having both your parents as your own personal slaves for their entire lives. [33]It's a thing. [34]Believe it. [35]The parents' guilt of having a selfish adult child keeps them locked in supporting that child. [36]It's hard to say goodbye to your own child, no matter how nasty they are. [37]A narcissist can disown their own good-hearted adult child with ease. [38]Maybe we can learn from the best here. [39]If they can do it to the best, maybe we can do it to the worst. [40]Yeah, this is how cold I am now. [41]Alright, on to my next soap box.

33. Fuck Around, Meet Find Out

[1]This section brings to a close the armory, this massive chapter filled with my foul language. [2]I'll make you a deal for those who are uncomfortable with my use of foul language. [3]You spread awareness of my book, and I just might remove all the vulgar language from Chapter 13 in the second edition. [4]Deal? [5]So, let's go over how to disarm the narcissist lightsaber high-ground style. [6]After that, we will go over how to use the narcissist's demons against them. Yes, I said demons. [7]It's not literal. [8]Or is it? [9]Who knows, right? ;)

[10]To disarm them, psychotherapist and Emotional Badass, among many other titles, Nikki Eisenhauer has this amazing podcast, where moxie meets mindful, called "10 Ways to Disarm an Emotional Manipulator & Narcissist". I highly recommend you give it a listen (or two or three). She recommends a book in that podcast which I plan to read as soon as I publish, but I wanted to reference it here in the hopes you do the work and listen to the podcast yourself. [11]Your healing growth work is not my responsibility nor is it a profession I'm seeking out, because there are so many out there who are masters at this stuff. [12]I will direct you to them instead through my use of social media. [13]This book is just my story and a catalyst for yours.

[14]To defeat them, cut off your empathy. [15]You wanna break that trauma bond? [16]Stop putting empathy into that supply line. Save it for yourself. [17]The narcissist will do the rest of the work destroying that trauma bond for you. [18]But they will never be the ones to cut that last strand. That's for you to do, and in your own special way. [19]You get to put some finesse on your goodbye. Enjoy that. [20]Your "goodbye" will be what haunts them forever.

[21]To destroy them, think of narcissists as modern-day vampires. [22]They are the living dead. [23]I'm positive the story of vampires of old came from those who had a thorough understanding of what we now call narcissistic personality disorder. [24]Good looking out past us-es! [25]Let's see, vampires have no reflection, and yet the narcissist has no true authentic self. [26]Hmmm. What's next? [27]Oh yes, vampires use charm and have to be let in, and the narcissist love bombs and you put them on a pedestal in your life. [28]OK, what else? [29]The vampire seeks the blood of the living. [30]Hmmm. [31]Narcissists pray on the empathetic, those who understand love. [32]Hmmm. What else? [33]Vampires drain blood from their victims,

and narcissists psychologically and emotionally drain their victims for the sake of deriving validation. [34]The abused feel drained after dealing with the narcissist's bullshit for so long. [35]Hmmm. What else? [36]Vampires die in the sunlight, and narcissists fear exposure. [37]Hmmm. So many similarities. [38]What happens when you fully expose a narcissist? [39]They are mortified and collapse. [40]Hmmm. Hmmm indeed.

[41]To fuck with them, smile, and don't react to their bullshit. [42]Have you heard of the smile test? [43]When meeting someone and they smile at you. [44]It's normal to smile back. [45]But what if you don't? [46]Keep your face stoic. [47]If the person is a narcissist, the fact you don't smile back will have meaning for them. [48]And they may act offended. [49]People aren't entitled to your smile just because they chose to smile at you first. [50]A normal person may think it odd you didn't return the smile, but it will bug the narcissist. [51]They will wonder, why didn't that person smile back? [777]Here's a fun idea, stick your tongue out at people to let them know you read this book. [53]I know that makes no sense right now, but it will later. [54]Sticking out your tongue, and if the other person sticks their tongue out back at you, you've successfully communicated that you are both in the know. [55]You found yourself a possible fellow reader. [56]Or maybe not, but if you stick your tongue out to a narcissist, they are going to get offended first. [57]Sticking out your tongue is also a way to get people talking about my book. [58]Help me out, will you?

Beast Mode:

[59]I can picture it now, people Googling "Why is everyone…" and watch that shit populate the rest of their search with "…sticking their tongue out". [60]Wikipedia gonna have a new added description under the entry for "tongue" under its Society and Culture section, under the Gesture header. [61]It could say, [62]"Sticking out the tongue could also imply communication to another that the person doing it is aware of narcissistic abuse and pathologies. [63]Returning the gesture communicates the same in return. It's like a return salute."

[64]#GENESIMMONSSTYLE

[65]To control them, there are so many options. [66]Where do I begin? [67]This may deserve its own section. Yeah, let's do that. Hmmm. [68]It's gotta be

something witty, something that provokes thought. [69]Nothing provocative. [70]I know! We'll call it…

34. The Multiverse of Manipulation

[1]Here we go. This is what you've been waiting for. [2]How do we manipulate the manipulator? [3]Well, in order to do that, you have to understand who their master is. [4]Everyone has one. [5]For me, my master is God, which means no sin holds authority over me. [6]This isn't because God is protecting me from that sin, but it is I who am protecting me from that sin. [7]I fight it in my mind. [8]Before there is an action, there exists the thought of it. [9]If I notice the thought, performed through consistent introspection, then I can squash it then and there. [10]It took me a long time to clear all that clutter. It's not easy. [11]But as with all things, consistent discipline makes it less difficult. [12]One slip up, and I could be right back in the thick of that sin. [13]You have to know yourself. [14]I can tell you which two deadly sins had the longest hold over me in my life; lust and wrath. [15]I found a way to make those temptations work for me. [16]I mixed them and refined them. [17]Now, I have a lust for wrath, but not just any wrath. [18]I lust for the wrath of God. I want it all so I can share it. [19]Sharing is caring, after all.

[20]So how did I start off with my two weaknesses? [21]I was controlled by them. I would ruminate on exacting revenge on my enemies. [22]I would tempt myself to see if I had what it takes to deliver consequence. [23]Luckily, I succeeded in triumphing over that sin, unlike others who let it take them straight into jail. [24]Don't even get me started on lust. It's how I got into every toxic relationship. [25]These two sins I was the weakest against. [26]I make sure I keep them in check. [27]Why do you think I chose to share them here? [28]There's more than one answer. [29]You know what's funny? [30]If you tell your enemy your weakness, they will exploit it. [31]The more opportunities that come my way to show God I am strong enough not to give in to those sins, the stronger I become. [32]I'm literally baiting my enemy. [33]You could also deceive your enemy into perceiving something as a weakness that is actually your strength. [34]See, I know how the game works. And very soon, you will too. [35]You better know thyself if you want to engage in this art of war.

[36]Let's talk covert coercive control. [37]How does one control someone who is a controller? [38]You use their fears against them. [39]All narcissists are fear-based creatures. [40]Their first instinct is to fight anything that threatens their sense of self, their ego. [41]So how do you get a narcissist to resort to flight? [42]They fear exposure, they fear those who see them for exactly what they are. [43]Those are the people they distance themselves from. [44]It worked for me. [45]Remember, narcissists don't have feelings for anyone other than them, all they have is an ago. [46]There's nothing inside. [47]This is because they have no empathy, no ability to perceive real love from limerence, because they can't understand love.

[48]The narcissist's ego is what they refer to as their feelings. [49]They think their ego is who they truly are. [50]So, if you say something true about them that invokes shame in them, they call it hurting their feelings or that you are being mean. [51]You are literally attacking them with your words, because all they are is their ego. [52]That's why they use DARVO to escape accountability. [53]If the narcissist can redirect you holding them accountable, then their ego is safe. [54]If they can make you feel guilty for hurting their so-called feelings, then they not only escape accountability, but they get a nice hit of narcissist supply off of you. [55]Weird, huh? [56]They want you to feel guilty about bruising their ego. Don't. It's manipulation. [57]They don't feel guilt, their pride won't let them, but they know that people with empathy can feel guilt. [58]Lay into the conversation with all you got, while staying calm, speaking slowly, maintaining eye contact, and oozing a self-confidence they could never match, even with their mask on. [59]You are going to need to apply some covert coercive control techniques.

[60]Covert coercive control is the equivalent of the narcissist love bombing you in the initial phase of them engaging you, after they identify your potential as their next flavor of supply. [61]See, it's no different than a drug dealer giving you a free sample, and then another. [62]They want to see how bad you need that next hit. [63]It's covert, because they don't tell you what they know they are doing to you. [64]It's coercive, because it is your fear of losing that next free sample that will keep you close to them. [65]It's control, because eventually you are going to be paying for the rest of your samples. They won't be free. [66]Each subsequent sample will require you to sacrifice a bit of your independence. [67]The control only works

once you've been made codependent. [68]This is the control. [69]Every time you start to wise up and want to get clean, from this love bomb drug addiction, they will be there to give you one more free sample. [70]Oh, you ain't goin' anywhere. [71]Why? Because you are desperate. [72]Welcome to covert coercive control, a manipulation designed to either allure, deter, or to punish.

[73]Oh? [74]You need another example? [75]How about this one. [76]You have an opinion about something that isn't so mainstream? [77]Afraid to speak up because people will judge you? [78]If you are afraid to speak your mind and get gang-stalked, then you are under covert coercive control. [79]Yes, we all are. [80]I'm doing my part to change that. [81]Are you? [82]What good is freedom of speech if we are too afraid to use it? [83]It's dangerous to speak truth these days about what's truly going wrong with the world. And that's why I'm doing it now. [84]If not me, then who? [85]There is such a thing as "too late". [86]I'm not going to take the risk of waiting, out of fear, for someone else to be the first to speak up. [87]Nope.

35. Attack the Pride of Their Ego

[1]All narcissists are slaves to the sin of pride first and foremost. [2]Pride is what keeps them from escaping their narcissism. [3]Pride is what keeps a narcissist a slave to their narcissism. [4]Since this is the easiest way to control them, this is where we start. [5]They are also beholden to the other deadly sins too. [6]If a non-narcissist is beholden to one of the deadly sins, you can use these same tactics on them too. [7]It will work on anyone, as long as you know the sin that controls them.

[8]You've engaged the narcissist you are close with and they're resorting to overt manipulation of threatening you or covert manipulation of attempting something reckless like self-harm. [9]Yeah, they love that pity party, don't they? [10]You can get them to stop, if you tell them with confidence something like this, "You want to be reckless? You want me to call the police? Fine. Get arrested. Everyone will finally see you for what you are, and they will side with me. I will even frame your mugshot. You'll lose your job, you'll lose your friends, and you'll definitely lose access to me. So go ahead, be reckless." [11]You want to dig in deep with that attack of their pride. [12]These may not be the kinds of words you'd normally

speak or maybe mean, but that doesn't matter. [14]You are speaking directly to only their ego.

[15]They may go through with their threat, but it's because they think you are bluffing. [16]Show them you weren't. [17]Never bluff with a narcissist. [18]You need to be willing to follow through with everything you say and stick to it. [19]This is how you teach them consequence. [20]This will also teach them to fear you. [21]Make sure you are convincing, and their pride will control them and do the rest. [22]They will stop engaging with you, because the more they do, they subject themselves to your shaming and their possible exposure. [23]If they get angry and say they hate you, you are doing it right.

[24]Let's try another scenario on a more overt narcissist on the job, say at the office. [25]Let's say you don't have a super close relationship with them, but you know they are narcissistic. [26]Let's say they've targeted you to make your life miserable. [27]Obviously, you must've said something that bruised their ego at some point. [28]They love to fuck with the people who have no clue they even offended the narcissist. [29]It starts small and ramps up over time. [30]Attack that pride during a presentation. [31]Throw some jabs at it. [32]Let's say they made some stupid comment toward you. [33]"That sounds a little condescending, don't you think?" [34]BOOM, instant shame, and it attacked their pride, their image, in front of those attending the presentation. [35]Yes, you'll suck the air out of the room. [36]Yes, you will be smeared afterward. [37]Yes, the attention will totally be shifted toward you…if you let it. [38]Bring it back to the condescending comment, "You said _____. That was condescending." [39]They will try to gaslight you in front of the group and triangulate those who are loyal to them and have influence over you. [40]Call out every tactic while they do it. [41]You got the cajones for that? [42]This is how you do it. [43]They won't be able to show their face at work for days if you do this right. [44]If they fire you, so be it. [45]Is the job more important than your dignity?

[46]Everyone who attended the presentation will be talking about how you put that person in their place. [47]Why? [48]Because you are doing what everyone else wished they had the guts to do themselves. [49]The others in the office who are loyal to the narcissist, or are narcissistic themselves, will see you as a threat and call attention to your "outburst" or that maybe you need to see a therapist or work on anger manage-

ment. [50]This is why you have to be calm in your delivery. [51]It will make those who say that look stupid. [52]They don't want to look stupid because that hurts their ego. [53]Once the others see this narcissist getting the business end of your shaming, people will be more careful around you. [54]They should be walking on eggshells around you, and not the other way around. [55]The days of walking on eggshells around a tyrant boss is over. [56]You get paid to do a job, not be some tyrant boss's emotional tampon. [57]Fuck that shit. [58]Their "disorder" is not your problem. [59]Someone has to stand up and speak truth to power. [60]Do you have it in you?

[61]Want to know what that narcissist will be doing after that presentation? [62]They will be wasting their time thinking and talking about you to anyone willing to listen and coddle their wounded ego. That's the smear campaign. [63]They'll try some shady practice to quiet you because you are officially a threat to their ego. [64]Blow that whistle, file that claim, and expose their toxicity. [65]They depend on your fear to keep you quiet, but that was before you read The Sword that Divides. [66]Now, things are different.

36. Omission of Facts

[1]All narcissists have a little thing called selective amnesia. [2]They need to maintain their crafted image for all to believe. [3]They need to control the narrative, the optics. [4]Omitting a key fact allows them to twist what truly happened to fit into their new narrative. [5]This is how they create alternative facts, fabrications. I think telling lies has an impact on the brain. [6]All that editing of memories just to avoid shame and take control, taking from the creative left brain and assigning it to the factual right brain too many times must come at a mental toll. [7]But what do I know, right? [8]Just seems like a liar abuses their own brain in order to believe their own lies. [9]This is how a narcissist lives in their own reality. [10]They literally live in a fake world that they will do anything to protect. [11]I'd hate to be a narcissist these days, with all the awareness that is spreading about narcissism.

37. The Businesses of Narcissism

[1]The school of dark psychology is manipulation and mind control. [2]It almost seems unbelievable and a little like black magic. [3]Unfortunately, it is true that we are exposed to dark psychology in life, and more than you might think. [4]The same dark psychology tactics that narcissists employ are commonly used in marketing for timeshares, pyramid schemes, some religious institutions, and every single cult. [5]There are plenty of businesses out there that teach how to manipulate estranged spouses, usually ones that have finally enforced a boundary, into returning to the relationship. [6]There are so many businesses that teach people how to get results, the narcissistic way. [7]They just don't advertise that you'll be playing in the devil's playground by using their methods. Oh yeah, and they charge you.

38. No More Veggies

[1]To combat word salad, interrupt the narcissist as soon as you feel your brain not working gud no more. [2]Duh, so many words. Duh, but don't mean nothin'. Duh, how do you sound like you think good but also not so good? [3]Yo, check it, the moment you struggle to follow what they are saying, it's not your intelligence fleeting from you, it's because you are dealing with a moron trying to buy themselves time while they hear the sound of their own voice. [4]Remember, cut them off the moment you've had enough. [5]Bring the conversation back to the point. [6]And shame them lightly for it. Something like this, [7]"I'm gonna stop you right here. [8]Let's bring it back to the actual topic. [9]After that, you can go on a run-on tangent as much as you'd like." [10]Replace that last sentence with something a little less harsh and more politically correct if you have the energy for it. [11]Yes, the idea of saying all that makes you a little uncomfortable I take it. [12]That's normal. [13]A little cringe is maybe what this world needs right about now. [14]Of course, you can soften the blow a little. [15]But if you know you are dealing with a narcissist, why would you soften it?

[16]Remember, you aren't dealing with a regular person. You are dealing with a retard. [17]So, keep them on track, and the fact you are a little condescending with it will bruise their ego. [18]They will hate you for it because they fear what you are capable of, removing their mask. [19]They will then smear you to anyone willing to listen. [20]Imagine if the person

they are smearing you to had already read this book. [21]Imagine that person responding like so, [22]"Hey, Jack, I'm gonna stop you right there. [23]I see you're talking shit about someone else. [24]I think it's only fair we bring them into this conversation, don't you?" [25]BOOM. [26]They hate when you end a statement with a "don't you agree?", because they use this all the time themselves. [27]Can you count how many times I've done it to you here in this book? ;) [28]Narcissists hate it when you use their own tactics on them. [29]I bet they hate it when I do that. [30]Now they know why I do it so much in this book. [31]It's for your benefit to provoke your internal dialogue, to fuck with them and their internal dialogue, and let them know, "I see youuuuuuu…".

39. Don't Defend

[1]Yes, this isn't the first time you've heard this, but I decided to give it its own section to drive the point home. [2]Remember, they want you to defend yourself. [3]It means they are special if you do, because they command your chaos and control your reactions. [4]Your defense is a reaction they expect. So don't. [5]If you've identified the person you are dealing with as a narcissist, then you've identified someone you never have to defend yourself to. [6]If you know what they are saying isn't accurate about you, it's not your job to help them see you for who you know yourself to be. [7]They don't want to see that person anyway. [8]They just want to see you defend yourself just for fun. [9]Don't play the retard's game, unless you are defending yourself to play along while you wait for the perfect moment to discard them. [10]Don't be too brutal with your discard. [11]Games are supposed to be fun. [12]Win in your own authentic style. [13]Instead of being brutal, go for finesse. ;)

40. Jump to Conclusions

[1]The Office Space movie introduced a game concept called Jump to Conclusions. [2]This is a game narcissists love to play. [3]You can administer this game as a test for red flags. [4]Before you say what you plan to say, try to interpret it in a negative way, twisting your own words to create an unintended meaning. [4]Do this, and you will find the first conclusion a

narcissist will jump to. [5]Whether a narcissist does this for fun, or because of their insecurity, I do not know. [6]If you have to put thorough thought into how you are wording something so that the person you are speaking to won't misinterpret what you are trying to say, then you've had experience dealing with narcissists. [7]You walk on eggshells with your own words. [8]Instead, say what you were going to say how you wanted to say it. [9]Use their reaction to your words as a red flag detector. [10]A narcissist will be the first to jump to conclusions. [11]My book is loaded with conclusions for narcissists to jump to. [12]Some of them lead nowhere. Some of them lead to traps that expose narcissists in social media. ;) [13]Yes, I've designed my book to lead narcissists to expose themselves to the public.

[14]I know what I'm doing. [15]Eventually, everyone will be able to see what I did with this book the more things play out after publishing. [16]So, for my narcissistic audience, I have this to say. Happy hopping! [17]I look forward to the entertaining posts where I get to see where all their conclusions lead. [18]They can be so creative with their narratives. [19]I depend on that creativity for my reading pleasure. [20]Maybe I will feature one of their posts. [21]Everyone loves attention, right? [22]I would be scared of my attention if I were a narcissist. [23]I'll expose one just for fun and to show people how it's done. [24]Hey, did you watch Don Lemon's recent interview of Elon Musk? [25]Watch it after reading this book. [26]Donnie boy is an obvious full-blown narcissist. [27]I had heard that narcissists get worse with age, but DAMNNN! [28]I want to see round two after Elon has read my book. [29]Elon would rip him to shreds…or maybe he already knows all this and is just playing along. [30]Don Lemon wouldn't survive an interview with me. [31]His better half Tucker Carlson wouldn't either. [32]Yes, I can talk shit because I can see through both of them. [33]Am I making enemies today or what!?! [34]Yes, because by me speaking poorly of them, it will offend their base, which is all too easy to do. [35]Now, why would I invite such a thing upon myself? [36]I'm pretty much asking to be gang stalked. [37]Now that doesn't seem very smart of me, does it? [38]What's my motive?

[39]When someone attacks the cult leader, we all know what happens. [40]You should. I wrote about it, remember? [41]A cult is a cult. [42]Do I want the world to hate me? [43]I don't care, but I know that a narcissist's hate equates to fear of truth and the shame that it brings them. [43]If they hate

me, it's because they fear my truth. [44]You do not want to feed into that psychopathic side of me. I'll love it too much. [45]Hate is a form of validation. [46]If ya'll really want to mess with me, don't talk about my book at all. [47]Be indifferent about it. [48]Let it disappear into the annals of obscurity. [49]Want to make it viral? [50]That's the point, isn't it?

41. They Live, Among Us, as The Traitors

[1]There's a popular game called Among Us. In this game you are assigned the role of repairing your spaceship before you are killed in order to escape and win the game. [2]But, before the game starts, it selects a player at random to be assigned the role of imposter. [3]The imposter can also perform repairs but has the ability to kill the other players. [4]Since there is no way to identify the imposter, other than witnessing them in the act of killing one of the other players, they can easily blend in. [5]Among Us is a very special game made popular because it is a game of deception and survival, much like everyday life here on the earth. Only, in reality, we choose which one we want to be. [6]Are we the one who fixes things, or are we the one who destabilizes those efforts and causes chaos?

[7]Surely, there is a thrill in deception, otherwise people wouldn't do it. [8]In reality, we have always been playing Among Us. [9]Our role was not chosen for us at random before we started this game of life. [10]We choose our roles while we play this game. [11]We can switch sides whenever we want. [12]Every day is a new game. [13]Play the same way long enough in the same role, and you are no longer playing the role; you are the role. [14]This is how I believe narcissists are made, when God gives them over into the role they repeatedly choose, and derive pleasure from, each day. [15]The name of that role is imposter.

[16]I wonder if the narcissist can remember the day when they woke up with a feeling of emptiness inside. [17]When do they feel the effect of their reprobation? [18]Is it gradual, or do they wake up one day feeling that something is off? [19]Maybe some will come forward and talk about that day. [20]I do believe this book will help many narcissists become self-aware of their narcissism. [21]That is a secondary goal of mine, because my audience is those with empathy, not those without. [22]The secondary goal becomes achievable when the largest enabler among their harem of

enablers, which could be you, separates from the narcissist. [23]It's how I made Candace self-aware. Yes, Candace is completely self-aware of her narcissism, and has been for over 12 years now. [24]She says she tries to work on herself, but I have seen the proof that those are just more words of deception. [25]How do I know? [26]Well, she continued to try to drive a wedge between me and my sons. [27]That's not all. [28]She turned on her own children to derive supply from them too, with me being blind to it. [29]When you have eyes to see this, everything changes. [777]And now you understand why I am so thankful to the Lord God Almighty for this revelation of good news and why I would do absolutely anything He asks of me. [31]Writing this book was my choice.

[32]My secondary goal of waking up narcissists to become self-aware has two purposes. [33]The primary purpose is to help them see that they are their own problem. [34]They need to be able to see themselves as toxic and how that will lead to their destruction. [35]Only then can they start to seek help. [36]On the flip side, bringing self-awareness to a narcissist who does not wish to change makes them lean harder into their manipulative and deceptive nature. [37]Now, why would that be my secondary purpose? [38]What good does that do for anybody? [39]I have two answers. The first is the easy answer. None, it doesn't do good for the abuser and those they abuse. My second answer exposes the entire nature of my book. [40]Should I answer that now? [41]Why not?

[42]By waking up narcissists who desire to be malignant, I in turn make life harder for their victims, their supply lines. [43]My goal with that is this. These narcissists are so good at hiding who they truly are, but not so much when they increase their abuse. [44]That's what they will do. [45]The fear of losing supply, and the awareness my book brings, will mean they will have to tighten their control. [46]More control means higher levels of abuse. [47]The more abusive they are, the more pressure they put on their supply, the more likely the supply can finally see them as who they truly are. [48]It is my hopes that many empathetic people wake the fuck up when they feel the weight of that pressure. [49]They will either wake up, or they will break.

[50]Once you see the imposter among you, you find the narcissist in your life. [51]Don't go back and forth with a narcissist. They will just try to gaslight you. [52]They all know they are lying! Life is a game to them.

[53]They get what they want through deception. They learned the easy way of deceiving others to get ahead. [54]And they have been allowed by God, and by us as enablers, to continue to deceive. [55]The better they are at deceiving, the more assets they have to entice with, the more they can receive. [56]They will cheat on you with just about anyone who gives them attention, like another narcissist. [57]Double their pleasure, double your pain. [58]They will leave you without a second thought if there was even a shred of belief within them that the person they are engaging with one-ups you in any one area, especially financially. [59]They will throw away a marriage with you, and all the years you tried to make it work, for the chance for more with someone else. [60]And if not, they are at least lining up your potential replacements. [61]This is the cold hard truth. [62]Want another one? [63]Just because you've been discarded doesn't mean that you are aware of it. They discard you every time they cheat on you.

[64]You could literally make a game show based on the premise of how they are always looking for greener pastures, and how they destroy their own pastures in their endless pursuit of greener. [65]They always have to torch the pasture they leave behind so you can't move on. [66]They need to keep you as a backup. [67]As long as they believe you are destroyed and want them back, you are successfully shelved in their mind indefinitely until they get bored with whoever they are with (and they will). [68]They always get bored the more time they spend with anyone. [69]These are the people who are always excited about the new-new. ;) [70]You can't have a fruitful long-term relationship with anyone, narcissist or not, who chases the new. [71]The longer you keep them on that pedestal, the more pain you will endure, the more you become something you dislike. [72]That's a dark path. [73]Want to see an example of what it looks like? [74]Watch the movie Deep Water. [75]That said, any movie where the narcissist wins makes me question a lot about the nature of the movie, its true purpose, and those who made it. [76]That said, the movie serves my purposes in articulating the scenario I gave.

[77]You could be very attractive and successful, but the moment someone new with potential comes along, and draws the attention of many, they will covet that person just for the status and attention it could bring them alone. [78]It's for popularity. [79]They see the person as a way to upgrade themselves, and you become yesterday's news. [80]And you are none the

wiser, left confused, feeling devalued, and possibly envious of the new person. [81]Your heart is shattered, and that narcissist is not thinking about you at all. [82]Not until they start getting bored again and there's no one new to upgrade to. [83]You can watch it all play out on so much reality TV. [84]You just have to finally see things as they have always been. [85]I do now, and many of you will too soon. [86]Once your eyes open, you will see how much fruit there is to discern them by. [87]Their rotten fruit is all out there in the physical world and cyberspace, the internet, financial transactions, and social media.

42. A Real-Life Batman

[1]Once I was presented with the gift of knowledge that came after my son Cruz opened up to me, I knew I had to use it for more than just my situation. [2]There were other people in my life who needed to hear about it. [3]Every day that passes is torture for so many who are not awake to be able to see their own situations as toxic. [4]There is an entire world that needs to wake up fast. [5]The only reason I can write all this is because of those who woke up before me and started talking and writing about this. [6]I could not do this without their help. [7]Still, the world isn't awake enough. [8]Now it's my turn to help wake people up. [9]I want to do my part, but I needed to be different. [10]I gotta bring my authenticity, and I have to attack this subject differently. [11]This is like an experiment of mine. [12]People gravitate to authenticity and a good story. [13]I have a great story, and I found a way to turn it into a hero's journey for myself, and also for you as well. [14]You get to see some of my creative side like no one else in my life ever has, and that includes myself as well.

[15]This awareness, and my leaning completely on God, has made me fearless to be myself and sacrifice my earthly desires to do the will of God. [16]If you are reading this book, it's because God allowed me to put it out, and led you right to it. [17]All things work for the greater good. [18]I've got a foul mouth, but that's mostly for this book. [19]Sometimes you need to speak the language of the audience you are targeting to get them to first see you. Then they can hear you. Eventually, hearing can become listening. [20]That's how I plant my seeds of wisdom in you. [21]They are there for you to water and test for yourself. [22]If you water those seeds, they will

indeed grow before your eyes. [23]The more people who water those seeds, the more real my book becomes, and the more you see this world and your life for what it has always truly been.

[24]The battle for your soul is fought constantly. [25]We all suffer here, especially the ones who chose the light. [26]We get it the worst, because of the damage we are capable of doing to the narcissists of the world and their control over it. [27]I'm just one person who has chosen to stand up to this menace. [28]Watch what my book accomplishes in other people and the impact it will have. Just watch. [29]See what just one person is capable of when they choose God over their money, their lust, their lavish life, their pride, their envy of others, and the easy paycheck that requires the least amount of work possible, which costs them their own growth.

[30]What else have I been doing in my quest to expose these narcissists? [31]I do see this as a spiritual war. [32]I do apply Sun Tzu's war tactics. [33]I listened to those around me with my new ears from the awareness. [34]I found that if you find the unhealed empath, you can find their narcissists. [35]The unhealed empath is much easier to detect than a narcissist. [36]They are the ones who walk on eggshells around others. [37]They apologize a lot. [38]They are very worried about what others think or feel. [39]They take on burdens that do not belong to them, because they feel they are doing the right thing by helping someone else. [40]These are pretty decent signs of an abused form of empathy. [41]A wounded empath is that sweet person you know who goes silent all of a sudden, communication drops. [42]I was every one of these people once upon a time. [43]It's how I can see it so easily in others. [44]Find the wounded or unhealed empath, the ones without boundaries, and you find your next new supply. [45]I'm just kidding.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[46]"He's not kidding. [47]He just tried to gaslight us!"

Beast Mode:

[48]Thank you, Mr. Narcinson. [49]So, you HAVE been paying attention. [50]Good. [51]I knew you couldn't stop reading this. [52]Gotcha, bitch!

[53]I was not kidding. [54]But your new supply is not the unhealed or wounded empath. [55]They are your bait for the real supply. [56]For those out there like me, the ones who have been built for this battle, you will derive supply from the narcissist in a whole different way. [57]Find that bait and triangulate yourself. [58]Get to know the narcissist's victim. [59]Naturally, you would befriend them. [60]These are beautiful people who don't yet understand that they are in an abusive relationship. [61]Slowly get to know them and let them get to know you. [62]Eventually, when you feel trust is attained, you open up and become vulnerable as you share your story of awakening. [63]Bring them to this book. [64]Do this to plant within them the seed of interest in this knowledge. [65]Eventually, they will apply what's in the book and see the narcissist's script in action. [66]That will wake them up real good. [67]If it doesn't, then we tried, didn't we? [68]Some people choose the pain and the fake love over self-love. [69]You can't convince anyone they are worthy of love, they need to come to that conclusion on their own.

[70]So, in the way I just described, I find those narcissists. [71]Their primary supply, the unhealed empath, has more power to destroy the narcissist than I do or you. [72]The pain can't come from the outside, I have to infect the supply line with knowledge from my experience and what I've learned from others. [73]Eventually, in time, when the supply is ready and has endured enough suffering, they strike at the heart of the narcissist with their absence, leaving the narcissist reeling in the new reality of their mortified ego. [74]I never get to experience the pleasure I pour my efforts into, but I do follow up with the empaths. [75]Their stories are the next best thing that lets me taste their narcissist's suffering. [76]I get the pleasure of knowing that I had a role to play in it. [77]I triangulate myself in this regard. [78]The last person a narcissist wants to triangulate into their argument with an empath is someone like me. [79]Now you know why. [80]This work makes me happy. [81]It makes the fire in my bosom surge. [82]This is me getting my rocks off on a spiritual level. [83]There's nothing like the feeling of helping others be the consequence the narcissist deserves.

Beast Mode:

[84]Narc tears are so tasty! [85]Yes, they cry when their ego shatters. [86]Their self-serving tears may as well be blood from their wounded ego. [87]So tasty! [88]I don't care about those walking ego shells. [89]I just care about getting my hands on every drop of those tears.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[90]"You are sick!"

Beast Mode:

[91]Thank you, Mr. Narcinson. [92]You are right. It is sick to want to make someone else cry for pleasure. [93]Guilty! Thank you for showing me the splinter in my eye.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[94]"?!?"

Beast Mode:

[95]#HESGOTWOOD [96]#LICKSLIPS

[97]At this time, I've helped over a handful of empaths confront their codependency and cut ties with at least one narcissist each. [98]The stories of healing are real. [99]Ailments fade away, and strength not only returns but is magnified beyond what was initially there before the narcissist entered their life. [100]This is who I am. [101]Operating from the shadows, identifying and working with the victims, and helping them break free and cut ties. [102]You want to know how to heal a trauma bond? You cut it first. [103]Think of this narcissist in your life as a massive tumor attached to you. [104]It's been part of you so long that you don't know where exactly you end and the tumor begins. [105]This isn't the time to be surgically precise. [106]You grab that lumpy motherfucker, and you rip it the fuck off of you, healthy pound of flesh and all. [107]You are better healing that nasty monstrous wound, than to choose to live with it attached to you forever.

[108]It's weird, the abused are awestruck when I can find who their narcissists are by just speaking with them. [109]Anyone who has this understanding can find multiple narcissists leeched onto somebody. [110]Many of the abused aren't ready to leave their narcissistic spouse of many years,

their parent, or their grown adult child. [111]That's their problem. [112]I've gotten comfortable with so many who would prefer to remain blind. I let them. [113]It hurts to see someone who is blind to their own abuse and who is so loyal and brainwashed, that there is only one way to stop feeling so bad about them. [114]I have to respect that some people will prefer that way of life. [115]It's not my job to understand why. [116]I distance myself from these people, just far enough to not let their suffering affect me, but close enough to be accessible when they start waking up.

43. It's Them!

[1]Dr. Ramani has a book that recently published titled "It's Not You", which will help in understanding the abuse and starting the healing process. I highly recommend you consider reading it, especially if my book has led you to the topic of narcissism. [2]I'm placing this here in the armory because I can only imagine its value in spiritual warfare. [3]Dr. Ramani was the first to enlighten me, so this is my way of saying "thank you, doc" to her.

44. Lifting the Veil and Thinking Like a Narcissist

[1]In my 20's I remember waiting for 2012 to come, because that was when the Mayan calendar ended. [2]I remember a rumor that it would bring either the end of the world or a period of enlightenment. I was hoping for the enlightenment. To me, neither came at any time in 2012. [3]In 2022, however, I got that enlightenment in the form of my son, Cruz, telling me over the phone how he was feeling.

[4]Starting with that video I found by Doctor Ramani, the veil began to lift from my eyes. [5]The more information I ingested, the more dots I connected. [6]And then, while continuing to find additional golden nuggets of information, more memories would surface and there would be new dots to connect. [7]I learned the new narcissistic abuse vernacular like the terms hoover, gray rock, yellow rock, stonewall, hoover, scapegoat, golden child, hoover, secure attachment style, avoidant, overt, covert, hoover, devalue, discard, DARVO, flying monkeys, smearing, triangulation, projection and last but not least hoover.

[8]I know what you may be thinking. [9]You think I repeatedly wrote the word hoover, but I didn't. [10]Are you sure about that? I only wrote that once. [11]Maybe you should get yourself checked. [12]Oh, I forgot to include "gaslighting" in that list. By now, you know all these terms. [13]This is your final refresher before we move on.

[14]Gaslighting deserves a repeat because it is the most challenging to detect. [15]Let's go over it one more time, and let's make it about swapping a memory. [16]It's when the person, someone trying to escape accountability for their words or actions, tries to replace your memory of it with a slightly different version of that memory that allows them to escape accountability. [17]Remember me mentioning Kellyanne Conway using the term "alternative facts" on a CNN interview? [18]That's probably the best example I can use in this recap. [19]The gaslighter tries to put an alternative fact into your memory by trying to convince you of how you remembered it wrongly. [20]Normally, if this is someone you love and trust, you may lean toward believing the gaslighter. [21]In doing so, the manipulation maneuver is complete. [22]You question your ability to retain memory, which makes you easier to gaslight over time, and the gaslighter gets away with whatever words or actions you tried to address and hold them accountable for.

[23]Remember, while the gaslighting session is taking place, there are several other manipulation tactics that can be deployed throughout it. [24]In the end, you are sapped of energy, ready to just give in for the sake of moving on, and less likely to bring up things that the person says or does that hurt you. [25]So let your body tell you, with the sapping of your energy, that you may be right in the crosshairs of manipulation. [26]Are you finding yourself walking on eggshells with your word choice to avoid anything that looks like placing fault on the narcissist? There's another sign. [27]How about your heart rate, is it on the rise? There's another sign. [28]Do you feel like you are spending more time trying to explain or defend yourself, than getting to the root of the issue in the conversation? There's another sign. [29]Listen to what your subconscious is trying to tell you, your gut. [30]Taking a nice long slow breath in, holding it for five seconds, and slowly breathing it out, will give you a moment of peace amidst the conversation. [31]You can create moments like these whenever you want. [32]Don't worry about the narcissist having to wait

for your response. [33]They are tortured by your silence anyway. [34]Let's them sweat while you piece things together. ;) [35]You'll get better at detecting gaslighting and eventually you won't even be phased by their pathetic attempts at it. [36]They hate being called out for it while they are doing it.

[37]On the gaslighter's end, they get to experience the rush of successfully twisting your reality. [38]It makes them feel smart and powerful, fuels their ego, and validates them as being better than you. [39]They believe fooling people makes them smarter. Not just that, but they think that because no one else can see what they are doing to you, they are in some higher class of human being, where rules don't apply. [40]They believe accountability can be escaped through an exploitation of many different corrupted systems where people just like them can create and maintain power. [41]Life is a game to them. Can I get what I want from you by manipulating you into thinking you want to give it to me? [42]That's the ultimate rush. [43]Knowing they can win is what they live for. [44]If they only knew what they traded in exchange for that power.

[45]These retards traded free and abundant love for power and control. [46]They chose to worship the false self. [47]Once the ones that give them the most validation leave them, they finally see how powerless they truly were all along. [48]Once you take your power back, they realize that your power was part of their ego. [49]They are devastated as you have shattered their sense of self. [50]They fight to reconcile with themselves and come to grips with reality, so they create a new false one to escape to. [51]In this new reality, you are the bad guy. [52]The smear campaign against you goes into full force targeting those who hold you in high regard. [53]The point is to make you suffer, to isolate you, and to prepare you for what they don't even realize will be their next move, the hoover.

[54]Now comes the hoover attempt. [55]They will try to get you to come back to them. [56]They need your validation like a drug, and they will do just about anything to get it. [57]Also, they hate the fact that they need you, and since they can't see themselves as weak enough to need anyone, they will then hate you. [58]Maybe not at first, but eventually you will see them cycle through different versions of this hoover technique. It's all manipulation. [59]The point of it is to sucker you into re-entering the relationship with them, having you provide them with whatever validation they

normally got from you, and then they can crank up the manipulation tactics in an effort to covertly punish you for making them feel less than the most important person on the earth.

[60]Don't forget DARVO. [61]Remember that if you've experienced being on the receiving end of DARVO, then you have tried to hold a narcissist accountable. [62]Again, DARVO stands for Deny, Attack, Reverse, Victim and Offender. [63]Once you master recognizing this technique, you will see it being used everywhere. [64]It's the easiest way to spot a narcissist, or manipulative person, no matter how covert they are. [65]It even works on people who are not narcissistic who are under the influence of spirits. [66]By spirits, I mean alcohol. [67]Yeah, that's it, alcohol and definitely not "spirits" as in "evil spirits." ;)

[68]The narcissist will almost always begin speaking over you if you are counter-manipulating effectively. [69]Call it out. [70]You can say, " I like how you choose to speak over me whenever you start losing control of the conversation." [71]That will freak them out. [72]They know what they are doing. [73]This will let them know you see behind their mask. [74]They will call you crazy. That means you did it right. [75]You have to be crazy, otherwise they are! LOL [76]Let them stay in their delusional world. [77]You can respond to crazy accusations as [78]"Yeah, I get that a lot. [79]It's funny that only people like you think this. [80]I don't bother trying to understand some of life's mysteries."

[81]Be wise to being placed in positions where you are defending yourself with truth too much. [82]Be quick to notice when someone is playing with your mind. [83]People who continue to accuse you of something you aren't guilty for, and who try to convince you that you should feel guilty, have no interest in your perspective. [84]These retards know [85]Otherwise, they would state something that was actually true. [86]They know you won't defend something they say that is true about you. [87]They get off on fucking with your head. [88]These are the people who you've loved and trusted. [89]This is how their mind truly works. [90]Take it or leave it. [91]I sincerely hope it's the latter.

[92]Narcissists know you are right, and they expect that, since you are right, you will defend yourself. [93]They are not worth your time spent engaging with them. [94]It's real sad this is how they extract validation. [95]It's unbe-

lievably pathetic. [96]Awww, they want your empathy, and they will get it if they have to squeeze it out of you, even if that last drop was supposed to be for yourself. [97]I thought they wanted power and control. [98]No amount of money, power, or control will ever bring them the one thing everyone else has for free; that is love. [99]No love for the self, with all their self-hatred underneath, means they have to find it outside themselves. [100]It's so sad they can never hold on to what they get their hands on. [101]It's both sad and beautiful. [102]Each one is their own unique walking tragedy. [103]They all get it in the end, just a bunch of walking skin suits with nothing of substance on the inside, the walking dead. [104]They snuffed out their own light. [105]Who needs revenge when you see the beauty in this design? [106]It's almost like this "disorder" is part of our cosmic design, a built-in fail-safe. [107]If you don't choose truth and love, you choose suffering.

Beast Mode:

[108]Free will is a bitch, huh? [109]How do you like my upside-down pyramid scheme? LOL. Time for all the shit to finally roll downhill, all the way down to its source.

[110]#POOPOOEATERSANONYMOUS [111]#LUCYTHEPOO-POOHEAD [112]#ASSENDOFTHEMASTERDESIGN

45. Limerence, Somatic Narcissists, and Sex Addiction

[1]How about being in a relationship with a sex addict or somatic narcissist? Lucky you, right?!? [2]The limerence you receive from the pedestal they place you on, and the pleasures they offer, are extremely addictive. [3]You will search for that in every relationship after them. [4]You will self-sabotage a healthy relationship because you may feel that the same level of excitement is missing, but it's because you aren't being put on a pedestal. [5]You have successfully confused limerence for love, the result of being with a somatic narcissist who has trained themselves in how to use their sexual appeal and skill to their benefit…to trap you.

[6]Once you see it as the love bombing it was, it will allow you to see that it was just a show that fueled their own ego on how much you practically worshipped them in the bedroom. [7]After that, you can then enjoy a

healthy sex life in a healthy relationship. The love between you both will grow. [8]Do you see how this works? [9]When healthy people come along, a wounded dickmatized empath will fuck it up for themselves every time. [10]If you are addicted to limerence, you are not ready for love. [11]"Falling in love" sounds more like limerence than "feeling the love grow." [12]Word choice is important. [13]Falling is easy; growing takes effort. :) [14]So, maybe put that dickmatized or pussy-controlled version of you in the past where it belongs. [15]Being someone's bitch is not cool. [16]Don't be a simp. [17]Simps are a dime a dozen.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

"[18]Admit it. [19]You think you know everything don't you? [20]Does that make you feel special? [21]Does that make you feel…validated?

[22]Your dad beat the shit out of you because he knew you were going to be this much of a disappointment to him and your entire family. [23]How does it feel to know that everyone sees through you now? [24]Show us, Michael. [25]What happens when you have your own narcissistic mortification and collapse? [26]Show us your God, then! We want to see! We want to see! We want to see!"

Beast Mode:

[27]I love the sound of demon screams in the morning.

[28]Let them have the last word. [29]Once they see you as superior to them, and onto their game, they will claim that you are the narcissist. [30]At this point, with the personal insult and them going for your core wounds, do not engage. [31]You've won. [32]That was their last line of defense, and now all that negative energy that has been going back and forth between you both is stuck in them once you make your exit. [33]The shame is stored in them until they can put it in someone else via psychological and emotional abuse. [34]They have no choice but to follow the narcissist's playbook.

[35]I guarantee you they aren't just going to go home and eat a meal and watch a movie afterward. [36]You might, but they will be on their little black mirrors abusing someone before they lay their heads down for the night. [37]That's the goal, remember? [38]The more you make that narcissist suffer, the more they show who they truly are to those who remain in their life. [39]In a way, shaming a narcissist

leads to one of their victims wising up to the game in time. [40]Suffering is the greatest teacher. [41]I'm loving it.

[42]#THEYAREMCFUCKED [43]#HAPPYMEALTIME

46. Online Bullying - Where You Find the Most Pathetic Ones

[1]What narcissists do online to strangers is nothing compared to what they do to the ones that love them, and that includes their spouse and children. [2]That's why I want this taught. Knowledge is power. [3]Ignorance will make you fodder for deception. [4]Ignorance will make you follow a retard all the way to storming the U.S. Capitol Building, while the retard stays blameless. Who is the retard now? ;)

[5]These fools go to the internet to derive supply for their fragile little egos. [6]This is where the lowest of the low go for supply. [7]It takes no amount of skill to devalue someone online. [8]Anyone can do it from behind the safety of, yet another, false persona. [9]This is where I go to lure and fuck with narcissists. [10]They can't handle someone calling them out in front of the entire community about how they use all the tactics associated with a poor self-concept. [11]Yes, I do this to sharpen my mind, make an example of them to the community, and get my own narcissistic supply. [12]I can drain a narcissist of their energy through engagement. [14]Seriously, they get worse at narc-ing the more they tango with someone like me. [15]They lose their flavor so quickly, like a piece of gum. [16]The more you chew them up, the more you want to spit them out of your mouth. [17]This is how you play the game for fun. [18]The bullied becomes the bullier, using nothing but shame, observation, and truth.

[19]Richard Grannon said, "any and all contact is an opportunity to abuse." [20]Narcissists are opportunistic, so expect that every interaction where you aren't providing validation voluntarily will be extracted from you in the form of abuse. [21]Like Mr. Miyagi told that Karate Kid Daniel-san, "No be there", you can just block an account that seems narcissistic. [22]The tools to block these fools are in place. [23]They disappear for you forever. [24]If you aren't the fighting type, like me, you can simply just do that to make online bullies disappear forever. [25]Use those functions. [26]Maybe artificial intelligence will someday just do the blocking for us

based on a simple algorithm. [27]The narcissistic playbook can be fed to AI to search and destroy these accounts from your visibility. Believe it. [28]Let the narcissists of the world do their bullying while not a "living" soul ever sees it. [29]In this, two worlds can exist in one. [30]Watch how often a narcissist will actually use social media to bully once an AI filter makes them all obsolete. [31]It's truly that easy.

47. Three Relationship Types and Which is the Narcissist's

[1]I saw a video once on YouTube (I cannot recall the content creator or video title) where this content creator talked about three types of relationships. [2]Those three types are reciprocal, transactional, and investment. [3]Which relationship type do you employ? [4]Can you guess which one a narcissist uses? [5]Let's go over an explanation of what each means.

[6]Reciprocal is a relationship type where both parties contribute to the growth of the relationship. [7]Maybe they aren't always giving equal portions of effort, and it's normal for one to carry the other at times. [8]This is the relationship that never stops growing. [9]This is the one you want for the closest relationships. [10]Personally, this is what I would want for all relationships, but that's not realistic, not with the way the world is now at least. [11]When the reciprocation ends, so does the relationship eventually.

[12]Transactional relationships are when each party gives the other something that each one wants. [14]Sex work is a transactional relationship, and so is hiring an attorney, and so are most of those sugar daddy relationships. [15]You know, the ones where the rich and ugly, on the inside, buy their way into getting a greedy, lazy, young attractive fuck partner. [16]They are both in a transactional relationship. [17]Watch what happens when the old loses money, or the young gets older, the relationship falls apart. [18]People who have intimate relationships like this are doomed for failure. [19]It always ends with at least one of them getting fucked. [20]They both fuck each other in the end, in more ways than one, a match made in hell. [21]When the transactions end, so does the relationship eventually.

[22]Investment-type relationships are where you find the narcissists. [23]All narcissists may appear to be transactional, and they indeed are, but their

relationship type is investment. [24]Think about it. [25]They create the fake mask just for you, they treat you like a king or queen, and that costs them a lowering of their ego. [26]They took themselves off of their pedestal just for you. [27]You will pay for all of that investment in you. [28]The thing that's funny to me is that they make you suffer for seeing through their mask. [29]But isn't that their own fucking fault? [30]They are punishing you for seeing through the Frankenstein patchwork of a mask you were able to see through. [31]And they punish you for being able to see through it after all the time, energy, and things they did in order to get you to like them. [32]How pathetic is that? [33]If they didn't do such a shitty job of being a narcissist, maybe you'd still believe their mask. [34]Being punished for seeing through their poor craftsmanship doesn't seem fair to me. [35]Does it seem fair to you? [36]Why?

[36]Other than the whole narcissist thing, other examples of investment-type relationships is putting payment upfront with the understanding that the return will be worth it. [37]When the investment doesn't result in the desirable return, the relationship doesn't necessarily end. [38]That sunken cost fallacy and the disease of hope can keep you investing in a lost cause. [39]Invest in a relationship with yourself for a change instead. [40]That's the only guaranteed return on investment. [41]You control the level of return.

48. Fun Projects with Narcissists

[1]Intention is everything. [2]Intention is invisible. [3]The intention behind a statement can be innocent or malicious. [4]If it appears malicious, and you decide to bring attention to that appearance in order to further discern, a narcissist will react with DARVO and/or gaslighting to deter you from coming to the conclusion of their intent. [5]It's sad how obvious this is once you become aware.

[6]If you manage to call out their use of those tactics or reach the conclusion of their intent, then the narcissist will insist you've lost your mind. [7]This is assuming you can even make it this far in an interaction with them, as they will most likely interrupt you many times along the way in an attempt to derail you. [8]They cannot handle the shame of being seen for who they truly are. [9]Narcissistic rage comes soon after, just like clock-

work. [10]I'm going to repeat this often, their anger is their first reaction to their fear. [11]See it for what it is, and it goes from being something offensive to being hilarious. [12]As they cycle through various reactions in desperation to maintain the deception, the more obvious the deception becomes. [14]They will cycle through being angry, then being upset with you, then wanting sympathy. [15]If you don't fall for any of it, they just reboot the cycle in order over and over again.

[16]How many of them can you get to call you crazy? [17]Do you think you can ever beat my high score? [18]I wear "crazy" like a badge of honor because I understand what it truly means when it comes from their mouth after an engagement with me.

49. You're the Narcissist!

[1]As more people wise up to narcissism, the narcissist will actually accuse you as the true narcissist. [2]Maybe you are. [3]A lot of these narcissists get the ultimate karma of being evenly yoked to each other. [4]Imagine two stupid donkeys plowing all over the place, if even at all, because each one is too busy looking at the other to ensure they aren't pulling more than their own fair share of weight. [5]Hmmm. [6]Why am I all of a sudden imagining a donkey and an elephant having the same problem?

[7]Look up the pathologies of NPD in the DSM-V. [8]Go ahead, you should know for sure by taking the time to read about it from the leaders of psychology. [9]If you are being accused of being a narcissist, from a narcissist, then just leave them. [10]You prove you are not a narcissist by the fact you are not codependent. [11]A codependent would be too afraid to walk away from a narcissist for long anyway. [12]Speak without words, let your absence let them know who the true narcissist is.

50. The Last Word

[1]I wanted to save this for last. Narcissists love to have the last word. [2]Even if you walk away from the argument, they will make sure they have the last word. [3]Maybe you've been caught up in this game of yelling back and forth. [4]The narcissist is no different than the grade

school child who has to have the last word no matter what. [5]Yes, just like in grade school. [6]Let them have the last word. [7]This is how you make them shut up. [8]You want them to keep going back and forth with you, then just keep talking. [9]You are in complete control of the conversation. [10]Let them have it. [11]The narcissist pulls this school kid shit all the way up into old age, and even from their death-beds. [12]Sad.

Beast Mode:

[14]What? [15]You thought they'd actually change some-day? [16]No, they just pretend to in order to trick the next naive person. [17]Silly rabbit!

[18]#THELASTWORDISMINE

CHAPTER 10
RUNNING THROUGH THE WICKED GARDEN

"Sing the song or keep it inside."
— Scott Weiland

Wicked Garden
By Stone Temple Pilots

1. The F-List

[1]If I was an intelligent self-aware covert narcissist, which professions would suit me best? [2]Which one gives me the most access to validation without the witnesses to call out my manipulation tactics? [3]Which one gives me the most credibility, and the ones where I serve no one? [4]Create a list of 20 professions that fit into that model and rank the top 10 from that list in order from 1-10. [5]Which ones do you see at the top of that list? [6]Those professions are where the power seekers go. [7]It makes sense that the majority of people in those professions would be highly narcissistic, unless there is a solid system of checks and balances, and a reputation of holding others to account.

2. The End of Candace in Sight

[1]My original desire of wanting to deconstruct Candace so I could manifest her worst fears was going to come true by virtue of sharing my story alone. [2]Assuming Candace is indeed a narcissist, which I wouldn't be writing this book if I believed otherwise, she would be driven mad by the negative opinions of others for all the fucked-up shit she did to my sons and me. [3]If I exposed the truth by telling my story…it would be her end. [4]She wouldn't be able to control the opinions of her that people have. [5]And because she's narcissistic, this would destroy her reality. [6]She would no longer be able to run from shame. [7]Either she would mentally implode, or whatever demon that's inside of her would climb out of her mouth in absolute agony. [8]I make that comment in jest, but I would not be surprised if such a sight presented itself. [9]I'd hope to be there to see it face-to-face. [10]I have a smile reserved just for that demon as soon as it's stupid enough to make eye contact with me.

[11]If Candace's followers, and she will indeed have her own following, fund her defamation of character case against me, the fun will continue. [12]See, I know how narcissists think. [14]They can all be predicted on a meta-level. [15]You think I wrote this book completely clueless as to how this story truly ends? [16]Of course not, I want an audience, and Candace and her followers will give it to me. [17]They will be the ones to spread the word about this book and get even more people to read it. [18]My enemies will do my work for me. [19]The more she fights me, the more stupid she

will make herself and her followers look. [20]She has already done all the work for me. [21]I'm just playing the waiting game, another game I have mastered. [22]It's already check-mate. It's always been check-mate. [23]I just needed to see it for myself. [24]This is what happens when a player who was once just a pawn receives their crown.

3. Can You See Just Like a Child?

[1]The year was 1992, and after saving money for a while, I bought the first CD player in my household. It was a boom box. [2]The first CD album I bought was Stone Temple Pilot's Core. [3]I was drawn to it. [4]Before then, I was unfamiliar with their music, except for maybe one song from that album that was playing on the radio. [5]I listened to it endlessly. [6]At one point I had every lyric from the album memorized. [7]The songs didn't hold any special meaning for me at the age of 12, but the sound resonated. [8]The lyrics were interesting, as in there was definitive depth to them.

[9]Fast forward to the last couple years and the songs have new meaning to me. [10]They are about suffering, power, and growth as a result, walking through the fire and into uncertainty to emerge tempered. [11]That's if you survive enduring the heat. [12]Fire cleanses, you know. [14]A forest fire will desolate lush forestry. [15]But years later, the land is more fertile than it was before the fire. [16]It's a process called razing.

[17]Now, with my knowledge of narcissism, its abuse, and the manipulation tactics involved, how the narcissist derives power, how they deceive, and their deepest fears of exposure and abandonment, I look at so many songs and movies differently. [18]I've spent the time to learn how they treat their parents, children, friends, and romantic partners. [19]I see and hear the victims of its abuse in the songs they write, and in the songs they sing. [20]I see and hear the ones who have triumphed over it too, just as I had as I chose me and made my escape. [21]You don't need to know what narcissism is to be intimately aware of the pathologies. [22]We've seen these people portraying the bad guys in films and stories our entire lives. [23]I wonder what they think when they witness the bad guy play his role. [24]Are they even smart enough to be able to see how that is them? [25]I wonder what they think when they see a movie like

Cruel Intentions, where the narcissist gets completely exposed in the end.

Beast Mode:

[26]They are probably thinking, "Thank goodness that won't be me! [27]I'm too smart to get caught. [28]Aheyuck!"

[29]#GOOFBALLS

[30]I learned about how hard it was to go up against these people. [31]I learned how they accuse you of doing exactly what they are doing. [32]It's called projection. [33]I also learned that if they know you see through them, they fear you. [34]Because they view fear as weakness, they resort to anger and rage. [35]It gives them the illusion that they are in power. [36]For a narcissist, they can convince themselves of this illusion just as easily as they can fool the naive and innocent. That's good. Well, for me, that's good. It means that their anger with me is truly fear-based. [37]People like me, who see through their masks or at least stand up to them, are the things of their nightmares. [38]They have no choice but to attempt to show dominance over the one that threatens their false image. [39]Let's play.

[40]I think back to the bullies I confronted throughout my childhood and young adulthood. [41]They toyed with me until I had enough. [42]And in their mind, in their own fabricated reality, I threatened their false position of power. [43]That is why they chose to fight me. [44]And it is that same narcissism, their weakness, I exploited when I simply chose to fight back, a boundary against their treatment of me. [45]They saw I didn't care how big they were, how much stronger they were, I didn't care if I got beat up. [46]They would not escape an interaction with me without me taking at least a pound of their flesh with me. It is in that pound of flesh where their ego lies, for no one ever fought me a second time. [47]It was simply my act of fighting back that bruised their ego. My fighting back was a rejection of their false self to them. [48]Maybe it helped that I had to be mad in order to look them in the eyes with burning fury. [49]My anger was not because of my ego, it was from injustice. [50]All these bullies had to do their bullying when teachers, those in authority, were not looking. [51]They all had to be sneaky with their bullying.

[52]A sneaky bully is someone who has chosen their own ego as superior, but they need fuel. [53]They need to abuse and play with their victims in order to constantly validate their ego. [54]A covert narcissist is no different. [55]I think back to Jordan Peterson talking about the dragon you fear most and the cave of treasures it stands in front of. [56]My dragon was a covert narcissist. [57]The dragon's cave is its sanctuary, and where it stores its riches. [58]My first order of business in confronting my dragon was to create my game plan. [59]Strategizing is what I love to do. [60]I learn from my setbacks. [61]Every conflict is another opportunity to exercise risk in altering my strategy. [62]A dragon can fly and is quick and devastatingly deadly. [63]It kills and also destroys. [64]And in this, it causes fear in its victims because they know what the dragon is capable of.

[65]If my dragon's weakness is exposure, then it will stay in its lair or cave, or close to it. [66]What if I couldn't slay my dragon? [67]What happens when I attempt to kill it, and it escapes? [68]It will surely hunt me until I am dead with all its advantages. [69]I would have to take a page from Cobra Kai's mantra and strike first and hard and without mercy, but it would be wise that if my blow didn't do the trick, I should go for its wings first. [70]A dragon is less agile on sea or land without its wings. [71]Immobilizing the enemy is something I learned in the Army. [72]Anti-tank warfare had us go for the treads first if the tank's treads were exposed. [73]Since your first shot also alerts the enemy, it's best that it at least immobilizes when it connects.

[74]Depending on the tank's armor plating and what weaponry it has to work with, a tank could take several hits before it's destroyed, and it's best to plan for that to be the case. [75]After immobilizing the tank's treads, the next threat is the turret which would be rotating itself to target me. [76]I can't allow the tank to take a shot. [77]The next shot I would take would be at the space between the turret and the body of the tank. [78]I viewed my dragon's wings as the tank's treads. [79]I viewed my dragon's neck as my follow-up shot. [80]Can't get hit with fire breath if the head is hanging off its body from the blow. [81]It's a lot easier to hit your target when the tank is exposed and not moving much, or at all. [82]A tank without its turret and the ability to move is no longer a threat. [83]I could finish it off easily after that. [84]In warfare, however, finishing off a tank is no longer a priority unless it's the last tank on the battlefield. [85]Logic dictates you

find cover and seek other tanks that may appear first and foremost. [86]You neutralize all the threats before dealing the final blows upon all of them.

[87]A tank can't repair itself, but my dragon would be a little different. [88]If my first blow didn't kill it, a smart dragon would retreat to heal, especially if the wound I delivered was devastating enough. [89]A narcissist's healing is found in the many sources of those who enable it. [90]The enablers could come to the dragon's aid if I wound it. [91]I don't want to directly harm the enablers, but I would need to separate the dragon from its enablers. [92]No enablers, no healing the wounds I inflict. [93]This would take serious strategizing. [94]Exposing the dragon and dealing my blow would mean I would need to draw it out of its cave first, away from its source of power, the enablers. [95]Just like in the Army how we would target the treads, I'd have to enter the cave where the dragon sleeps and go for the wings of my dragon, and hope it would still attempt to pursue me instead of attempt to heal. [96]I would need to seriously piss it off. [97]Clipping its wings might do the trick.

[98]The problem with being pursued by a pissed off wingless dragon outside of its cave is that it can use the terrain to its advantage. [99]I saw a wicked garden full of thorns before me, like in the movie Sleeping Beauty. [100]Once I would retreat from the cave, I would be slowed and damaged by the thorns. [101]The forest of thorns is of course a metaphor for what I would need to contend with that would make my battle more difficult. [102]I saw this forest of thorns as a thick wicked garden where there would be traps that I could not see through its thickness, or evade fast enough once I drew the dragon out. I would be toast. [103]The only way I could survive would be to burn it to the ground beforehand, this would of course alert the dragon that something was abnormal. [104]This would be the only way to move forward.

[105]I would need to prepare my sons for what was to come. [106]As extensions of my dragon, they themselves were also playing a role in enabling. [107]If I weren't careful, I would risk pushing my sons away from me and they would come to their mother's defense. [108]Burning down this wicked garden would require deliberate and methodical burning in sections starting further away from the dragon's cave, so that it would not notice. [109]I would need to control the spread of the flames as well so that I could do my work undercover and gradually.

[110]Just as narcissistic parents poison the minds of their children against the other parent, especially an empathetic parent who wants to have a relationship with their children, I would need to drip-feed truth to my sons with each visitation. [111]I would need to show them content on narcissistic abuse and teach them what I myself learned and how to defend the mind against this unique form of invisible abuse, a purely psychological and emotional kind, a covert and sadistic kind. [112]The abuse is meant to hide the abuser and even make the abuse appear as other things in the mind of the victim. [113]It is truly insidious.

[114]It was time for me to engage my battle plan for defeating my dragon. [115]My plan was to start methodically burning sections of the wicked garden so that by the time the dragon would pursue me out of the cave without its wings, the battlefield would be cleared, and allow me the space I would need to deliver the final blow to its neck. [116]In the real world, the burning of the wicked garden was a strategic exposure of Candace to my sons over time while preparing them for engaging with these kinds of people in adulthood. [117]The clipping of the dragon's wings translated to me calling the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and reporting the psychological and mental abuse. [118]It would be enough to possibly piss Candace off and get her to pursue me, if it didn't work in exposing her abuse.

[119]Usually, narcissists project and blame you for exactly what they are doing, so I expected the same would be done to me, and that it would be unfounded. [120]Regardless of the outcome from the DCFS investigation, I would start to pursue changing the child custody agreement to allow for out-of-state visitation. [121]If performed successfully, it would be a precursor to me pursuing custody soon after. [122]Also, I held close to my faith that no weapon formed against me would prosper. [123]If anything, these weapons would backfire, and I intended to allow this process to take place by not getting in my own way.

[124]By the time I would've lured the dragon out into the burned Wicked Garden, she would be exposed for my sons to see as she truly was. [125]And it is this act where she would begin losing two of her extensions, my sons who are part of her harem of those who believe in her mask. [126]In this she would begin to lose power, and then the fear would creep into her mind. [127]I could depend on her narcissism to transmute that fear

into anger and stupid reactions that she would end up hanging herself with. [128]In this I would use her own narcissistic pathologies against her. [129]The more I exposed Candace to the court and my sons, the more she would retaliate in her fear-fueled anger and expose herself more and more. [130]All I had to do was not let up on the application of my pressure on her. [131]Her bursting out of the cave and attempts to attack me would expose her to those involved in our situation, especially the judge.

[132]I knew that I would be in for a long slow battle, which I believed at the time would take about six months and cost me about $20,000. [133]I'll tell you now that I was way off in that calculation by almost two years and a difference of over $30,000. [134]This is all money that I did not have in the first place. [135]It's a good thing we have credit cards. [136]The problem is the time it takes to pay them off and the interest rate. [137]A debt of $50,000 becomes closer to over $70,000 by the time it is paid off. [138]This is the cost of doing battle in a system that enables, and caters to, narcissists… for now.

[139]I wanted to see my dragon thrashing about in the burned Wicked Garden in agony of its exposure and the sheer fact it was outsmarted, and indeed quite defeatable. [140]It would become quite the spectacle. [141]What would it look like in the real world? [142]A court transcript of Candace blatantly lying to the judge, and to her own attorneys about her narrative. [143]Was she telling her attorneys about all the first I had on her? [144]I bet not. [145]I depended on her pride to keep certain details from being divulged to her own lawyers. [146]If she told them everything, they would never want to attach their name to her. [147]Luckily, I would turn out to be right. [148]I took a page from the narcissistic playbook and leaned into an opportunistic mindset. [149]I depended on her hiding information from her own lawyers, as well as my ability to capitalize on that and make her and her lawyers look like fools in the courtroom. [150]The court transcripts are definitely a fun read these days. [151]My sons thought so too. [152]Yeah, I showed them everything.

[153]In an effort to keep the peace for over 12 years of parallel parenting, I kept mum about their…uh…mum. [154]I withheld so much truth because I knew how unbelievable their mother's lies were. [155]Every time I visited my sons, I would tell them where we were at in the custody process. [156]I shared every piece of evidence that pertained to my multiple court hear-

ings against Candace. [157]This is how I used Candace's own words to start eroding the trauma bonds that tied my sons to her. [158]She would call that parental alienation. [159]They saw her lies, and not just hers, but the lies of all she was able to triangulate to her side and feed into her narrative.

[160]My sons would learn a lot about the court system too. [161]I used everything as a training opportunity to prepare them for the kinds of battles that adults deal with. [162]My mindset was this, I could die tomorrow. [163]Better for me to die knowing my sons know the truth, than to let them believe the lies their mother had been feeding them all their lives. [164]I see truth as more important than my life. [165]It's worth suffering for. But afraid? No. [166]Only narcissists fear truth, not me. [167]Fear is the mind-killer. [168]Fear of what Candace was capable of is what I allowed to subdue me for so long. [169]I had no interest in my sons being afraid of a courtroom like I had initially been. [170]I taught my sons the folly of fear, and Candace was my teacher's aid, without ever realizing it herself. [171]Of course, she knows now, doesn't she? [172]I led her right into my arena, the arena she thought was hers all along, and then led her right to the noose of her own design. [173]All I had to do was say, "boo". [174]The fear was never mine to experience to begin with.

4. To Destroy or to Simply Conquer?

[1]Understanding narcissism, and with my belief that Candace is indeed a covert narcissist, I knew I would defeat her. [2]I knew the cost would be great. [3]The reward would be a new reality where she was no longer a concern, and my sons and I would be allowed to finally exist together in peace. [4]The reward would be knowing that my sons were entering adulthood vastly more capable than they were before. [5]I wanted them to understand how narcissists act when pressure is applied. [6]Under pressure diamonds can be formed. [7]With friction applied, gems are polished. [8]I knew the outcome would be a positive one, even though there was no way to tell what that would look like. [9]At the very worst, my sons would see me for who I was, a fighter for love, and absolutely fearless. [10]My sons would learn from my handling of my conflicts with calm confidence and armed with truth. [11]My sons had a front-row seat while in the custody of their mother to what happens when you apply pressure to a

piece of glass designed to look like a diamond. [12]They would witness the fracturing of their mother's mind as she would try everything to keep her mask on.

[14]Knowing narcissism, knowing Candace, and knowing what I endured as punishment for leaving her, I felt the desire to punish back. Now I knew how to do it. [15]I began to strategize how to make those fears into reality for her. [16]It was just like all those years in my childhood that I plotted against my bullies and my own father, dedicating my mental faculties, my dark fantasies, to the special and individual punishment I would deal to each of them. [17]This time, I could deliver punishment just as unseen as the abuse itself. [18]I took a page from the narcissist's playbook. [19]If they can be relentless with lies, I should be able to be relentless using only the truth and the due shame that comes with it. [20]They have no mercy. I can mimic that too. [21]Let's see what happens when I out-narc a narc.

[22]I did want to destroy Candace just as a narcissist desires and takes action to destroy their victims. [23]If exposure without their mask is one of their biggest fears, then what if I did that in front of the world stage? [24]How badly would that destroy her? [25]What would my sons think about me for using their mother's disorder against her in a way that would force her into a narcissistic collapse and mortify her? [26]Luckily, their mother made it easy for me when the time came for me to approach my sons asking for permission to speak about my experience with their mother. [27]So, in case you were wondering, my sons were on board with me publishing this book. [28]They have seen firsthand how damaging a narcissistic parent can be to their children. [29]My book is only the beginning. [30]Wait until the day they choose to write theirs, if they so choose.

[31]Narcissistic mortification is when a narcissist is so utterly devastated that they barely function as a human being. [32]Publishing a book would be a highly effective means of bringing mortification to a narcissist on a level the world has never seen. [33]With that, the fervor of attention the topic of narcissism would receive would finally start bringing some justice to all. [34]I thank Johnny Depp for showing me that it is indeed possible to hold a covert narcissist accountable in front of the entire world. [35]But unlike Johnny Depp, I'm no one of importance to the world, at least not at the time of my writing this. [36]Also, unlike Johnny Depp,

my reasoning is quite different, assuming his reasoning was purely to hold Amber Heard accountable for lying about him. [37]I'm using my court case to go after the jugular of systemic narcissism. [38]I have faith that everything changes when I publish, and that the topic of narcissism will be more mainstream than ever as a result.

[39]With making the topic of narcissism mainstream, I believe the topic will stay alive until the end of time. [40]The mind is the final frontier after all, and we are naturally explorers as a species. [41]It's more fruitful to explore the mind and how we have the power to provide healthy discipline to it. [42]Making the topic of narcissism mainstream, it will bring with it so much additional shame to Candace which would further devastate her. [43]I do have a dark side, after all. I just needed the right event to trigger me to embrace that darkness within. [44]Now that I know how to make my dark side work for me, instead of against me, I feel pretty unstoppable. [45]The Wicked Garden that is my dragon's refuge outside her lair will become her place of ego death. [46]If I were to crush her ego on the world stage, I would surely make enemies, especially from those who want this abuse kept hidden the most. [47]I strategized on how I could use my book to bait them. [48]I do have a quite layered and multi-phase master plan, my target being systemic narcissism itself. [49]Systemic narcissism made me an enemy. [50]Now it's my turn to show systemic narcissism just how dark I can be.

[51]The second phase of my plan depends on the ensuing battle upon publishing. [52]Narcissists can't help but fight. [53]It is their actions in fighting me that will be their undoing, just like how Candace fighting me in court was hers. [54]My plan depends on narcissists adhering to their script. [55]I can be confident enough to say that while knowing that doing so does not impact my second phase the least bit. [56]If anything, it will make what comes next a lot more entertaining, not just to me, but to anyone who wishes to watch the drama unfold. [57]People love drama, so this is how I will make the world my stage. [58]All the narcissists have to do is fight against me, and then it's on with the show. [59]I came to party. [60]They don't know what I know, because they can't think that far ahead. It's part of their reprobation. [61]They don't even know they operate on a script. [62]Even reading this they still can't understand what I mean. [63]Their pride won't let them believe they have an inferior mind, and that

it was by their own doing. [64]A healed and educated empath can run circles around a narcissist. [65]Is that you? [66]Can it be?

5. Cascade of Loss

[1]If the narcissist's biggest fear is abandonment, I can only imagine that their fear is justified. [2]The simplest explanation is usually the correct one. [3]Throughout the narcissist's life, people already abandoned them before my book, and before the understanding of what narcissism is before that. [4]These abandonments were the narcissist's wake-up calls to the fact they need to examine themselves and their actions more closely. [5]They don't learn though, because their pride prevents them from doing so. [6]I depend on their pride to keep them miserable. [7]I can ramp up the pressure until they break mentally, or their pride does. [8]Something will break eventually with enough exposure. :) [9]I used to be the good guy, you know. [10]The best bad guys in stories were once good. [11]Maybe this is what I'm better at. [12]Maybe this is what I was always meant to be. [13]I'm no hero; if anything, I'm anti.

[14]Once a narcissist loses that scapegoat or other primary supply, they turn the abuse up on whoever is left. [15]It's how their narcissism works. [16]It's in the script and they won't be able to fight it. [17]Candace will then need to project her rage onto the remaining family members. [18]Her narcissistic mother will also be devastated by Candace's shameful image that's placed on the family. [19]To Candace's mom, image is everything. [20]Once I snatch that image away, by design, they will implode. [21]All of this will drive a wedge between Candace's mother and stepfather. [22]A failing marriage will result. [23]And when Candace's stepdad tries to divorce her mother, that's when he will truly understand narcissism as his divorce will be uglier than mine. [24]Maybe then he will see me for who I am, which will help him heal. [25]Either way, their house will be divided. [26]Eventually, the last poor soul who stays will get it the worst. [27]I know who that will be. [28]To that person I say this, [29]"You always deserved better, and I look forward to the day when you separate and work on your healing and find your peace. I forgive you. You just wanted to be loved. I get that more than you know." [30]Now, I need to go back to bad guy mode.

[31]Now, let's talk paradoxes. You'd think that me laying out my plan would actually prevent it from becoming reality. [32]That's not how narcissists or their enablers work. [33]No, their pride will lock them in and make them all suffer until they break exactly like I foretold. [34]So, if they have pride, they will only suffer more for it. [35]This is how I use their pride to make them suffer more. [36]The more suffering, the more likely they will eventually snap out of their lifelong stupors. [37]Play the sins they are beholden to against them, and you will see how easy they are to manipulate. [38]This sounds like I'm a punisher, but I see it differently. I'm just playing the game that they have been playing all along. [39]Aww, they don't like it when I play their game. That's too bad. [40]The Sanders home will indeed fall apart, no matter how much support they receive from those who want to oppose my efforts. [41]As a matter of fact, the more support they receive to stay together, the more devastation there will be to systemic narcissism when they finally do fall apart. I'm very patient. [42]Their supporters will out themselves as enablers of toxicity. [43]Do you think their own households won't be divided as a result? [44]My enemies will do my work for me. [45]This is how my book can bring an entire system to its fucking knees. I just had to be fearless first.

[46]So, let's say you aren't ready for that kind of division. Sucks for you. [47]Staying in a relationship with one of these people will actually prevent them from doing the real work themselves to grow. [48]That's just not how they operate, so we can't operate in a way that feeds their narcissism. [49]For a narcissist to know that you know what they are and still won't leave them, it just makes them think you are even more stupid than they initially thought when they first met you. [50]Yes, they are with you because of how easy it is for them to fool you over and over again. [51]Still want to stick around and make things work with someone unwilling to change? [52]You got that kind of power? [53]Then, by all means, go for it. [54]Then, after 20-30 years of trying, write a book about how you wasted your life due to your own hubris.

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[55]*"Yeah, speaking about people and their hubris…"*

Beast Mode:

[56]Ok, let's do this, Mr. Narcinson. [57]Come on, motherfucker, bring that shit!

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[58]"I thought you'd never ask. [59]Now that I have your attention…"

Beast Mode:

[60]Just kidding. Gotcha again. [61]I actually forgot you were still here.

[62]Hello?

[63]I think next time I will play with him for a little bit before I disengage. [64]Sometimes you gotta play along for a little bit to get them riled up. [65]Remember, if you want them to believe they got you going back and forth with them, then defend yourself, act like you care what they think about you, and pretend your feelings are hurt when they make their baseless or twisted accusations about your character. [66]They want to see your face for your reactions. [67]Build them up with fake validation, and then pop that shit right when they think they got you sad and looking at the floor. [68]Then bring that head slowly up, make that solid eye contact, and don't say a word. Speak only with your eyes, saying [69]"I see you for what you are, and I'm the one with all the power and I know it, and I love watching you fake yourself into believing you are the powerful one." [70]Then give 'em that Mona Lisa smile. [71]They hate it when you look like you know something they don't know. [72]And the longer you take, the more it freaks them out. [73]Have fun!

[74]If you feel threatened, show no fear. [75]Reactive abuse works both ways. [77]Let them get angry. [78]It means they are scared anyway. [79]Ride that wave of their fear. [80]See their anger for what it is, what it always was; fear of losing you. [81]Don't believe me? Try walking away shaming them for showing you who they truly are. [82]Say you are done with them. [83]Yeah, they will go crazy. But this same crazy person who you once feared will be the same one begging and apologizing in an attempt to get you back sooner or later. [84]That's when you know you have truly won. [85]Relish that victorious moment, and don't even respond. [86]You also win if they never talk to you again. [87]See? You win either way. [88]This is how

you know who had the power all along. [89]If they become physically abusive or physically threatening, call the police. [90]They should be more afraid of you turning them in to the authorities, than you should be of whatever they can do to you. [91]Exposure is worse than physical death to a narcissist. [92]Kill them with your light.

[93]If you are worried for your life or the lives of others, then obviously be smart about it. [94]There is always a price to pay for leaving them. [95]If you haven't lost everything for leaving one, then consider yourself among the fortunate. [96]You have to be willing to lose everything to have the confidence to put these people in their place, under your foot. [97]They should be grateful for even that position. [98]How's that for hubris?

[99]Two narcissists entangled together will never leave each other, not for long at least. [100]They always come back to each other. [101]They spend the rest of their lives blaming the other for their troubles, instead of seeing their own faults. [102]Candace and her mother dearest can revisit my book any time they need to be reminded of how I designed their fate, and how easy it could've been for them if they chose to allow me to spend more time with my sons like I originally asked over two years ago. [103]Yes, they will indeed suffer for the emotional and psychological abuse that they have been getting away with for so damn long. [104]They can blame me and play the victims all they want. [105]As long as they believe that, they trap themselves in their own misery where their feelings turn into pure resentment towards me, and each other, and just continue to fester for all time. [106]It won't affect me, just them. [107]Avoiding the shame will keep them locked into their suffering.

[108]So, that's my plan to kick off their endless cascade of loss. It's how the "disorder" plays out. [109]I'm no clairvoyant, I'm just using logic and understanding to predict the most likely outcome and do my part to make that happen. [110]All I had to do was protect my sons by removing them from that toxicity and then exposing it. [111]Their "disorder" does the rest of the work for me. [112]That's how I play these fools against each other.

[113]Their hate for each other will grow because they will hate the fact that they depend on the other's coddling, and a wounded narcissist sucks at coddling anyone. [114]As their hate for each other rises throughout their

entire lives, a day will come when one of them will eventually pass away, most likely Mommy dearest. [115]When that happens, pure never-ending torture for who remains. [116]:) [117]Why should I feel bad about what I'm doing, when they have the power to come correct and make amends any time they so wish? [118]Oh, because I know that will never happen. [119]That's still not my problem. [120]They have the power to work on themselves. [121]If they want redemption, they will need to humble themselves and accept all that long-hidden and deep-seated shame they keep running from first. [122]That's where it starts. [123]And it won't likely happen. [124]The shame is too great, and that's a fact.

[125]I feel sorry for any of Candace's clients…as a mental health professional herself. [126]They let anyone in these days, I guess. [127]Yeah, that won't fuck people up even more. [128]The universities don't care about the damage they do by certifying these retards to work in mental health fields, they just want that money. [129]It's not their job to do a complete psyche evaluation. [130]Who pays for that? [131]All the clients of their graduated students do. [132]That doesn't seem fair. [133]This is just one more facet of systemic narcissism that I'm gunning for. I'm coming for all of them. [134]This book is just the beginning. [135]Want to know something else? [136]I'm all about backup plans. [137]Guess what will happen to systemic narcissism if anything happens to me or anyone I love? [138]Be creative. [139]Can you read my mind? [140]Here's a clue. [141]How can I multiply my efforts 12,000-fold? [142]That's life insurance right there. [143]If systemic narcissism takes the motherlode of blows from this book alone, watch what happens to it when there is more of me. [143]Game over. [144]These narcissists are in no rush to end the game, so they will behave themselves. [145]They will punish their own who come after me. [146]Swallow that pride, bitches! [147]I feel your hate…your fear. [148]Now give me those damn tears! [149]I'm thirsty damn it!

Beast Mode:

[150]*Damn, bro! LOL*

Beast Mode (Narc Style):

[151]*"I know, right?"*

6. Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap

[1]By informing you, dear reader, I have shared with you what is possible, and the cost of both the action of facing fears and the cost of the inaction as well. [2]Jordan Peterson said it best. You have to let the fear of inaction motivate you as it is indeed a strong motivator. [3]So how did I set my strategy to psychologically destroy Candace? [4]Sun Tzu advises to cut off or disrupt the supply lines to the enemy forces. [5]By going to court alone, it caused a financial hardship for both me and my enemy to endure, but I knew I was willing to take on any debt and I had faith that God would help me throughout the battle, and afterwards, with finances. [6]I knew Candace was stingy and that she didn't know how far I would go. [7]Maybe she thought she'd be able to scare me away with all her fake accusations. You'll hear about them all. I know you want to see it. [8]It's my pleasure, truly.

[9]Candace should've known who she was going up against. [10]I thought she did know me. After all, she loved to tell me how no one knew me as well as she did throughout the marriage. [11]She told me in writing, after I served her divorce papers, that one of the things she admired about me was my resilience and ability to focus on a goal and achieve it. [12]Surely, 12 years later, she must've forgotten that. That's ok, I'm venturing into the business of reminding narcissists just who the fuck I am. [13]I got fight in me, and plenty of it. [14]And I don't fight in the mud. [15]I fight on a different level. [16]Psychological warfare is a bitch when the rabbit finds that fucking gun, ain't that right? [17]Shoot. [18]Maybe Candace thought that by attacking me with lies that I would back down. That worked the first time she did it during the divorce, but not because I was scared of the lies, but concerned about how those lies would affect my sons. [19]So, that concern doesn't apply now.

[20]Lies cannot act as armor to protect yourself from the repercussions of using them. [21]If I'm coming for you, know that I have already committed myself to the fight and that I already know you and how you operate, who you answer to, and the rules you play by. [22]I don't care about losing battles, it's the war I'm focused on. [23]Sun Tzu says anyone who knows themself and the enemy need not fear the result of a hundred battles. [24]The Bible says that no weapon formed against me will prosper. [25]So yeah, I've got both of those going for me. [26]I'd hate to be my enemy.

[27]Placing my enemies on their slow, painful, downward spiral, until they yield or succumb to absolute defeat, without any bloodshed, is the epitome of the kind of badass victories I seek. [777]OMG [29]Who am I, right? Who am I, indeed.

Beast Mode:

[30]:Eating buttered popcorn: [31]Dude, he's got this. [32]:Licks fingers: [33]Makes me proud to see my boy all grown up. [34]:Sheds a happy tear and wipes it away:

[35]Just remember, Mr. Michael, you will never outdo the Master. [36]That's how we all got in this mess in the first place, remember? [37]Oh, you think that wrath inside you is all yours? No, it is His. [38]Just keep that banner raised high, soldier. [39]And you will. [40]We see you.

[41]#XOXO [42]#MYKINDOFINSANO

CHAPTER 11
UNSTOPPABLE

"A life well lived is a dance between having the strength to walk away and the courage to go all in."
— Eddie Pinero

Unstoppable
By Sia
-
Unstoppable
By Disturbed

1. Activity Time - Klein Bottle

[1]Do you know what a Klein bottle is? [2]Why don't you find out? [3]After you learn, how would you explain what a Klein bottle is to the average person today? [4]How would you explain it to a child? It takes a lot of time to explain, doesn't it? [5]It can also be very quickly explained, depending on the word choice. [6]But that doesn't mean that it can be easily or quickly understood.

2. Into My Crucible I Go

[1]I understand that I may appear neurotic. After all, I do have some negative energy here. [2]That's said, no anxiety or depression. [3]What mind-altering pharmaceuticals must I be on that are so successful in taking my anxiety and depression away? [4]Well, I'd first have to have it, wouldn't I? [5]The only thing that stresses me is the time it takes to write this book while trying to balance everything else in life. [6]It ain't easy. [7]By the time you read this, that stress will be gone, and I will be too busy adapting to whatever life looks like after. [8]Need to be on my game for what's to come. [9]Gotta stay frosty AF.

> **Beast Mode:**
>
> [10]*:Shivers:* [11]*Brrrrrrrrr :)*
>
> [12]*#ICECOLD*

[13]It's all about intent. [14]To the outside world, it may look like I've completely brainwashed my sons. [15]That could be considered parental alienation. [16]I was able to alienate Candace from my sons while my sons lived with her (and I barely interacted with them). [17]Who has that kind of power? [18]I did it because tomorrow isn't promised. [19]I opened myself up to my sons. [20]Trust was the result of showing them my vulnerability and showing them all that I hid because of a court-ordered document that ties my hands and serves Candace's agenda.

[21]There's a price for deceiving me. [22]My enemy lay hidden and protected from me for so long, but now I can finally see and access my enemy, this evil behind narcissism. [23]There's nothing this evil can do to stop me

because God has also hidden me from my enemies and worked on bringing me out of my own darkness, worked with me on healing myself, and showed mercy on me and my sons by waking me up. [24]I dropped everything upon my awakening and have not turned back since. [25]Every challenge has fueled me to not just continue, but to adjust my approach, strategize, and drive myself harder and faster. [26]A part of me likes the refining fires. [27]It burns good. [28]I become even more tempered in the furnace of this crucible.

Deadpool Mode:

[X1]Howdy there, big fella. You got room for one more in here? :)

[X2]#4THWALLBREAKERBROS [X3]#AVIATIONGIN [X4]#MINTMOBILE

Beast Mode:

[33]Dood! [34]How the fuck did he let you in here with me?!? [35]Sorry, bruh! [36]This place is already crowded as is. [37]Shouldn't you be out there saving the Marvel Cinematic Universe, "Marvel Jesus"? LOL [38]This is the true sacred timeline. [39]Much love though. [40]I hope you enjoyed your cameo. :)

[41]#GETREADYFORTHEAGEOFADELINE

Deadpool Mode:

[X5]:(…

[X6]#ISEEWHATYOUDIDTHERE [X7]#16WALLSBROKENYET-AGAIN [X8]#YOUARETOTALLYGOINGTOBEINMYNEXTMOVIE

She-Hulk Mode:

[X9]Hi Michael, or Mr. Beast, I see you may have a stalker. [X10]I specialize in these kinds of legal situations. [X11]If you'd like representation, I would be more than…

Beast Mode:

[49]Alright, that's enough! [50]But, Jennifer, please tell those execs at Disney to green light a second season of your show. [51]My heart desires it. [52]Alright, now go away please. [53]And thank you for helping me segue into the next section.

She-Hulk Mode:

X12;)

X13#IGOTYOU

3. Courtroom Antics

[1]Where do I even start, here? [2]At one point, I thought about just dumping all the court documents and full transcripts right into this chapter. [3]That way, there would not be any narrative but just the facts. [4]Let's face it, my book is big enough as is, and you don't want to sift through all the boring stuff. [5]Maybe withholding the proof of what's transpired in court will play out against those naysayers of mine. [6]Also, I wouldn't share all the documentation without the permission of both of my sons anyway. [7]Unlike a certain narcissistic mother, I do care about their feelings and I'm not one to pressure them. [8]Who knows, maybe they will be the ones to release the documentation themselves. There's some juicy stuff in there. [9]Candace's shame truly knows no bounds, but so does her stupidity. She gave me everything I needed to defeat her over and over again. All she needs to do is come at me. [10]Until then, I'll just be livin'. My boys will too. [11]This is what happens when fear is gone, I live for the fight, and I appreciate my rest periods. [12]Maybe I will fight for a living someday. [13]We shall see if there's a demand for my…uh…very particular set of skills. [14]LMAO

Beast Mode:

[15]Good Lawd! [16]He's talking about the skills he has acquired over a very long battle, skills that make him a nightmare for people like narcissists. [17]Michael, the Narcissist's Nightmare. [18]I like it! [19]Of course, I do.

[20]I can do this chronologically or I can do this by topic. [21]Let's do it this way. [22]I will list everything chronologically and tag each entry with some kind of identifier. [23]Sound good? [24]I'm not going to focus on how I was feeling inside, just the facts. [25]You can imagine how I felt. [26]Just ask yourself how you would feel if you were in my shoes. [27]We are going to go back, not just to the first court date, but to separation and post-divorce first. [28]Ready?

Beast Mode:

[29]*Let's a-go!*

[30]*#CHARLESMARTINET*

[31]Here are a list of dates and their happenings. [32]Even though I use question marks for missing days and months, it just means that either the exact date is unimportant, or I cannot quickly recall it. [33]Some dates without any question marks are accurate, others may be off a handful of days. [34]I use these dates primarily to illustrate the sequence of events. [35]I don't include every court hearing or parenting time, just the ones of most significance. [36]There, that was my mini disclaimer. Now, let's get to the good stuff. [37]Have fun.

[38]**??-???-2012** - *False Allegation - Court* - [39]Candace made the claim that Cruz's therapist said he had special needs. [40]I reached out to that therapist, and she stated that she did not make that statement. [41]I asked the therapist to provide a statement saying such, and she responded that she does not want to be involved in the court. [43]My attorney attempted to reach out to her for a statement. We never get it. [44]By the way, Cruz doesn't have special needs. That said, there's nothing wrong with special needs at all. [45]Candace was just trying to use it to form the basis that my sons had to stay close to her, and not with me, because of special needs. [46]Candace tried to manifest Cruz's special needs in order to isolate me from my sons and give her greater control over my visitation. [47]The thing I did not understand back then was that she was deriving validation from my sons after I abandoned her. [48]She was trying to turn both of them into my replacements. [49]How can I make that statement? Easily. [50]There are two witnesses, aren't there? It's considered hearsay until it isn't.

[51]**??-???-2013** – *Candace doing Candace* – [52]I attempted to coordinate a visit involving my immediate family and Candace denied it. [53]This turned out to be the last opportunity my sons would have to get to know my father,

their grandfather, before he passed away. [54]My sons got to know my father through me, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

[55]**??-???-2014** – *Visitation Disruption* – [56]I asked Candace not to schedule any activities with my sons during my parenting time. This is something that never stopped. [57]Candace would know far in advance when I would have my sons, and instead of rescheduling their activities, she would use them to disrupt my visitation and keep me local. [58]I saw through what she was doing, and I repeatedly asked her to stop. [59]I know Candace well enough to know that I make it worse for myself when I tell her what I don't like. I do that on purpose, so I could eventually out her for doing just that. [60]See? Here we are ten years later. Same shit. [61]Do I want to give her a taste of her own medicine? Sure I do, but I won't.

[62]**??-???-2015** – *Coercive Control Attempt Fail* – [63]Candace called me while I was at work. [64]She tried to convince me to abandon my sons, because the divorce was so hard on them. I shamed Candace for asking me to do that. [65]She attempted to bribe me with not having to pay child support if I would do as she asked. I shamed her again. I ended the conversation. [66]Candace called back not too much later and threatened that since I wouldn't abandon my kids, she would commit suicide. [67]She asked me if I would sign papers so that if she passed away, her mother would get custody of my sons. I shamed her for thinking of herself and not of what her loss would do to our sons. [68]I told her that if she were to pass away, I would take my sons and that I couldn't promise they would have a relationship with her family. [69]I said that to her as a deterrent against suicide. [70]I didn't believe her, and I don't let people control me with suicide threats. [71]Her life is her own. I respect her ability to make personal life choices, including ending hers. [72]Free will is *that* important to me, and you can shame me all you want for making that statement. [73]I told Candace that once my sons turn 18, I would tell my sons what she said, and that she better tell them before I do.

[74]**??-???-2015** - *Coercive Control Attempt Fail* - [75]Candace said over the phone she wouldn't let me have my sons around my wife. [76]My wife and I were married for over six months at this point. [77]Candace demanded to speak to my wife before she would approve a visit where she could see the boys…during my visitation. [78]Candace's claim? She didn't know if she could trust my wife. [79]I didn't allow the conversation to take place. [80]I knew Candace had foul intentions to try and manipulate my wife. [81]My wife did not need the stress of dealing with Candace. [82]I wouldn't let Candace triangulate my wife, or her way into our marriage. [83]I believed her goals were nothing but nefarious. [84]Candace was going to try and make my wife upset so she could use that to say she felt that my wife would be unsafe for my kids. [85]I wasn't about to put my wife in that position, to feel guilty for something Candace had planned all along. [86]Yeah, I may not have known all those fancy narcissistic terms here, but I knew Candace and her tactics. [87]I was already well-versed in NPD back then, without knowing what it was.

[88]**??-???-2018** – *Visitation Disruption* – [89]I made it known to Candace my wishes for her and her family were to stop interrupting my parenting time with multiple phone calls and visits. [90]This is one of a few times where there were so many interruptions that I needed to say something. [91]My sons needed to respond quickly to all texts, or Candace would be upset with them after I would drop my sons back off with her. [92]Because I knew this, I didn't say anything to my sons. [93]I didn't want them to get in trouble with their mother, but it was very disruptive and made it difficult to enjoy my time with my sons.

[94]**??-Jun-2019** – *Visitation Disruption - Police Involvement* – [95]Candace called the police to attempt to interrupt my summer parenting time. [96]It resulted in no finding of danger or harm, and my sons and I were allowed to continue exercising the visitation. [97]The event prompted my sons to divulge to me that their mother confessed to them that she tried to convince me to abandon my sons, from the 2015 conversation with Candace mentioned earlier. [98]She left out the fact that she tried to bribe me with not having to pay child support if I would abandon any rela-

tionship with my sons. [99]She also left out the part where she threatened to commit suicide since I chose to not abandon my sons. [100]She omits truth when it doesn't fit her narrative of her being a good mother and wife.

[101]**29-Apr-2022** – *"The Talk" - From Chapter 7: A Cult of Two* – [102]I attempted to ask the entire Sanders family, including my sons as witnesses, for additional time with my sons and out of state. [103]I have a transcription of what I said, and they may have a recording. [104]My request to the family was rejected. [105]Game: on, gloves: off, beast mode: engaged. [106]With my new flow, I'm ready to hit the streetz with my Nikes. ;)

[107]**01-May-2022** – *Child Protective Services Involvement* – [108]I reported to DCFS the emotional abuse my sons were, and are, enduring at the hands of their mother. The case against Candace is considered unfounded three months later. [109]Of course. Because no one knows how to detect covert narcissism or the results of its abuse…yet. [110]Hopefully, this book sets shit straight.

[111]**??-???-2022** - *False Allegation* - [112]I reached out to one of Cruz's many therapists. He had many because these therapists were not playing into her narrative of my son. [113]This therapist shared with me that Candace claimed I did not pay child support and was uninvolved. [114]If she told the truth, she would've said that I indeed pay child support consistently and that my level of involvement with the kids is under her control, and that she wished me to have none and fights against me every time I try. [115]But that would make her look like a bad parent. [116]And now that this therapist knew the truth, and that Candace was gaslighting the therapist, she stopped taking my son to that therapist. [117]This happened several times in 2022 and 2023. She kept therapist shopping for the one she could easily manipulate.

[118]**04-Jul-2022** – *Visitation Disruption - Police Involvement* – [119]I arrived to the Sanders residence to pick up my sons for court-ordered parenting time. [120]Candace refused to release my sons to me. [121]I called the police. The result is Candace eventually releasing my sons to me after the police speak with her. [122]The neighbors watched as the event unfolded.

[123]**22-Jul-2022** – *Court (Emergency Hearing)* – [124]Candace took me to court the day before my scheduled summer week-long parenting time in an attempt to restrict parenting, on the basis of Caleb having a compromised immune system that puts him in danger of contracting a disease. [125]The judge denied the restriction but added that sleeping arrangements for my sons would require that they sleep separately from family. [126]I already had their own room and bathroom so there was no change needed from original accommodations. Then there's the fact that Caleb wasn't truly immuno-compromised anymore, not at this point. [127]Candace lied to the court. The judge believed her without any evidence. [128]The result was I was court ordered to have my sons wearing masks the entire time they were to be with me and my family. [129]Stress and anxiety compromise the immune system. Living in a toxic family household will do just that. Can't prove that though…yet.

[130]**23-Jul-2022** – *Visitation Disruption - Police Involvement* – [131]I arrived at 9am to pick up my sons per court-ordered visitation, and per the agreed upon summer week-long trip, and per the emergency court hearing the previous day that denied restraint of my parenting time. [132]Candace stated I should come back at noon because my sons were sleeping. [133]I called the police since the court-ordered visitation start time was not being honored. [134]The police officer informed me that they were filing the police report, but I should come back at noon since Candace asked to come back at that time. [135]I complained to the officer about how ineffective they were, and the officer informed me that based on the current laws, a police report is all they can do and informed me that I would need to take Candace to court if I wanted access to my sons, and that the police reports would play a role in the hearing. [136]Going to court doesn't bring back the lost time with my sons.

[137]**23-Jul-2022** – *Visitation Disruption - Police Involvement* – [138]I arrived at the Sanders house again at noon to pick up my sons. [139]Candace denied my parenting time and withheld access to my sons. [140]I called the police, and they informed Candace that she was violating the court order. [141]Candace asked the police if they would arrest her if she denied my visitation with my sons. [142]The police informed her that they could not arrest her without a warrant, so she decided to deny visitation.

[143]**24-Jul-2022** – *Visitation Disruption - Police Involvement* – [144]I arrived on my birthday to pick up my sons, as my birthday is also court-ordered visitation. [145]Candace denied visitation despite me calling the police. [146]I got yet another useless police report and left again without my sons with me.

[147]**26-Jul-2022** – *Court (Emergency Hearing)* – *False Allegation* – [148]I took Candace to court for interfering with my summer visit parenting time and attempting to salvage half of the remaining trip. [149]Candace explained she was expecting me to tell her that my sons would be staying at a hotel, and that was the reason behind her denying both the court-ordered visitation and the judge's order to not restrict parenting time. [150]The judge ruled in my favor as my sons had separate sleeping arrangements already and ordered Candace to pay my legal fees for that court date which was later calculated to be $1,300. [151]Candace was also ordered to release my sons to me and make up for the missed parenting time. [152]Even though Candace violated the custody agreement, and lost the visitation restriction, and still refused me three times to visit my sons, the judge somehow did not find Candace in contempt, though she did use the word in the courtroom. [153]It's in the transcript too. [154]Candace accused me in front of the judge of the following false statements:

- [155]Lied about me not being involved with my son Caleb's medical treatments. I was not given the option of defending myself. I had at least 6 pieces of evidence to combat that lie.
- [156]Lied to the court about Caleb having a compromised immune system, which she tried to use to form the basis for her

withholding my children from me for their summer trip. [157]The judge chose not to hold Candace in contempt of the court order but made her pay my legal fees and forced her to give up my sons to me for the last four days of what was supposed to be a seven-day event-filled visitation with me and many paternal family members.

- [158]Lied that she was unaware I would be taking my sons to visit their paternal family members. [159]I made this known to Candace on April 29th, far in advance, giving her ample opportunity to discuss with me any concerns and any related plans. [160]The reality is this is one of many examples of Candace's attempts to isolate my sons from spending time with their family members from my side. [161]Also, my visitation is my visitation, it was not something for her to control.
- [162]Claimed that Cruz suffered from emotional dysregulation. There were no signs, nor proof, though Candace was sure hard at work of trying to build that narrative for Cruz. [163]Yeah, what a mother, right? [164]The narcissist can't let the scapegoat get away. [165]That's why they need to try and take the scapegoat's human rights. It makes it difficult for that child to escape the toxic family for the rest of their life. [166]Not on my fucking watch.
- [167]Claimed that I corrupted Cruz's mental faculties with a book I gave him titled "Going Mad to Stay Sane: The Psychology of Self-Destructive Behavior". [168]The book was a means to help Cruz deal with his emotions constructively. She took this book away from him. [169]The last thing a narcissistic parent wants is for their empathetic child to become empowered with knowledge.
- [170]Another false allegation was that I told my sons I would give them guns when they turned 18. [171]I chalk this up to my sons mishearing me, or Candace twisting my words to them. [172]If Candace had asked me if this was true, I would've told her that I had willed my firearms to my sons. So, if I were to pass away, they would inherit them at the appropriate age. [173]Instead of verifying with me what she thought she heard my sons say, she used it to build a case against me as a parent who was going to give his minor sons firearms. [174]Candace has her opinions about firearms. [175]To each their own. [176]If my sons told me that

Candace was going to give my then 11 and 13 year-old sons their own firearms, I'd be having a discussion with her about it. [177]But that's just me.

- [178]Candace claimed to fear that the summer trip the boys would spend with me would endanger my children mentally, physically, morally, and emotionally. [179]They had the time of their lives…for what remained of the trip after a second emergency hearing finally forced Candace to give my kids up to me. [180]We will never get those lost days back. [181]Candace was court-ordered to give me three days to make up. She never did. I guess that's not contempt either. [182]They get away with so much, don't they? [183]Yeah, not for long.

[184]**03-Aug-2022** – *Police Involvement – Coercive Control Attempt Failure* – [185]Candace reported Cruz as a run-away. [186]The police officer who arrived at the Sanders residence took the report and called me to inform me and ask if I had heard from Cruz. [187]I discovered that Cruz did reach out to me via one of our secret communication channels, and in his messages, he stated that he was running away after enduring two different occurrences of his mom "getting violent" with him. [188]From my experience, Candace has a history of using reactive abuse to provoke a reaction that she can then use to control and punish, which is laying the foundation for coercive control. [189]I called the police officer's direct line to inform the officer of Cruz's message. [190]Cruz called me approximately five hours after he was reported from a church and told me what happened. [191]His mother shoved him hard two different times over two days and requested I pick him up. [192]He felt bullied by his mother and felt powerless to stop it. He was afraid of defending himself and having that used against him by his mother. [193]Candace was trying to build a narrative at that time that Cruz was psychopathic. [194]Even Cruz knew this because she kept accusing him of being anti-social and violent. [195]I explained to Cruz that I would need to call the police since I was out of state, and even if I did make it there, I wouldn't have custody to be able to protect him. [196]I informed Cruz that I would be calling the police and that he needed to tell them everything so the police officer could make the best decision. [197]I informed the police and relayed his message about his mother's actions. [198]The police officer arrived at the scene, listened to

Cruz, and returned him to his mother. The police officer saw Cruz as a troublemaker to his mother and did nothing about the abuse since Cruz had no bruises visible. [199]I vow to myself to make it a point to expose this police behavior, and how enabling it is to the abuser, and how devastating it is to the abused child when authority fails to protect them. [200]I wonder to myself if this police officer deliberately chose to hide Cruz's abuse because of Candace's stepfather being a retired and well-known state trooper. [201]I'm not going to say that the police need to be trained to recognize reactive abuse, because that's what child protection services is supposed to do. [202]*:cough cough:*

[203]**05-Aug-2022** – *Police Involvement* – [204]I called Candace asking to speak with Cruz and she informed me that he wasn't home. [205]This caused me great concern, especially after her physical abuse and him subsequently running away, and I asked her where Cruz was. [206]Candace replies, "All I'm going to tell you is that Cruz is safe and being cared for". [207]I called the police since I was allowed to call my sons per court order and out of concern for Cruz's physical safety from Candace, based on Cruz's aforementioned last message to me. [208]The officer arrived and, after speaking with Candace, relayed to me that Cruz was in a behavioral hospital. [209]This caused me more concern as Cruz had repeatedly expressed fears to me throughout the year that he was worried his mom would send him to an asylum and/or keep him medicated against his will. [210]While Cruz was at the behavioral facility, I was not included in any paperwork regarding access to Cruz as his biological father. [211]Candace deliberately excluded me from the entire process and any details about it. [212]I asked if I could speak with Cruz, and Candace informed me I would need a special code in order to speak with Cruz and that she would not be giving it to me. [213]Specifically, she said she would ask Cruz's on-site therapist for me. [214]Did she? [215]What do you think?

[216]**08-Aug-2022** – *DCFS Report (unverified)* – [217]A therapist at the behavioral hospital allegedly reported Candace to DCFS for physical abuse based on Cruz informing the therapist of how his mother had punished him in the past. [218]She did this by binding his hands and feet

together (which is what constitutes physical abuse) with duct tape overnight, and then a second time on the same night after he managed to unbind himself so that he could sleep comfortably. [219]The reason behind my son being bound by his mother? [220]Cracking his knuckles which annoyed her. [221]This therapist was later removed from Cruz's therapy team at the request of Candace in what I believe to be retaliation against the therapist for reporting the physical abuse and/or allowing me as the other parent access to the same information Candace had – per court order and per Cruz's signed authorization. [222]I was able to call Cruz daily at this point, during the short time period for in-patients to receive phone calls. [223]Candace learned that I am able to contact Cruz, and she informed me not to talk to him about what happened to him or talk to him about his feelings, as they could trigger his fragile mental state. [224]It was complete bullshit. And I don't operate like that anyway. [225]Turns out Cruz is one tough cookie, and he told me he enjoyed the break away from his mother. [226]He felt at peace being out of the Sanders house. [227]I know what he means. [228]I believe that the DCFS report results were unfounded. [229]The DCFS proves itself absolutely useless to my sons. They only made things worse for the people who reported the abuse to them and, in turn, made things tougher on my sons. [230]The perpetrators and enablers of the abuse go repeatedly undetected.

[231]**02-Sep-2022** – *False Allegation* – *Court* – [232]Candace accused me of "severe mental abuse" of my sons and attempted to get the judge to approve a protection order against me from my sons. [233]Candace did not use her lawyer, and only filled out the request partially so that it would not get served. [234]That didn't stop her from putting on a show for the judge while I was absent to defend myself. [235]Without my defense, the judge grants the order. [236]My lawyer happened to be present and confronted the judge, pointing out the fact that I was not properly served, and the judge rescinded the order, but not before Candace was able to leave the courtroom with a granted protection order. [237]Candace deliberately did this right before a scheduled visitation. At the exact time of the court hearing was also my scheduled Labor Day weekend visitation with my sons. [238]The judge granted me limited visitation and a new court hearing for the protection order is set.

[239]**02-Sep-2022** – *Visitation Disruption – Police Involvement* – [240]I arrived at the Sanders residence for my scheduled court-ordered Labor Day weekend visitation with my sons. [241]Since Cruz was still an inpatient at the behavioral hospital, I was unable to exercise visitation with him. [242]Candace's half-sister Chari, in her late 30's, denied my access to Caleb. [243]I called the police who attempted to assist but were unsuccessful as Chari was acting as my son's guardian denying my parenting time. [244]Candace was in court at the time falsely accusing me and attempting to get a protection order against me so that I would not be able to see my sons. [245]Candace's family missed the memo that no weapon formed against me shall prosper. [246]They missed all those memos. That's okay though. I'm sure they got the message now. [247]I was allowed to pick up Caleb later in the day because of the court order but was required to bring him back each evening as a precaution, until the new hearing of the court order. [248]Cruz at this point was in outpatient care so he was sleeping at the Sander's residence, but most of his day was spent in outpatient therapy. [249]Per the judge's orders, and because Cruz was an inpatient, I needed to receive approval from his therapist to be able to exercise my visitation with him. [250]Cruz's current therapist was unreachable, and I left a voice message. [251]I was never called back so I was unable to plead my case to Cruz's therapist so that I could exercise my parenting time with Cruz. [252]I never got to spend Labor Day Weekend with Cruz. It was just me and Caleb.

[253]**02-Sep-2022** – *Police Involvement* – [254]As I was returning to the Sanders residence in the evening with my son Caleb, based on the limited visitation requiring me to bring him back each evening, I was greeted by Candace's mother and stepfather and a couple police squad cars. [255]Candace's mother was holding in her hand an order of protection against me interacting with my sons, the one that was immediately rescinded. [256]They knew I was allowed to have my son Caleb as he was released to me after the court hearing with my lawyer's aid and subsequent court order. [257]The officer explained that there was an order of protection against me, and I replied that the order was invalid and for the officer to please verify. [258]After 30 minutes, the officer confirmed the order of protection was not valid and, with that, Candace's family

was informed not to interfere with the rest of my parenting time with Caleb.

[259]**01-Oct-2022** – *Behavioral Facility Report* – [260]The report and final assessment for Cruz was complete and I spoke with the therapist. [261]Cruz required an environment of validation for his thoughts and feelings but was released to the same household where that did not exist. [262]This is something that all people deserve. [263]What happens when you don't get it? [264]The fingers all point at you being the problem. [265]That doesn't seem fair. Yet, apparently, that's the name of this game we play. [266]So be it. [267]I rest easy because I know I will be calling out all of this at the right time…which is now. [268]Cruz then goes from inpatient to outpatient services.

[269]**07-Oct-2022** – *Update* – [270]Candace's lawyer was able to convince the judge to reimburse me for legal expenses after she was almost found in contempt of court. [271]Candace completely reimburses my lawyer the amount in full. She had to because she would need to close out all fees before she could switch to a new lawyer. [272]Apparently, things just weren't working out between Candace and her first lawyer. [273]My guess? Her lawyer had enough of her, and her mom's, shit. [274]Or maybe, just maybe, her lawyer saw what Candace was doing, and that she didn't truly care about her own sons. [275]Or, maybe, Candace looked bad in court that day, and her ego couldn't take the loss and punished the lawyer by firing her. [276]I will never know. [277]Oh well. [278]The next lawyer of hers was a criminal defense lawyer and retired judge. But he only lasted a few hearings before he became a judge… again. [279]I actually liked him. [280]But her third lawyer became my favorite. [281]Just like her, good at twisting truths and then weaponizing them against me, a dirty fighter. [282]I found her to be a worthy opponent, completely focused on getting Candace what she wanted with zero regard for what she was helping Candace do to my sons. [283]I would come to enjoy being on the witness stand in front of her. [284]I loved staring deep into her eyes while I defeated every question aimed to discredit me with a response that further incriminated Candace. [285]I

was going to make this lawyer my bitch, and then my biggest fan. [286]Game recognizes game.

[287]**26-Oct-2022** – *Court* – [288]We had two hearings this day. [289]The first hearing was for Candace's order of protection motion against me. Candace represented herself without the help of her lawyer, since she did not use her lawyer for that motion. [290]Candace dropped the order of protection request. [291]It was then dismissed by the judge. [292]I guess I wasn't emotionally and psychologically abusive enough to my sons after all. Huh! [293]Who woulda thunk?!? [294]The second hearing Candace used her new lawyer. [295]Yeah, she dropped the last lawyer. She probably scolded Candace too much for all the dumb shit she was doing to ruin her own case. [296]I predicted this would happen. [297]The lawyer probably got tired of walking on eggshells around Candace with anything shaming. [298]In this hearing, Candace submitted a letter from her old therapist that she also would use periodically for Cruz too. [299]This therapist submitted a letter accusing me of being unsafe for my sons. [300]The GAL knew this therapist was close to Candace and that she was using her to build a narrative against me. [301]The document didn't prevent me from seeing my sons, but the judge did order that my visitation with my sons for lunch that day would need to be supervised. [302]The GAL volunteered to supervise. The supervision worked in my favor in the long run, as the GAL got to witness my sons and I do our thing, talk non-stop about movies and video games we love mostly.

[303]**22-Nov-2022** – *Court* – [304]I secured Thanksgiving with my sons. [305]Since I was in town and had to wait until the day I could see my sons, while I stayed in a hotel, I asked Candace to take my sons to dinner while I was there in town. [306]She denies it. [307]That doesn't violate anything, it just would've been nice. [308]Candace then asked that all parenting time pick-ups and drop-offs would happen at the nearby McDonalds, and no longer at the Sanders residence. [309]I guess the neighbors were asking questions regarding all the police cars repeatedly coming to the Sanders residence that year. [310]The court order pretty much stated that Candace needed to stop blocking my sons from speaking with me, and for her and

her family members to stop monitoring the phone calls. [311]It only took six months. [312]Woot woot! [313]: |

[314]**20-Dec-2022** – *Court* – [315]I attempted to get my Christmas vacation with my sons out of state. I went through the court since Candace would not allow out-of-state visits. [316]There was a new temporary judge assigned. The judge, also soon to be retiring, didn't feel comfortable making a decision so close to the holidays on me taking the kids out of state. [317]His reasoning was that all the "professionals" Candace convinced to write negative statements about me, on top of lacking any feedback from the family therapist, put him in a difficult situation. [318]Regarding that, Candace deliberately wasted time in making her appointment which was enough to cause a significant delay. [319]The hearing was a complete waste of time and money since there was not enough time spent with the assigned family therapist. [320]On the bright side, the family therapist recommended a parental fitness evaluation. The therapist who will be conducting the report said the report should be completed around February 2023 if Candace was cooperative. [321]This would create the basis for a custody hearing. We awaited the appointing of the new judge with a status hearing. [322]The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) recommended to the judge a parental fitness evaluation, especially since Candace blocks all her calls to my sons. [323]Financially, things were starting to get tough. The retainer ran out on my lawyer. The GAL's retainer was about to run out soon too. The family therapy sessions were incredibly expensive at $280 an hour. [324]I was unable to use my health insurance due to being court-mandated, otherwise they would have been just a co-pay. [325]Candace introduced the second document from a last-minute therapist for Cruz she went to, his fifth one that year. The letter from that therapist stated I am parentally isolating my sons from Candace. [326]The GAL knew about Candace and her therapist shopping and communicated that to the judge. The judge didn't buy into the letter. [327]I made a mental note to put this triangulated person in my book, but instead I've decided to give this therapist a chance to come forward with truth before I take legal action once I publish.

[328]Yeah, I'm that guy now who comes to expose everyone who got in my way using lies or hiding truth. [329]Every. Damned. One. [329]That's right. I

have a list of those I will expose while holding them accountable. [330]I'm going to expose all those who Candace was able to manipulate to attack me with her fabrications. [331]I'm merciful until I'm not. [332]I don't tell people when their time is up anymore, I just act. [333]Come on! Ya'll know me by now. But you ain't seen nuttin' yet. :o [334]Think I can't expose people from beyond the grave? I can do it even faster after death. You'd think I couldn't, and you'd be wrong. [335]Only one way to know for sure. [336]The one who puts me in the grave will eventually find themselves to be the target of my enemies. [337]My enemy needs a scapegoat. [338]The one who kills me simply takes over that role, and they will have more than just my enemies to contend with. [339]No one wants to spend their life on the run from the inevitable. Narcissists already know that feeling all too well. [340]That's just the shame they run from. [341]Do I have a deathwish? [342]No. [343]I am in a hurry to get to the end of our collective story though.

[344]**25-Dec-2022** – *Visitation in State* – [345]My sons and I spent Christmas to New Year's Day at an Airbnb far away from Candace, a three-hour drive south of Chicago. We had a blast as per usual. I gave them cooking lessons, taking advantage of having a kitchen. [346]Over a decade of staying in a hotel room made experiences like this very special to me.

[347]**01-May-2023** – *Visitation in State* – [348]Candace checked Cruz into yet another behavioral facility. Her reasoning, according to the facility, was to improve her relationship with Cruz. [349]Unfortunately, the narrative she was using on the legal side was that Cruz was emotionally and psychologically unstable, a blatant lie to Cruz, the court, and even the behavioral facility itself. [350]Everyone had a different story for why Cruz is there, including me. I kept mine to myself, but I share that here in my book. [351]My belief is that Cruz wasn't being a good little scapegoat anymore. Yeah, this is what happens when scapegoats wake up, their families don't like it much. [352]It's easier to continue to blame the scapegoat than it is to accept due shame and guilt for abusing a child psychologically and emotionally for over a decade or enabling it. [353]I believe Candace was also using the facility to neglect Cruz. [354]Nothing sends a message to a child that they aren't welcome more than sending them off

to a facility to work on being a better scapegoat. [355]This is what Candace wanted. [356]She wanted her scapegoat returned back to normal. [357]Instead, Cruz makes an impact on the children at the facility including the staff. [358]Cruz makes the most of his nearly two months stay. [359]It was only supposed to be a 45-day program.

[360]**31-Mar-2023** – *Court* – [361]I'm going to have to bullet this one, due to how much happened:

- [362]I originally did not want to go into this hearing. [363]Candace's third and final lawyer made a good argument in her response to my petition for time with my sons out of state for Spring break. [364]I felt like the hearing would be a loss, but my lawyer leaned completely on the GAL and my sons' testimony. [365]My lawyer gave me an 80% success rate. [366]I told her, before committing to this hearing, that I felt she relied on the GAL too much and that I questioned my trust in her abilities. [367]I commit to proceeding with the hearing. [368]My lawyer is on thin ice with me.
- [369]I arrived to court and Candace's lawyer greeted me with a handshake. I extend my hand and we shake. I wonder to myself if she has any clue who she's representing. [370]My lawyer told me that the GAL had been restricted based on Candace's lawyer's brand-new motion. I saw the writing on the wall, I came for nothing but Candace's amusement. [371]I saw the handshake a little differently. It was like a pity handshake saying, "look, I'm sure you're a good man and all, but because I represent your ex, you're going to lose no matter what." [372]Challenge accepted. [373]My sons were right outside the courtroom ready to testify in front of the judge, but since the GAL has been restricted, she couldn't participate in the hearing. [374]My petition for out-of-state spring break week with my sons is denied.
- [375]I decided to make Candace's third lawyer my footstool. [376]I do have two feet after all. [377]Who says I can't take this personally? I can take whatever the fuck I want personally. [378]I don't care who says "but, Michael, she's just doing her job!" [379]Anyone who deliberately gets between me and my sons is my

enemy. [380]In the animal kingdom, that equates to playing with death. [381]But what do you do with the living dead? Attack their ego, of course. ;) [382]There's no law against attacking the metaphysical. [383]That just seems like crazy talk. [384]Shame on Candace's last lawyer and shame to all lawyers who hide behind "just doing my job", because that excuse doesn't work on God when you help the enemy fight the abused or fight to keep the abused in toxicity. [385]These lawyers can say, "But, we didn't know then, Michael." [386]Ok, and what are you going to do about it now? [387]Better make shit right, while you still can. [388]They can say, "But the law prevents me from disclosing…". [389]You are talking to the wrong person. [390]Since when has doing the right thing ever been easy? [391]Yeah, you will most likely get sued as a lawyer who apologizes to a family you once helped destroy. You will probably lose your license. [392]You may lose everything and will never know what you gained in exchange until Judgement Day. [393]That's a *you* problem. [394]You enjoyed the money, right, and what you were able to do with it? [395]Didn't realize you were selling your soul, huh? [396]Yeah. It burns, doesn't it!?! Good. :)

- [397]So, with the GAL being restricted at the last second, and with no need for the judge to interview my sons, I lost. [398]After taking this L, I walked out of the courtroom and mentally prepared myself to fly back home. [399]My lawyer left the courtroom and as she approached me I saw her lips start moving. She made some comment about the hearing and then I completely cut her off with a calm and direct, [400]"You're done!" [401]I did my eye contact thing. [402]I waited a second for her response, which was a serious and submissive [403]"ok". [404]I then turned to leave her alone with her shame. [405]You get what you pay for, right? [406]That's what I get for getting the discount lawyer. [407]Wanna know something funny? [408]Her firm hadn't been applying the discount l was supposed to get. [409]I had to remind them after I received my final bill. [410]I liked calling them out for trying to rip me off (or forgetting the discount) after firing my lawyer. [411]Oh well, I'm sure her practice will do just fine. [412]As a lawyer, you never truly know who you will represent in court, they may be an abuser…

or they might just be a future author looking to make an impact. [413]How big do you like your craters ;)

- [414]I saw my sons outside the courtroom, ready to be interviewed. [415]I informed them that I wouldn't be seeing them for Spring Break and that I would see them the next time I came into town. [416]I gave them hugs and made my way to exit the courthouse. [417]Candace's lawyer attempted to get my attention and started speaking, "Mr. Arguello…". [418]I blew past her and her assistant putting on my coat, which slightly whacked her assistant, and I said, [419]"I have nothing to say to you." [420]WTF, was she high?!? [421]I kept walking, and Candace's lawyer then said, "I was going to ask you if you wanted to spend some time with your sons, but if you'd rather…" [422]I turned and started walking towards her, [423]"I'm listening. Speak."
- [424]Candace's lawyer offered me a few hours with my sons, enough for us to hang out for a bit and enjoy a long lunch together. [425]I saw right through the effort. Her lawyer believed this will make her client look better. [426]Candace voiced disagreement and her lawyer silenced her. [427]Candace's entire family was present to witness everything. [428]I swallowed any pride and agreed to spend time with my sons, and I thanked her lawyer. [429]Her lawyer had no idea that I make the most of every second with my sons. I told my sons everything. [430]My sons were more informed about what was going on with their case than anyone, besides Candace, in the Sanders residence. [431]Her lawyer, in an effort to put on a nice display for the sake of optics, fucked up. [432]When my sons ask me questions about what is happening in their situation, I answer them. [433]It's not my fault that the truth hurts their relationship with their mother. [434]She can tell them the truth any time. [435]When you discover that someone you trust withholds information that would help you understand your situation better, trust is broken. [436]The end result is abandoning the person who has repeatedly broken your trust. [437]That's their fault. [438]Every court battle is a big "I love you" to my sons. [439]Even my L's are W's.

[440]**01-Apr-2023** - *Update* - [441]This isn't related to the court battle, but it's relevant:

- [442]I was so upset about how blind the legal system was, the police force, the therapists, and everyone involved who chose to be blind to the abuse my sons were enduring. [443]The psychological abuse was so subtle, that I would appear psychotic if I were to get upset with everyone who failed my sons and failed me in my attempts to protect them from it.
- [444]I wrote letters to so many content creators on narcissistic abuse, including psychologists, and professors in the field of psychology.
- [445]I tried to get the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) involved, because of the DCFS's failure to recognize my sons' psychological abuse. [446]I figured my case was symbolic of systemic covert psychological abuse in the household, the underrepresented minorities the ACLU would be interested in helping being the minors themselves. [447]The minors in the household are oblivious to the abuse, for the most part, and many enter the world damaged and on downward spirals. [448]If only these grown children of toxic households knew why they felt the way they did, then there would be hope and healing. [449]Without the ACLU to back up my case and use it to finally crack open narcissistic abuse in the household, it would be up to only me. [450]The ACLU declined to assist me, even after reviewing whatever letters they received to support my case. [451]Why did the ACLU truly decline my case? [452]They ain't ready for this. [453]They don't want this. [454]They could've changed the world taking on that case. [455]But no, changing the world, I guess that would take someone like me.
- [456]I saw an advertisement for The Art of Livin', an event led my Matthew McConaughey for late April. [457]I had no idea what to expect. [458]Others that would speak during the event would be Trent Shelton, Tony Robbins, Dean Graziosi, and Marie Forleo. [459]I waited for the event to approach not knowing what to expect. [460]My gut told me that I needed to go into this event and

that I would find my answers for what to do next. [461]I attended live, and I went on what I would call a "road trip". It was at this event that I full-fledged decided to write this book. [462]Up until that point, it was a thought I had been entertaining and taking some notes here and there. [463]After The Art of Livin', however, I picked up the pace on writing and starting to strategize what my message would be and how to deliver it best. [464]I also decided to become a life coach and began my work to get certified in narcissistic abuse and trauma recovery. [465]It was a very busy year after that, bringing with it this book. I also used my book and my life coach training to infuse the book with some added oomph.

[466]**04-May-2023** – *Court* – [467]In between this court date and the last one, I did end up finding a better lawyer. I screened him lightly for narcissism and interviewed him, a consultation to him. He passed and I hired him - game changer. [468]I saw my new lawyer in action working that courtroom like the pro he is and was able to get the GAL reinstated. [469]Things could finally start to move forward. [470]This lawyer just never ceased to amaze me. [471]I felt good. [472]I felt supported by someone who actually knew what the fuck they were doing, instead of playing stupid legal games. [473]Yeah, I just need to rub some salt in that narcissistic wound of my initial lawyer. ;) [474]I know she'll be reading this. [475]I told her the whole time that I was considering writing a book about the whole experience. You'd think she would've given it all she had because of me saying that. Maybe she did, and she just really sucked at her job. [476]That's certainly possible. [477]She sure did sell herself well. [478]All talk, little proof. [479]Either way, I'm a man of my word. [480]Here you are reading the very book I told her about. [481]And now she's a part of the wrong end of history forever. [482]Yeah, it's like that with me. [483]I can be cold AF. [484]Ok, "I'm done" talking about her. ;) LOL [485]I got it out of my system. [486]We good.

[487]**07-Jul-2023** – *Court* – [488]We had a hearing, but it was postponed until Monday. I grabbed a hotel and stayed in town for the weekend while I waited for the Monday hearing.

[489]**10-Jul-2023** – *Court* – [490]My lawyer killed it in the courtroom, yet again. [491]I took the stand, and so did Candace. [492]The whole thing, lasting about two hours, went so well that I bought the nearly $777 transcript. [493]I bought nearly all the transcripts, but this one was my favorite, until the final hearing where I received custody of course. [494]I got out-of-state visitation rights a year and a half after I pursued all this, effective immediately. [495]I also got a full week of summer visitation effective immediately for this summer. [496]For subsequent Summers I got three weeks, with no more than two weeks consecutively. [497]My sons and I drove straight to my house and had the time of our lives together just livin'. [498]They got to see the U.S. capital and so many sights. [499]Our week was action packed with plenty of movie nights, and video games too. [500]We went through my old clothes, photos, and mementos I've kept since childhood. [501]We ended the trip with a fun train ride back to Chicago…in our own sleeper room! [502]We got to enjoy this amazing travel experience coming from the New York City train hub. [503]I highly recommend adding to your bucket list going cross country in a train sleeper. [504]It's different. [505]My sons and I had so much fun doing that.

[506]**??-Aug-2023** – *Court* – [507]The therapist doing the original family therapy was unable to *also* do the parental fitness evaluation based on laws or regulations. The court orders the evaluation to take place and the evaluator is chosen and agreed to by both parties.

[508]**11-Sep-2023** – *Update* – [509]The evaluator met with me for the first time. He stated that the process should take 2-3 months max, as long as both parties are cooperative.

[510]**??-Dec-2023** – *Update* – [511]I spoke with the evaluator again and asked how much longer the report will take. He estimates February or mid-March. Multiple status hearings took place with no progress because everything was contingent on this report.

[512]**25-Mar-2024** – *Update* – [512]I discovered that the reason why the parental fitness evaluation hadn't been released yet was because it stalled due to Candace refusing to make payment. [513]I paid nearly $8400 for the report, which was my half of payment. Candace refusing to pay her half ensures the report doesn't come out and buys her time to build a bogus contempt motion against me for not paying for things I was not bound by any court order to pay for. [514]But it wasn't about the money, it was about discrediting me. I saw it for what it was. [515]At this point, I'm so not afraid of court anymore. I spoke with my lawyer to take Candace to court for not paying the court-ordered, and mutually agreed upon, evaluation. [516]I considered the fact that the delay worked for me so I could use the time to write this book. [517]Everything worked out for the greater good. [518]Not only that, but Candace's refusing to pay for the evaluation as court-ordered just made her and her lawyer look bad. That too worked in my favor. [519]With the extra time, over the next few weeks, I was able to finish wrapping up the remaining chapters on my first draft of The Sword that Divides.

[520]**12-Apr-2024** – *Update* – [521]After my lawyer filed the motion for Candace to pay the evaluator what was due, she finally submitted payment and things started moving again. [522]I'm upset with the fact that I had to be the one to see something and say something in order to get the evaluation moving again. This shouldn't have been my role.

[523]**16-Apr-2024** – *Court* – [524]I arrived at court to fight for Spring Break 2024 since Candace was not being cooperative. I physically came to Illinois from Virginia, as I didn't have the option to attend the hearing virtually. I ended up not even going in front of the judge because both parties were able to resolve on paper. [525]Why did we have to go to court to pick Spring Break dates that could've been done via email correspondence? [526]Because Candace is the type of person, a narcissist, who needs me to push her into court in order for me to spend time with my sons. [527]I secured Spring Break week for the following week, but I had to agree to bring my sons back to Illinois for their classes. [528]I had tried to avoid

overlapping their schooling by requesting, via email to Candace, Spring Break week as far back as February. [529]I was awarded a week of Spring Break, but I ended up only spending about three full days in Virginia. The rest of the time was spent traveling and staying in yet another hotel in Illinois.

[530]**10-Jun-2024** – *Update* – [531]The evaluator completed his evaluation and submitted it to all parties. [532]My lawyer and I reviewed and discussed the findings. [533]I would not be interested in mediating with a narcissist. I learned my lesson from last time. [534]Also, Rebecca Zung talks a ton in her video content about how mediating with a narcissist only prolongs the inevitable and can even make things worse for the more agreeable party…and that's me. [535]Nuh-uh. No thank you. [536]Oh yeah, wanna know what the evaluation said? [537]Obviously, the evaluator recommended I have sole custody. Duh! [538]I was so sure of myself I wrote an entire book based on getting custody back when my original lawyer stated to me that simply getting out-of-state visitation would be as hard as getting out-of-country visitation. [539]Well? How you like me now? [540]Yeah, I'm going to shit talk a bit. [541]Ok, I'm done talking about my first lawyer. For real this time. [542]The evaluator did not diagnose either Candace or myself, but I'm not surprised at his findings on Candace's pathologies presented. [542]As for me? [543]I was hoping to get a little insight on myself. There was no revelation about myself in that report. [544]I share the news, and the entire report, with my family. [545]What is a day of celebration in my family is a day of mourning in Candace's no doubt. [546]I thought about how all of this could have been avoided had Candace had an ounce of empathy when I attempted to ask for more time to spend with my sons, or had she not been so contemptuous and disagreeable. [547]Oh well. [548]We all learn our lessons, don't we? [549]Well, maybe not all of us.

[550]**24-Jun-2024** – *Court* – [551]This was a status hearing. [552]Candace's lawyer states that they will contest the results of the evaluation. [553]Of course! [554]I'm not surprised. [555]But the court hearing would be held on

August 14, almost two months later. This upset me. [556]I wasn't upset with Candace. She's just playing her role. [557]But it's this judicial system that I have beef with. No parent should have to go through all of this, nor their children. [558]Change must happen to the laws that enable this, and fast. [559]In order for me to make change happen fast, I have to take this battle directly into the homes and personal lives of those who work within those systems or are affected by them. [560]That would be everyone. [561]The Sword that Divides will do just that.

[562]**12-Jul-2024** – *Update and Game Changer* – [563]I am informed by my lawyer that Candace's lawyer filed a request for a second evaluation by an independent expert. [564]She would incur the full cost of this evaluation. This is interesting to me since she tried to get me to cover her half of the first evaluation. If she couldn't afford half of the first evaluation, how could she afford all of the second evaluation's cost? It would be most likely $8,000 just to get it started. [565]She thinks she can delay the inevitable? That's cute. [566]My lawyer works on getting a temporary custody order in light of…well…everything. [567]I won't be able to update The Sword that Divides any further. [568]I know that another evaluation will prolong the case indefinitely. [569]Will I get temporary custody of my sons? I don't know. [570]Cruz would soon be turning 18-years-old and living with me. But Caleb would stay with his mother if I can't get temporary custody. [571]Not just that, but now I have a new dilemma. [572a]Do I wait for the final hearing to be finished before publishing as originally intended? [572b]Or do I publish the moment my sons are safe with me? [573]All I can do is pray and play it by ear. [574]Anything can happen at this point. [575]This is my last update as I wrap my final edits on The Sword that Divides. [576]As of this moment, it is I who do not know what you most likely already do about my own story. [577]That's a VERY weird feeling.

[578]**14-Aug-2024** – *Court* – [579]This was to be the hearing that was supposed to bring an end to over 2.5 years of court battles since Cruz opened up to me about his feelings, the event that started this long uphill battle.

[580]There's a chance I am granted temporary custody this day. [581]We shall see.

[582]**??-???-2024** – *The Sword that Divides publishes* – [583]My book is published. [584]As the first readers of my book enter its pages, my entire family starts a new chapter in life and Candace's family starts their new chapter in life too. [585]I imagine that if you've read this far, Candace is aware that this book has been published. [586]I know she will read it. [587]She knew when we met I always wanted to be a writer. [588]We talked about it often. [589]And there you have it, The Sword that Divides is born out of thriving after deep trauma to help people recognize and escape from their own. [590]All things work for the greater good.

4. Grandiose Me

[1]For over a decade, Candace fed so many people a version of me that was disconnected from my sons, and a lying, cheating, husband who heartlessly left his family. [2]If I'm the bad guy, why fight that narrative? [3]Why not lean all the way into it? [4]Who is more evil, the one who manipulates the naive for power and control, or the one who enjoys putting the fear of God into his enemies? [5]One could argue that I am more evil. [6]One could argue that inflicting suffering is not the Christian thing to do. [7]I have something to say about that. [8]If exposing someone's lies exposes that person, then it is not me who is ultimately responsible for their suffering, it is the one who spoke the lie. [9]Do I think I will go to hell for busting out a bag of popcorn and kicking my feet back as I watch the narcissist's lie come back to get them? No. No, I don't. :) [10]I prefer caramel popcorn. Why? I love the mix of salty and sweet. That pretty much represents my entire experience waking up to what narcissism truly is. [11]The experience has left me salty, but I found the sweetness in it. [12]It's a sweet experience because I can use the narcissist's playbook better than any narcissist can. [14]Now, you can too.

[15]I played Candace's "disorder" by applying pressure and watching her go lower, tell crazier lies, triangulate more people, and put additional

pressure on my sons so that they could see her and their situation for what it has always been. [16]The more I stood my ground over the two and a half years of litigation, as much of a waste of time and money that it was, the lower she would continue to go. [17]Even if I lost a court battle, I would never stop fighting. [18]I documented everything, pulled every police report, paid for every court transcript, and tracked every piece of falsified evidence. [19]In the end, my sons would know how hard I fought against their mother just to spend more time with them and to give them whatever was left of their childhood in a non-toxic family dynamic. [20]My sons would come to see and read about their mother's lies and repeated attempts to take away their time with me. [21]They would know that Candace hated me more than having love for them. [22]A person without empathy cannot love, nor would be able to understand it outside what was observable. [23]To a narcissist, limerence pretty much means love. [24]Limerence can be faked. [25]Love cannot be faked.

[26]By the time the court battles came to an end with my victory and custody of my sons, Candace would have done all the work I could never do myself, in order to get my sons to see her for who she truly was and depart from her. [27]Yes, in the end, her hate for me destroys my son's trust in Candace, and the level of closeness. [28]I don't have to worry about Candace being a future thorn in my son's sides for my son's future relationships, or a thorn in my side for my relationships with my future grandkids. [29]Additionally, outside of Candace, my sons would see just how easily their mom manipulated and abused the very systems meant to protect them, no matter how hard I tried to work within the rights those systems gave me. [30]I like that my sons got to see the cracks in all these systems that actually support narcissists and work against the victims of the abuse itself. [31]I wanted to expose this the moment I saw how blind everyone wanted to be to the truth. [32]With my book, I expose this broken system in the "land of the free and home of the brave" in which we live.

[33]This more galvanized version of me came out the other end of the endless court battles and pursuit of spending time with my sons. [34]I know that I can be self-sacrificing, but not this time; I would not be for this person. [35]Instead of me holding space for my sympathy for Candace, and all the people out there just like her, I withhold that sympathy and

choose to pour it right back into myself and show this world, and remind others, just who the fuck I am. [36]If I'm going to be baptized time and time again with fire, it's about time I drag that bitch with me right into it and do it in front of the entire world. [37]I'm willing to burn alive for what I choose to fight for. [38]Not everyone survives the flames of righteousness. [39]What galvanizes me would destroy a narcissist.

[40]Candace thought it was my own fault I was so gullible to fall for her lies and mask, as all narcissists do. [42]This time I will hit way harder than I did at the time of separation. [43]It's time to show Candace who I am when I no longer choose to play nice. [44]I knew Candace was a narcissist, and I learned everything about the disorder, including how to bring a narcissist to their knees by weaponizing their fears. [45]The goal is not to exact my revenge. Revenge doesn't bring me back all the lost time with my sons. [46]There is no price Candace can pay that would equate to any revenge I could dish out. [47]Nothing changes what has already happened. [48]Knowing how to identify narcissists, examining how they think and operate, weaponizing what hurts them, and sharing all of that with the world in the form of this book is me giving power to those who were once like me. [49]Knowledge truly is power. Ignorance is not bliss. [50]Me using Candace to help me illustrate narcissism is the icing on the cake, and the nail in her coffin. [51]Don't worry, she just sleeps in it. [52]I'm nailing it shut so that when daybreak hits, she won't be able to get into it. [666]No rest of the wicked.

[54]I'm coming for the title of "The Narcissist's Nightmare". [55]It will be mine. Oh yes, it will be mine. [56]If someone wants to compete with me for that title, then I invite everyone reading this to join me in this healthy competition. [57]Everyone wins when we compete for who can better expose narcissists and how to best play into their self-induced suffering and fears. [58]Am I a monster now? [59]Maybe. [60]Did Candace make me? [61]No. [62]Did Candace break me? [63]No. [64]Did years of narcissistic abuse take its toll on me? [65]No. [66]What all that pressure did do was just make me turn to God for help. [67]I got it. [68]My beast, who I spent so much of my childhood and adulthood running from, turned out to be my ally. [69]Having control over my beast was my first lifelong test. [70]All I had to do next was embrace him and trust myself that my will would always be stronger than my beast's. [71]Bending my beast's will to mine turned out to

be not too challenging. [72]My beast and I had a common enemy, and it wasn't Candace, but the evil inside her "disorder". [73]In order to go up against evil, I would first need to tap into my own darkness.

Beast Mode:

[74]Finally! [75]Are you ready? [76]Because it's shadow integration time.

[77]#HAVENOFEAR [78]#BENOTAFRAID [79]#DONTBESCURD

CHAPTER 12
THE DARK HORSE COMETH

"If you are going to speak out against injustice, if you are angry at ungodliness in the society, then you have the opposing force to contend against."
— Sunday Adelaja, The Mountain of Ignorance

Karma Killer
By Robbie Williams
-
Dark Horse (feat. Juicy J)
By Katy Perry
-
Destroyer
By Skillet

1. High on Life

[1]You want to know what happens when a narcissist is at their lowest? [2]Watch Jack Black's performance as Jeff Portnoy while he is tied to a tree, in the movie Tropic Thunder. [3]Kinda seems possessed, right? [4]Watch what happens to all narcissists when they can't get their fix…of validation and empathy from another human being. [5]These energy vampires need to feed on those with light inside them, empathy. [6]We are the drug. We are their addiction.

Beast Mode:

[7]I love that movie! [8]My favorite part is watching that fool Les Grossman dance at the end. [9]He's dancing all the way to hell and has absolutely no clue. LMAO. [10]He's the biggest fool in the entire movie. [11]W-w-w-wa-watchin' Tom Cruise dancin' m-m-ma-makes me happy! Sometimes I la-laugh so much it makes my eyes rain. ;)…

[12]At least I know who I am. [13]I'm the dude playin' the dude, disguised as another dude, and about to merge into this dude.

[14]#TROPICTHUNDER [15]#DANCINGNARCISSISTSRFUNNY
[16]#NOMOREJELLYBEANS [17]#ABSOLUTEPANDAMONIUM
[18]#DONTWORRYABOUTTHEMANGRYFACES
[19]#THEYJUSTHATING

2. Show Time

[1]In the movie Star Wars, the version I saw as a child, Han Solo shot first. [2]The character of Han Solo shot the bounty hunter Greedo at the Mos Eisley cantina. [3]This was later changed. [4]I'm a strong believer in shooting first once you've identified the threat. [5]Why wait for the threat to get the upper hand? [6]No, you strike Cobra Kai style. [7]Strike first, strike hard, and show no mercy. [8]Welcome to my opera.

Beast Mode:

[9]Finally! [10]The moment I've been waiting for. [11]I can't say this will be the last time you hear from me. But when you do hear the last unfiltered portion of me, I promise you will never forget it. [12]Before I jump off, please know that I've appre-

ciated being able to speak my mind on this platform. [13]This is not the end of me, but more of a new beginning. [14]The author and I officially merge, and we show you how we did it. [15]What we are on the other side is the complete version of both of us, like a composite. [16]We will be known as "I". [17]No more of this he or me shit. [18]We made each other strong, but his fear of me held us both back. What he truly feared was not me, but his ability to control me, because deep down he loves what I do, and he knows it. [19]I am his righteous anger made manifest. [20]That's all I ever was. [21]He and I were never two separate entities. [22]It's nice to feel appreciated instead of feared. [23]Now we can truly work together. [24]I have the means to deliver consequence, and I will use those means in Michael. [25]Those means are truth and my voice is the vehicle for that truth. We have the knowledge of how to devastate our enemy, and we will leverage this knowledge to its fullest.

[26]See you on the flip side. ;)

[27]#SEEUINSECTION4

[28]In the end, I see that Candace was unable to turn my sons away from me, no matter how hard she tried to do it slowly over time. [29]No weapon formed against me will prosper. [30]She tried to turn my sons into weapons in order to hurt me, and this blew up in her face. She failed. [31]She tried to control me forever. She failed. [32]She tried to keep my sons from visiting me out of state. She failed. [33]She tried to convince the court that I was an abuser. She failed. [34]She leveraged her flying monkey therapist friends to say that I was an abuser to the court. She failed on both attempts. [35]She had one of her flying monkey therapist friends sic child protective services on me. She and her therapist friend both failed. [36]She tried to mentally break down my son Cruz. She failed. [37]She planned on Cruz being a lifelong scapegoat. She failed. [38]She planned on Caleb being a lifelong extension of herself. She failed. [39]She had a plan to rely on my sons to support her in her elder years no doubt. She failed.

[40]The more Candace fought me, the more she placed a wedge between herself and my sons. [41]This was her original design intended for me upon the divorce. [42]Because I didn't fight, no wedge was placed between me and my sons. [43]Candace could've salvaged some life with my sons, but instead her pride and arrogance, and fear of all the shame she keeps trying to escape, pushed her further and further down the road of damnation. [44]It's like she couldn't help it. [45]Oh, that's right, a narcissist

can't help it. That was kinda the point of me adding all that pressure. [46]It's like she had a creme pie launcher and shot all those pies right into the wind, so that every pie ended up on her face. [47]I just had to play the long game and use this book as a supplement to therapy. [48]Yes, writing this book helped me put all my emotions into words. [49]It serves as a family heirloom as well. [50]It will also stand as my testimony.

3. My Encounter with the Prince of Persia

[1]The systems that are meant to protect victims of emotional and psychological abuse is beyond flawed. [2]It's not so much broken, but more like not fully formed, and I'm tired of working within the system. [3]It is clear to me that change doesn't happen until the cracks in the system are exposed. [4]We don't need a new system, but it's time we learn a lesson from the Japanese art of kintsugi. [5]We need to find these cracks and broken-off pieces and fuse them back together with gold. [6]The gold acknowledges the cracks were once there, and that there's a respect and vulnerability to the growth process. [7]People are like this too. Some people try to erase their past and create a new present. [8]They are the fabricators of our time. They don't grow. [9]Other people adopt the kintsugi mindset whether they are aware of the art of kintsugi or not. They do grow. [10]Those golden cracks are real and raw, the authentic ones of our time bear golden scars.

[11]Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung developed a concept called shadow work, which is the process of recognizing and exploring your shadow self. [12]You can go your entire life without meeting your shadow self. [13]Some people are always running away from their shadow without realizing it, others let it run the show within themselves, but it is the awareness of the shadow and how much of it we embrace that gives way to new growth within us. [14]The shadow self is scary, and it is also very ugly, but it is also a major part of who we truly are. [15]The shadow never goes away and it's best not to pretend that it has left us just because we can't see it. [16]Being aware of the shadow self affords us the opportunity to slowly bring it into the light to acknowledge it. [17]Only then can we modify parts of who we are. [18]You can't change the shadow, let's be clear. [19]But when one has full awareness of their shadow, beau-

tiful things can happen. [20]We can learn things from our shadow. [21]There are certainly some parts of it worth integrating, but that's for you to find out by doing your own homework on learning about Carl Jung's work on the shadow self.

[22]I bring up the concept of the shadow self because I do in this book what I have feared most, and in doing so show those who read it what happens when you tap into that shadow self. [23]There's a game designed in 1989 by American video game designer Jordan Mechner called The Prince of Persia. [24]I played it for the first time on a computer at my uncle and aunt's home in Quito, Ecuador, and a black and white monitor PC. [25]I'd never seen anything like it at the time. [26]It was a true adventure. [27]This isn't the time or place to fully go into every amazing aspect of this game, so I will get directly to the point. I do reveal a spoiler here, so if this game is something you want to experience first, then you should stop reading here and come back after you've beaten the game. [28]You have one hour to beat it, or you lose the game. [29]Wanna go for it? [30]The controls are simple, and the game is inexpensive these days. [31]Alright, now it's time to enter into spoiler territory.

[32]There comes a point in the Prince of Persia when you break a mirror and create your shadow self. [33]This new enemy operates on an entirely different script than all previous enemies encountered in the game. [34]He sabotages you, and he steals power-ups before you can get to them yourself. [35]He's smart. He knows you because he is you. [36]He's dangerous. He's relentless in his pursuit of tormenting you by triggering traps and thwarting your progress over a decent portion of the game whenever you encounter him.

[37]There comes a point before the end of the game where you must defeat your shadow self in order to continue to the end of your journey. [38]If you react to him by freezing, he also stays put and blocks you from progressing. [39]If you react to him by fleeing, you will eventually succumb to a coward's death. If you react to him by fighting, you will eventually succumb to death. [40]So, what do you do? [41]There is another option at your disposal. [42]It's not a reaction, but more of a response. [43]If you put your sword away and walk toward him, you join with him and absorb all his power, which is the ability to take more hits before succumbing to death.

[44]When I decided to write this book, there were competing thoughts in my head. [45]This book will help people. [46]The other thought was from my shadow, [47]"If you truly want to help people, show me to them". [48]My competing thought with that one was that the world would think I'm crazy, or neurotic. They will judge me. They will believe this is all I am. I will lose friends and family. [49]Instead of helping people, they will shut my story out and dismiss it as the ramblings of a man gone mad, thus defeating the purpose of writing it. [50]I think back to the game Prince of Persia and how the designer Jordan Mechner made the decision to incorporate the shadow man and the benefits of merging with him to become truly powerful.

[51]This is my life, it's not a game. [52]If I embrace my shadow in front of all, what then becomes of me? [53]I would need to be absolutely fearless, not of who I am for I am comfortable with who I am, but fearless of the thoughts and opinions of others and whatever the outcome would be. [54]After joining with the shadow man in Prince of Persia, the hero absorbs his power, and the player must then take a leap of faith in a dark abyss. [55]In itself it is a kind of ego death. [56]The remnants of fear within the self must be dissolved to make this possible.

[57]I hereby take my leap of faith, for God is with me no matter what I go through. [58]Into the depths of darkness I go, and by you choosing to read on, I will bring you with me into the next level of my journey. [59]And maybe, just maybe, it will become part of your own, a never-ending story so to speak. [60]This book is written by me, but it is indeed a collaboration between who I strive to be, and my consciousness of the darkness within me. [61]I think of this as an experiment on my own psyche. [62]What happens when I embrace my darkness, now that it is under my control? [63]What happens when I expose this dark part of me to complete strangers? [64]I can only imagine the possibilities, the judgments cast upon me, the mental diagnoses that will come, all of it. [65]I want to see what happens when I take my own fear completely out of the equation in order to deliver a message that I feel is an important one for our time. [66]This is me embracing my shadow in front of any and all. [67]May it at least entertain you if nothing else. [68]May this book bring the answers you seek, and maybe even the right questions to ask yourself. [69]Regardless, it is time. [70]Now, let's peel this onion of my mind one layer at a time.

[71]Whether the world is ready for me or not is inconsequential. I am ready for me. [72]Publishing my book is the key, my leap of faith into the abyss. [73]What lies on the other side is truly the unknown for me, and I already embrace it whatever that may bring including the version of me that emerges as a result. [74]Just as fear is a tool of the devil, fear is now my tool too. [75]I become vengeance fighting fire with fire.

[76]In December 2023, I decided to embrace my shadow. [77]In that embrace I felt a surge of power. [78]I accepted the darkness that is part of me. [79]The same thing that protected me could be formed into a weapon, and I accepted this about myself. [80]In embracing my shadow, I opened some ancient doorway within myself. [81]Battle no longer deterred me, but it in fact is how I derived energy. [82]The strategizing and fantasizing of my victory and how I would achieve it fueled me. [83]Merging with my shadow led me to see my enemy clearly. [84]I finally had a bully worthy of this part of me, and it would not be Candace. [85]This bully, this enemy of mine, has always been the one pulling the strings of my enemies. [86]Now I could finally see him. [87]Everything I would come to do, from this point forth, would be to bring my true enemy to his knees and make a display of it. [88]My book was truly turning into a weapon, hence the title. [89]Writing my book turned me into a weapon too, an instrument.

4. Shadow Integration Komplete

[1]Hey there! Remember me? [2]Same voice, sexier body. [3]:raises eyebrow, smiles, makes clicking sounds with tongue: LOL. [4]Well, here I am. [5]It feels good to be me. [6]So, apparently, merging together brought with it some additional awareness. [7]Who would've thought? [8]I brought something ancient into me. How ancient? The most ancient. :) [9]Apparently, this shadow entity of mine has seen some shit, a soldier through and through, a leader. [10]There's still a lot I don't understand, but I found some new direction upon the merge. [11]This thing I had been running from, and afraid of, for so long was my power. [12]Is this my inner child? Maybe. [13]What do they call these separate parts of ourselves? [14]Modern-day psychology calls it a dissociated identity. Maybe that's what it is.

[15]Ancient philosophy might call shadow integration a partnership with an angel or a demon. [16]My take? [17]I think I integrated with someone who

has a taste for dealing justice to the demonic, a Doom Slayer. [18]Quoting the Doom Eternal video game character Dark Lord, [19]"Against all the evil that hell can conjure, all the wickedness that mankind can produce, we will send unto them only you. [20]Rip and tear, until it is done."

[21]Being exposed, alone, and abandoned is a narcissist's worst nightmare? [22]Alrighty then. [23]That's my mission, to separate all narcissists from their supply lines. [24]Infect the supply with knowledge and turn the supply on them. [25]The supply, that's you dear reader, has the power to expose the narcissist in their life. [26]Only you can bring them the misery they deserve by exposing them and then ditching them forever. [27]Make me proud. [28]Just like narcissists choose their scapegoat and unload on it, I choose all narcissists to be my scapegoats. [29]Now I will dump on all of them. [30]They tried to sacrifice me on their altars to evil? [31]This works both ways. [32]That's something I've learned. [33]I use their own tactics against them, and victory will be mine. [34]Watch me turn this into a game. [35]Teach people the rules of the game, the fun in playing it, the ability to master it, and the reward for winning it.

[36]The reward for playing this game is becoming an evolved version of yourself. [37]I brought you with me into my fire, into my shadow integration, and into my reality, to show you how the game is won. [38]If you don't want to play, you'll at least be entertained by others who choose to play it. [39]This is a game you will be able to see being played all around you, if all goes according to plan. [40]What is performed in the dark, I force into the light. [41]Am I the Machiavellian narcissist for thinking and believing I have the power to do this, or am I just a man who has a penchant for dealing righteous consequence in a way that abides by both the laws of God and of man?

[42]I was told that "actions speak louder than words", by Bobby. Now, he has seen my actions, and now I would assume he has also read these words. [43]I'd like to ask, which one of the two turned out to be the loudest? [44]Don't like how I did it? Well, I missed the part where that's my problem. [45]There is a nearly 12-year-long record of me trying to do this the right way, and those attempts failing. [46]No, it had to come to this. This was the only way. [47]I could've stopped with the final court decision on custody, but that wouldn't have been enough. [48]Exposure to light is the only thing that kills every trace of darkness and allows everyone the

opportunity to see what is truly there. [49]I saw that it gives everyone the opportunity, because many who see what is exposed will pretend not to see it. Not because they don't see it, but because they know that it could've been them that was exposed. [50]Better to let their fear fuel them to believe that the truth doesn't exist, because it threatens their mask. [51]Their fears of the truth are what keeps their mask so securely fastened. [52]And now they have seen that there are people like me in this world who are not only unafraid but relish the opportunity to expose these narcissists in a public spectacle that cannot be ignored. [53]This is only the beginning. [54]For even if I don't accomplish my goals with this book, many readers will be enlightened and inspired to do the same. [55]This book, my sword, will deliver a wounding blow to the forces of evil…for all time.

[56]I went easy on Candace in my testimony, this book, and she knows it. [57]She's the mother of my sons after all. [58]I didn't want to utterly destroy her. [59]Yeah-yeah, I only shared the tip of the iceberg, and only enough to illustrate the pathologies of narcissism and narcissistic abuse. [60]You can call me Michael the Merciful. [61]What I didn't share, I'm saving for the defamation case that I'm sure will be coming my way. [62]That's when things get truly fun. [63]I count on it. [64]I planned for it. [65]I'm bold enough to say it, because a narcissist's pride cannot be denied. [0666]I can give all the warnings to a narcissist, and they will still fall for the trap. [67]Come to me, wounded narcissist, so that I may deliver a proper ego death blow, a spectacle to be remembered forever by all who witness it. [68]Come and let me shatter every one of your masks in front of the world until you lay down broken and defeated, weeping on the ground, and gnashing your teeth in endless agony. [69]I shall have no mercy for those who pursue me. [70]I've turned the other cheek enough. [71]Now, every blow that comes my way shall be countered one thousand-fold on a psychological level. [72]My purpose is made manifest, and you got to witness my shadow integration in this book, how my shadow formed and how I tamed it before embracing it. [73]It's on.

CHAPTER 13
BACK TO THE FUTURE

(This message in a Klein bottle will be downloadable once the second edition of The Sword that Divides publishes)

"You can't move mountains by whispering at them."
— P!nk

I'd Love to Change the World
By Ten Years After
-
A Million Dreams
Performed by P!nk
Written by Benj Pasek / Justin Paul
-
Time Is on My Side
By The Rolling Stones

CHAPTER 14
THE SWORD THAT DIVIDES

"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."
— Jesus Christ, Matthew 10:34

Follow Me
By Muse
-
Divisive
By Disturbed
-
Time of Our Lives (Radio Edit) [feat. Vega 4]
By Paul van Dyk

22. Take a Breath

[35]Each breath is a gift. [34]Each day is a chance. [33]It takes several years for a tree to produce good fruit, at least a few seasons since first producing a crop. [32]All good things take time. [31]What if I told you that you had the ability to create a pocket of time? [30]That's what this tiny section is about. [29]Let's take a moment to sit with the gratitude that each breath brings. [28]Also, I think it's a good time to take a breath, because we are about to go deeper now. [27]Remember, taking a long deep breath in, holding it for about five seconds, and then slowly releasing it helps you focus on responding and not reacting. [26]It will help you regulate your heart rate. [25]This breath is your break from a conversation with a toxic person. [24]It works for you, and it works against those who feel entitled to your reaction. [23]It gives you space and peace when you need it, and it takes peace from the narcissist while they have no choice but to wait. [22]Need another breath? Take one.

[21]There is no rule that states, "`thou shalt immediately respond to anyone who speaks to you." [20]Take another long breath. It costs you nothing. [19]This gives you time to focus on the best way to respond, if any response is needed. [18]Make that eye contact with that person acting narcissistic. [17]Trust me when I say that this is way more uncomfortable to the other person than it is for you. [16]Let them be uncomfortable. [15]Let them dread your pause when they provoke you. [14]This is the pocket of time you can create whenever you want. [13]Time and space are yours to play with in this moment.

[12]Feeling like life is getting super busy? [11]Don't have time to do the things you want? You know that pocket of time you made? [10]Here's another trick. [9]Want to get more hours in your day? [8]Take out the distractions. [7]It's not fun or easy to do. [6]Say goodbye to some YouTube channels, say goodbye to watching the least of your favorite shows. [5]Say goodbye to one or two smartphone games. [4]I promise you won't regret nixing any of these things once you see the extra hours in your day come out of thin air. [3]It's easy to forget that we are the masters of the time we spend. [2]When we work, we are selling our hours to our job. Look at it that way. [1]Time is precious, and it's all yours to do with as you wish.

21. My Faith

[61]Here is a section disclaimer; I do get a little preachy here. [60]It is what it is. [59]Feel free to skip this entire section if you find me speaking to my faith in God disturbing to you. [58]By now, you know that I believe in God. [57]I also believe in Jesus Christ as the only begotten son of God and what he did for humanity, and I believe that the Holy Spirit is God within the self. [56]No, I don't know why or how God can exist as three versions at the same time. [55]I do believe that there are things that were meant to be hidden from humanity, or that humanity cannot fully comprehend. [54]I know how dangerous a partial understanding of anything can be. [53]You don't need to believe what I believe but understanding what I believe will help you understand me and why I wrote this book. [52]Personally, I don't like it when people push religion or denominations of Christianity on me. [51]For the longest time I believed that if the religion or practice someone lived by focused on love for others as self, then that person would be fine. I believed their soul to be safe. [50]Who am I to be involved with anyone's spiritual walk, if they even had one?

[49]I'm allowed to have my beliefs, thoughts, and opinions. I'm allowed to share those. [48]You, as the reader, are allowed to stop reading anything that makes you uncomfortable. [47]You are not a captive audience. [46]You did not pay for this book. [45]No one is keeping you here. [44]That said, even though I won't be diving into scripture, I will lean into my Christian beliefs. [43]Am I the perfect model of a Christian? Definitely not. [42]I do some amount of swearing, though not as much as I do in this book. [41]I can be very cold and dark in wanting to make my enemies suffer in the worst ways possible, and this book is an accurate portrayal of that side of me. [40]I know the Bible says to love and pray for my enemies, and that I still do. [39]I also pray for myself and my ability to control my wrathful thoughts. [38]All that said, even though I have come far in my spiritual walk, I have plenty more to work on as a Christian. [37]I appreciate constructive criticism. I take it to heart. I pray about it. If I'm so compelled, I apply edits to my behaviors. [36]I do that not to appease those who correct me, but to appease God. [35]In the end, I benefit from all the edits I've made to my own programming. [34]My enemies benefit from my growth, because in that growth I have learned to show mercy and try to be a peacemaker. [33]When you kill the chaos that declines the mercy

offered to it, this is another way of establishing peace. [32]Either way, whether now or later, peace is made.

[31]My relationship with God has kept me from becoming a full-blown psychopath. I know that for a fact. [30]It's been a struggle keeping myself from physically harming narcissists who have done me wrong and trusting in God to work in the hearts of my enemies. [29]I have learned to see my body as a vehicle I've been driving all my life. [28]Each narcissist keeps trying to grab my wheel, or mess with my gear shift, or crank up my radio on a station I don't care to listen to, or crank up the heat full blast on a hot day. [27]Once I handed the wheel to the Holy Spirit to drive me in April of 2023, I found such inner peace, even among the turmoil of a two-year-long contentious court battle. [26]My bond to the Holy Spirit within me has only become stronger, and that is a path I will remain on until the day I die. [777]I am ride-or-die for Christ.

[24]Giving the wheel to the Holy Spirit to do my driving for me, while I ride shotgun, is based on trust. [23]I had to completely submit to him first. It was like I handed the Holy Spirit, my player two, my controller. In doing so, so much was made possible for me. [22]All I needed to do was to walk down the path that God placed in front of me, instead of me creating my own, and I could see in the distance how God would give me not just the desires of my heart, but way beyond that. [21]I share that with you in case you needed to hear me say it. [20]Being down with Christ is a life experience on a whole new level. [19]I was able to understand more of the Bible's scripture. [18]It was like the meaning behind the scripture was locked away until I proved myself worthy of its deeper meaning. [17]The more I read and understood, the more I understood why things are the way they are in life. [16]Everything began to make sense.

[15]I have a ton more Bible reading to do, and it's something that has become enjoyable and nourishing. [14]I read, I internalize, and I grow. [13]This book, the Bible, that I've known about all my life had everything I needed to discern against evil, yet I spent my life prioritizing other things which ended up with me paying the price. [12]I see now how truly dangerous to the mind, body, and soul the evil in this world truly is. [11]I see now why we are sheep amongst the wolves. [10]I see now why the wolves dress as sheep. [9]I see now why the book of Revelation in the Bible says what it does about the end times. [8]People say seeing is believing. [7]I

have not seen God or Jesus. [6]I cannot see the Holy Spirit within me. That said, I have seen evil up close and personal. [5]The more intimate I became with evil, the more I saw how the Bible explains it all perfectly, the more profound my relationship with God became. [4]Am I righteous? I try. [3]Do I play with narcissists for fun? I do sometimes. [2]Iron sharpens iron, you know. [1]Gotta stay frosty.

20. Mapping the Mind

[92]Neuroscientists want to map the brain. Why? [91]Whatever the real reason, the end result will be control. [90]Map the brain, and you can control its user. [89]I believe in the reverse of that. [88]If the user maps their own brain, they themselves can control it. [87]What do I mean by that? [86]Dopamine. [85]The mind serves the soul, that is what I believe. [84]We know what is most important to us. [83]For some, the most important thing is to find a mate we find attractive. [82]Then, when we don't get it, we become upset, depressed, and maybe filled with some anxiety. [81]Why can't we have the one thing we want? Does the universe hate us? [80]Let's say, we got the mate we were attracted to. Now, some people may wonder if they can get another, or if they can get someone who is more attractive, more successful, and/or more wealthy.

[79]The dopamine drip of getting what we want leads to us wanting more of it, or a different variety. [78]If we can't get more of it, we need to make it something new. We twist it, we add to it. [77]What once gave a good dopamine hit, now doesn't grant as much. We must have more. [76]This is how what was once a healthy sexual relationship with someone can become something twisted and depraved later. Anything less, and the mind becomes bored. [75]The mind, body, and soul become a slave to the dopamine drip of what the soul cares for the most. [74]We live in a world that is a system of reward, and we drive our own earthly vessels, our bodies, with yet another reward system. [73]When you realize that you control your own reward system, you truly become the master of your own internal universe. [72]If you are a slave to something and you are tired of it having control over you, remove the master from its place of power. [71]Easier said than done, but the concept works.

[70]We have the ability to wire our own brains. [69]What we make a priority in our lives, we receive internal reward for once we achieve it in the form of dopamine. [68]We train our minds to find ways to extract more dopamine. [67]This is where the dangers come into play. [66]Can we be satisfied with what we have, and grateful for it, or do we constantly seek out more? [65]I don't want to get too philosophical in all this, but I think it's something that should be on all of our minds. [64]If we were to see our body as its own temple, what hangs over our altar? Who or what is most important to us? [63]What happens when we put a relationship with God at the top pedestal? [62]We don't get any dopamine for that. Say a prayer, no dopamine. A prayer is answered, no dopamine. Repent for your sins, definitely no dopamine. LOL. [61]So what do you get? [60]For me, I got inner peace, even amidst suffering life's many challenges. [59]This doesn't mean that I abstain from life's healthy pleasures, and some unhealthy ones from time to time, I just put forth the effort to keep myself controlled and balanced. [58]I still have my own dreams and ambitions; they just aren't as important as my relationship with God. [57]That's my personal choice. [56]Funny thing is that my dreams and ambitions seem to be aligning a lot with what God had in store for me. [55]Win-win.

[54]On the flip side, what about the mind of a narcissist? I think a narcissist abuses their mind. [53]They spend so much energy fabricating a false persona and maintaining it. [52]They spend their energy devaluing and manipulating the ones who care most for them. [51]They use their brain power to deceive and use lies to get what they want or change the way others perceive them. [50]I think all of that takes a toll on the mind. [49]I don't think the mind was meant to function in that manner. [48]I think this abuse of their own mind, is what creates this personality disorder of narcissism. [47]Instead of putting a relationship with God over the altar of their mind, they clear it off and put this false version of themselves over it like an idol. [46]Who do you think the narcissist is sacrificing on that altar to their own false image on their pedestal? It's not themselves. [45]It's your offerings to them in the form of your money, your energy, your attention, and your time. [44]It's your M.E.A.T. they place on the altar to their false image. [43]It is you who is the human sacrifice to their god. [42]How you like dem apples?

[41]Everything the narcissist does feeds their own false image. [40]They become enslaved to themselves, so to speak. [39]Why else would they spend so much energy protecting that idol? [38]No wonder their entire world comes crashing down on them when they are exposed as frauds. [37]Their false image of themselves is destroyed. [36]All the time and energy spent building upon it is gone. [35]That sunken cost is wasted. [34]Of course, it would be horrifying. [33]I get it. [32]I don't have to be a narcissist to imagine what that must feel like, reality falling apart while you are still in it. [31]The beauty of being a person capable of real empathy is it allows me to place myself into the mind of a narcissist.

[30]Let's take this a step further. [29]When you go to social media, the advertisements seem to know what you like. [28]That's no coincidence. [27]There's an algorithm involved. [26]The advertisements know what you like and how long you may linger on a picture. [25]With the Apple Vision Pro, we may eventually have the ability to send data on where exactly we are looking in a picture. [24]Look at a butt long enough in a photo, and the next thing you know you'll be seeing a lot more images of butts. [23]Why? [22]Because the data shows that is what you are into, no matter if you see that for yourself or not. [21]There's no judgment there, just data and targeted advertisement. [20]The mind operates the exact same I feel.

[19]Let's say we put a relationship with a narcissist on the pedestal of our mind, or worse, the narcissist themselves. [18]We would sacrifice on the altar of that pedestal our money, energy, attention, and time to that relationship. [17]A narcissist is only going to keep taking. [16]So, if a relationship with a narcissist is the most important thing to us, then we can expect to be miserable for the rest of our lives as we pursue the unattainable from them, that love bombing aspect from the beginning of the relationship, and those bread crumbs of affection.

[15]Let's talk about suicide for a moment. Yes, I know this is a touchy area. [14]Let's say a man is married to a female narcissist. She cheats on him as most narcissists do. He discovers it. [12]If that relationship with the narcissist was on the pedestal in his inner temple, then he becomes devastated. [11]The person he valued most betrayed him. The relationship he valued most was a lie. He chooses to leave this world out of so much grief over the betrayal. That's that. [10]People may say the suicide was a result of poor mental health, or low self-worth. [9]We don't talk

about the real reason people commit suicide, but I'm willing to believe that a narcissist is at the center of it almost every time. [8]Narcissists fear the uncertainty of death, as it is the end of their pursuit of supply and the end of their ego. Are they the ones committing suicide? I think not, at least not intentionally. [7]When we don't put our relationship with God on the highest pedestal in our temple over the altar, I think that is when we suffer needlessly. [6]Faith, and where you place it, is very important.

[5]Understanding that we have control over our minds, and hence our bodies, makes it easier to execute that control. It also makes it harder for others to take that control away from us for themselves. [4]A balanced independent thinker, strengthened by their faith, is a force to be reckoned with. [3]Add to that person the innocence of a dove and the wisdom of the snake, and you have a superhuman being on your hands. I think this is the goal to strive for. It affords the individual the most autonomy and is beholden to no man. [2]A person like this would not be a slave to their own sin. [1]A person like this would be a master of their own world within.

19. The Cosmic Divorce

[106]I'm going to get bold here with this section. So, skip it if you don't like the God talk. [105]I think we all have something in common with God. [104]I know that may sound silly. [103]I think every one of us has had a close relationship with a narcissist, our own Judas. [102]Judas self terminated, unalived himself after he betrayed Christ. [101]Hmmm. [666]We have all been betrayed by a deceiver and manipulator. [99]Lucifer, God's rebellious angel, was a narcissist. [98]He thought he could do it better than God. [97]Wrong. [96]He was banished from Heaven along with a third of the angels who sided with him. [95]Lucifer received the very first narcissistic injury when God said goodbye. [94]Lucifer, once loved and trusted by God, was abandoned by God. [93]And what did Lucifer do after God gave him the boot? [92]What do all narcissists do when they are divorced from their empathetic partner? [91]The narcissist goes ballistic and is bent on revenge until the day they die and then goes after the children in order to hurt the empathetic parent.

[90]Just like the narcissist isolates the child and alienates them covertly over time from the empathetic parent, Lucifer has gone after all God's children here on earth. [89]His lies hide the existence of God, lest we know Him and pursue Him. [88]His ways are subtle and feeds the fleshly desires, which in turn drives a wedge in-between us and our relationship with God. [87]If we have a weakness like sloth, greed, envy, lust, pride, wrath, or gluttony, then Lucifer can do his work within us more easily. [86]If Lucifer can get a child of light to yoke with one of the Damned he has control over, even better. [85]That hamster wheel will keep that child of light busy until they breathe their last breath, never knowing their true potential outside of a life of toxicity. [84]Score one for Lucifer there.

[83]I see this battle between good and evil as this cosmic divorce between God and Lucifer. [82]We are the children caught in the middle. [81]The narcissistic parent pits their children against each other. [80]The one with the most light who is unafraid to speak the truth becomes the scapegoat, the vessel to be dumped on and then sacrificed. [79]Remember when Jesus did that? [78]The people made Jesus their scapegoat and then sacrificed him, though that was the plan all along. [77]Just as he was hated, so will I be hated as all those who choose to stand for truth. [76]It is the way of the toxic dynamic that we continue to find ourselves in. [75]Just as we have a scapegoat in the household, we have a scapegoat in the toxic workplace, politics, and any place of power. [74]:cough cough AOC: [73]There is always a scapegoat that the toxic dynamic is fearful of speaking the truth and exposing the toxicity.

[72]The other members of the toxic dynamic become henchmen treating the scapegoat the same as the narcissist does, which feeds the ego of the narcissist. [71]Everyone is expendable to the narcissist, because the narcissist sees them as objects, extensions of the self, and nothing more. [70]It's time for us to wake up to who has been pulling our strings, hiding behind the curtain, and keeping us from this closeness with God and all the blessings that would bring upon us, and also the world. [69]No, it's easier to believe that God is not real, nor is evil real, and that most people are good natured, and that society isn't falling apart in front of our very eyes. [68]While we are at it, it's also easier to believe that mankind has all the answers, that ChatGPT is all we need, and that big pharma is not greedy and has humanity's best interest in mind.

[67]It's easier to believe that we are right and the other side is wrong, that we are smart and the other side is dumb, that this color means this and that color means that, that having more money means we are better than those without it. [66]These are all fallacies that are way easier to believe than God. [65]Belief in God is what has kept people like me from being humanity's worst nightmare. If vengeance wasn't the Lord's, well then it would be mine, and I'd be good at it too. [64]My creativity goes both ways, into the dark and into the light. [63]Whether you believe in God or not, you benefit by simply existing in a world where people do believe. [62]That's something to be very grateful for. [61]Being grateful is a great start to anyone's healing journey, believer in Christ or not.

[60]My life improved with each narcissist or narcissistic person I left. [59]I leveled up when I took the lessons I learned from those relationships and applied them. [58]I can't say the same for those narcissists. [57]Their lives went downward. [56]It was I who kept them from the full brunt of the repercussions of their way of life. [55]It was them who kept me from receiving the majority of the blessings God had in store for me. [54]Why bless me, when the narcissist can ravage those blessings? No, I needed to be gone first. [53]Same goes for the narcissist. [52]Why let the narcissist feel the full weight of consequence for their unrepented sins, when I too would absorb their suffering? No, I needed to be gone first. [51]These people are meant to feel the full weight of their self-loathing, their self-imposed suffering, until they get it right. That's my belief, and we are getting in God's way.

[50]Being with these narcissists is also a teaching moment for both parties. [49]They get to experience unconditional love while we stay with them and they abuse us, and we get to experience what it's like to make our unconditional love conditional after trying long and hard enough. [48]Separating from these narcissists grants more peace than being with them. [47]Even though I've had to parallel parent with Candace for over twelve years since separating, I have done so from a place of peace. [46]I think every narcissist has a choice, either deceive and manipulate, or choose not to. [45]It's that simple. [44]The problem is, what happens when a narcissist has been deceiving and manipulating for so long? [43]Is it still as simple as stopping those behaviors? [42]I don't think so.

[41]Scripture says God gives people over to the reprobate mind who wish or prefer to do sin. [40]If God created all things, and us in his image, then what if the reprobate mind is what we call cluster B disorders like NPD? [39]Think about it. [38]Why are these reprobates so afraid of exposure of who they truly are? [37]Is it because they indeed know of their shame? [36]Is it because they have a knowing deep down that they are hellbound? [35]Why are they so afraid of being abandoned? [34]I think they have already been abandoned by God, which is the reprobation of their mind. [33]I think this is why they began to fear abandonment in the first place, as there was a reason for it.

[32]When these damned creatures, these walking spiritually dead, encounter someone with empathy, God's light, they are drawn to it. [31]They must deceive to attain the ones carrying God's light. They must manipulate, in order to retain them. [30]Eventually they envy the ones carrying the light, and so they must devalue. [29]How cruel is that? [28]They got something they never deserved, and then they destroy it or try to, especially when that person is able to see them for who they truly are. [27]Whether that's their goal or not is inconsequential. [26]These fools spend all their time running from the daylight. [25]They want pity, and in me they shall find none. [24]I don't drink from that poisoned vine of manipulation anymore. [23]They want mercy, but they have had it this entire time. [22]They chose this. [21]They love being who they are, and they hate it at the same time. [20]They live in two realities. One they run from, the other is fake. [19]What happens when the fake is destroyed forever, when they are all seen for exactly who they are? [18]Will they weep with self-loathing? [17]Will they gnash their teeth in agony?

[16]I understand the boldness of this section. [15]I understand I will be hated for it. [14]I'm ok with that. [13]I'm not the one with an ego to defend. [12]I'm not the one that is controlled by shame. I'm not the one who fears abandonment. [11]I'm not the one who needs constant distractions or people to validate me to tell me who I am. [10]I'll be fine, whatever you feel about me. [9]But the Damned? They don't want to put in the work. That's ok. [8]I used to care about other people's souls. I should've been caring about my own. [7]The hubris I had to believe I could change Candace, all that did was waste my time and energy, and bring me loads of grief. [6]In the end, I'm glad that I tried as long as I did. I needed to see it for myself, that

some people cannot be saved, nor do they want to be, nor am I the one to save them. [5]Jesus saves, I do not. I accept that now. [4]I am where I am today because of my relationship with Jesus. No one pushed me to him. I had to go to him by myself. [3]Narcissists who wish to pursue a relationship with God will find that to be a very long and difficult suffering, but through Christ all things are possible. [2]This is why I don't feel sorry for them or their fate to come, though I do wish them the best. [1]Free will is a bitch, huh?

18. Fresh Out the Forge

[77]This is a time for many to fear. [76]This is also a time for many to stop being afraid. [75]Fear is the mind-killer and does not come from God. [74]Only fear of God is real. [73]If you skipped the last section, you should know that I also refer to narcissists as the Damned. [72]I'm going to do a short recap and then tie it together here, because I do anticipate readers skipping over those portions. [71]Basically, I have two separate, yet related systems of belief. [70]As I mentioned in the section Mapping the Mind, I believe that the cluster B disorders like NPD are self-imposed. [69]At this point, there is no physical proof to support or defeat my belief. [68]As I said in the section The Cosmic Divorce, I believe the reprobate mind is also ultimately self-imposed. I think it's the same thing, using different words. One version uses people's words, the other uses God's words. [67]The effect is the same.

[66]Read the Bible and what it says about reprobates, and you will find everything you ever need to know about how the Damned acted back then, these ignorant narcissists. [65]They have not changed since then, but we do have terminology now to describe various manipulation tactics, we have terminology for the pathologies of those with disordered minds. [64]We also have the word "disordered". [63]I wonder how the Bible labeled disordered people. [62]Do you think mental disorders did not exist until we came up with a word for it? [61]Do you think demons stopped existing because the topic is no longer mainstream?

[60]Jesus knew how the damned thought; he knew their minds and you can see it in how he crafted his responses to the Pharisees. [59]Here we are, 2000 years later, and as far as we have come, these narcissists have not

changed one friggin' bit. [58]They just have way more access to the supply of validation using social media and a ton of apps that specialize in fan service. [57]It's a great time to be a narcissist. LMAO. [56]But that was yesterday. This is today. [55]Today is the day you get your sword. [54]Today is the day that the Damned in your life have always feared, the day you receive your power which is this knowledge.

[53]Do I think all Narcissists are evil? Not necessarily. [52]Do I perceive the intent behind some of the things they do as evil? Not necessarily. [51]I see narcissists mostly as self-serving with their deception and manipulation. [50]I see them as being deceived and manipulated themselves. [49]I see them as people who have completely bought into their own deception and have given control of their actions completely to their selfishness and must prey on those they have the ability to deceive in order to acquire validation. In this they are predatory. [48]Is a predator evil, or is it just their nature?

[47]In the animal Kingdom, an animal that is predatory does so to survive. Narcissists are simply operating on their script, and it is this script that I believe is evil and not necessarily the individual. [46]I just refuse to be part of it. [45]There is great peace after separating from people like this. [44]I believe we were not placed on this earth to be narc food, or fodder for the narc machine called systemic narcissism. Why? [43]Why would we want to willingly suffer? [42]You want to leave the world behind? [41]Start with ditching these vampires to suck on their own blood. [40]Yeah, let's see how long they can pull that off. [39]I'm curious. [38]What happens when you isolate a bunch of narcissists? [37]That's a reality TV show I wouldn't mind watching. [36]Where's my popcorn?

[35]According to the Bible, these narcissists are going to run for the hills when Jesus returns. [34]I think that return is just around the corner. [33]How would I know? [32]The Bible says no one but God knows. [777]That said, the book of Revelation says a lot about what is going on today. [30]I'm not going to go into every sign, as there are plenty of content creators out there who can accurately call out the biblical prophecy that is on full display today. [29]The rich are building systems of underground bunkers, just as predicted in the Bible. [28]Something is definitely coming. [27]I'd be scared too if I knew that I was getting off on deceiving and manipulating people and getting rich off of it. [26]When the shit goes down, those

bunkers are the last place on earth you'd rather be. [25]They'd usher empaths all the way down into the innermost and/or lowermost chambers…along with the rest of the food and energy stores. [24]In a famine, those who have the food or fuel hold the power. [23];) [22]Your life may be saved underground, but your soul would suffer greatly in exchange. [21]When the time comes, you will remember this.

[20]I want to see what the Damned look like when they are weeping and gnashing their teeth in agony because all their supply lines wised up and no one is left to coddle them and take their shame from them. [19]I'm curious. [18]Will I enjoy watching their own self-inflicted suffering, will I simply be disgusted, or will I be horrified? [17]I know myself well enough to know I'm going to be one of those people who want to see God's plan in action in my enemy, the Damned. [16]One thing is for certain, my empathy for all of them is gone. [15]I don't care what this one did for humanity, or how many lives that one over there saved in the emergency room. They did it for their ego anyway, who they wanted the world to believe them to be. [14]Let's face it, every narcissist is going to hate my guts for writing this book, and not just the narcissists, but all those who have benefited from humanity's ignorance of it for so long.

[13]In this book, I reveal the face of my enemy and yours, a ferocious beast that steals, kills, and destroys at the soul level. [12]Together we can deal a blow that will symbolize that we are ready for what comes next. [11]I can't do this on my own. [10]As grandiose as I am to imagine that this book has the power to turn things around once and for all, I am only one man. [9]I cannot take on every narcissist in the world. [8]Luckily, this book is all I need to do to get things started. [7]I just need to spread this virus of awareness. [6]You will do the rest for me.

[5]Candace called me "a poison" to the minds of my sons according to the parental fitness evaluation. Now I can poison your mind too. [4]If Candace considers her supply lines poisoned, well that pretty much lets me know that I will be successful with this book in tainting as many of us empathetic folk as possible. [3]Long live the taint! [2]Uh oh, I smell a meme in the making with that last sentence. [1]Yup. Fuck it! I'm leaving that in the book.

17. Moves Like Fischer

[107]I'm literally triangulating you against my enemy. [106]See? I can use these narcissistic tactics just like they can. [105]Let's make this fun, shall we? [104]All we need to do is begin the separation at the individual level. [103]The rest will take care of itself because that is the design. [102]Play into their self-sabotage. [101]All these narcissists, no matter how wealthy or powerful, need empathetic people in their lives. [100]They cannot survive without us empaths. [99]Maybe separation is their punishment for using and abusing the very supply they needed to exist. [98]Maybe their punishment is that we are now slowly being able to detect them. [97]Their worst fears of exposure and abandonment are justified, because they will all indeed experience this now more than ever before.

[96]As more and more people come forward and share their stories about their experience with their day-to-day dealings with a narcissist, the narcissist will have their worst fears made manifest. [95]Exposure will be followed by some level of abandonment. [94]As one speaks up against a narcissist, perhaps more will also speak out. [93]No narcissist has only one victim. [92]No, they have many the older or more powerful they are. [91]Once exposed, the mask breaks, the supply leaves one by one, and further exposure comes with every supply line that breaks away. [90]It will be a cascade of shame upon each individual narcissist.

[89]Their hell will be the knowing of what they could've been. [88]FOMO to the max, and I'm not even talking about where they spend eternity. [87]They can look at the bright side. At least they got to party it up like YOLO-style. [86];) [85]At least the Damned got to experience real love through their victims. It will be the only real love they will ever know. [84]Good. Those memories will be their cage of torture until their last breath. [83]They will have to ruminate on the good times, because the shame associated with the bad times they were the propagator of will hurt them even more. [82]That puts the Damned exactly where I want them, a perpetual state of self-induced suffering. [81]They have the key to unlock that cage, but in order to access it, they have to go deep into their shame. [80]The key to their cage is their repentance.

[79]If they don't believe in God, then there is no one to repent to. [78]If they believe God is someone who can be manipulated or deceived, then there

is no true repentance. [77]The only way out of that cage of theirs will be to go further into their suffering and introspect instead of running from it. [76]The Damned only know how to run from shame. [75]I'd say almost all of them are screwed, based on what the Bible says. [74]The Bible also says not to give your pearls to the swine. [73]This means that, once you identify someone as a member of the Damned, this person is not your problem. [72]Your helping the Damned, out of some kind of act of righteousness, will be your own undoing. That's exactly the supply they will be seeking out. [71]You've been warned. [70]The most desperate narcissists will go for your pity. [69]Don't give them any and watch how quickly they lash out at you for not buying into their manipulation. [68]Let their reaction to you refusing to be their emotional tampon let you know your gut instinct was right.

[67]As households are torn apart by this Sword that Divides, the levels above the household will begin to fall apart. [66]Toxic workplaces will be the first to fall apart after the home. [65]As more empathetic people wake up, some will separate from their toxic workplaces. [64]But it's the ones who stay behind that will endure the most workplace abuse. [63]Don't think for a second that a bunch of toxic people whose personal lives are falling apart won't take their toxic shame out on you. [62]The more they do, the more workplace abuse there will be to expose. [61]The more people who leave the workplace, the more will want to leave as they have to pick up all the slack. [60]Picking up the slack is not something narcissists do well, especially if they have trouble at home and the fear of the awareness of their kind spreading.

[59]One by one the toxic workplaces will begin to shut down. [58]The flow of commerce must be maintained, so the workplaces that remain standing, who have done the work to rid itself of toxic employees, will be among those who inherit the wave of opportunity that comes their way. [57]Soon after, this movement of awareness will move into higher functioning systems like the media, politics, and government. [56]This is when positive change will finally be able to take place. [55]It's going to get ugly, but we will bounce back stronger than ever. [54]I believe this collective awareness and our separation from toxicity, including doing the work within ourselves, will lead to a never-ending golden age. [53]Imagine that.

[52]Without toxicity in the home and practicing mindfulness, young children in the household can grow into healthier adults. [51]We could work less hours and get way more done. [50]Imagine a 5-hour workday, where you work and accomplish much, without anyone toxic in your way. [49]Things will progress faster worldwide. [48]Once we separate from the Damned, watch how the country leading that effort blossoms before our eyes. [47]Watch how countries who lead that effort ally with each other and strengthen each other. [46]This will be what the beginning of our golden age will look like.

[45]What about the Damned? [44]Indeed. What about them? [43]According to the Bible, the damned will run and hide, mostly underground. [42]Why would they do that? [41]Because they will be so easy to identify on the surface, that they will indeed need to congregate with their own kind. [40]Among themselves I guess they can coddle each other's egos and lean fully into their pride to protect them from their shame. [39]I can't even begin to imagine what a socioeconomic system consisting entirely of narcissists, without grade A or even grade B, supply would look like. [38]I take that back. I can imagine a portion of it. [37]The member of the Damned who has control of information will be the one at the top of that food chain. [36]Fear of that information being exposed to the group, with the shame involved, will be how you keep a member of the Damned in line amongst each other. [35]They care what their brethren think about them after all; image is everything. [34]One moment you are a few echelons from the top of the food chain, and with one wave of exposure you are now at the very bottom. [33]That's how you run a cult the right way.

[32]I imagine the member of the Damned who is at the very top will be paranoid of losing power constantly. [31]What happens when a narcissist fears losing power? [30]They crank up the control and punitive punishments. [29]This places pressure on those below them. [28]The pressure breeds contempt. [27]The contempt turns into action, which justifies the paranoia at the top. [26]This will be the endless cycle that goes on in the world of the Damned, while those of us on the surface thrive in our golden age. [25]Those on the surface will maintain accountability and strive for continual growth. [24]Any signs of narcissism will be rooted out as a potential threat to be worked on. [23]I imagine that every attempt will be made to facilitate someone's healing who is dealing with narcissistic

leanings. [22]I imagine that would be something everyone does, like a quarterly review. [21]I imagine things would be so good, no one would want to leave or even join the Damned. [20]The Damned would eat this person alive, not literally.

[19]So there, this is the highlight of my master plan. [18]Write the book, spread awareness, expose narcissists as the Damned they are, begin the mass separation, watch as the powers that be who ally with corruption begin to fall apart, watch as God's children rise in their power, watch how the Damned begin to hide themselves, and work towards true peace on earth. [17]How bad do you want it, my fellow lions? [16]Come on, you know you've been waiting for a sign like this all your life. [15]It's not pretty, it requires everything on your part, it requires a lot of suffering up front, and you may not live to see the day where we are officially thriving in our golden age. [14]But you will be part of it all, no matter which side you are on, and no matter if you choose to do something or nothing. [13]We are all a part of this story. [12]In this story, with this awareness, we get to be our own heroes. [11]How amazing is that?

[10]You know what happens on a chessboard when the pawn makes it all the way over to the other side? [9]They become royalty and are imbued with the powers associated with that status. [8]Who was once a pawn becomes their own weapon of mass destruction to the opposing force. [7]Welcome to my game. [6]The time of protecting our abusers by staying silent is over. [5]It's time to get loud. [4]It's time to be trumpets. [3]My final words to the self-aware narcissist, [2]"It's never too late to stop being a dick." [1];)

16. Ode to the Damned

[74]This section is for those self-aware narcissists. [73]Maybe you became self-aware upon reading this book. [72]You're welcome. ;) [71]If you are not a member of the Damned, then by all means read this section and be entertained.

[70]We know we've won against you when you smear us. [69]The more you smear, the more we know we got to you. [68]We know you only smear the ones who can see you. [67]Your smear campaigns will eventually lead to

your own exposure. [66]So, count this as me doing something nice for you. [65]I'm doing you a solid. [64]Keep smearing, and you will come to regret not taking my advice. [63]The smear campaign can always be traced to the source. [62]Keep calling empathetic people crazy when they see through your deception and manipulation, it lets them know they are right about who you truly are. [61]The one with the "disorder" calling people crazy for seeing through your pathological lies, now that's funny.

[60]Deception and manipulation will be known as your tools, and not ours. [59]Our ability to detect it will lead to you unmasking yourselves for us publicly. [58] Once we see who you are, once we see enough, you will be known as just another empty vessel. [57]Eventually, not a single person will care to understand you or why you are the way you are. [56]Any thoughts spent on you will be seen as a complete waste of their time. [55]See, with time, we grow and you suffer. [54]If you can't imagine eternity, imagine watching the ones you sinned against never stop rising and enjoying what God has in store for them, while you remain in absolute lament. [53]The pain will only compound with every passing second. [52]You will go down in history as an idiot. [51]Just as we believed your lies, you believed Lucifer's. [50]Just as you manipulated us, Lucifer manipulated you the same exact way. [49]Who's the fool now? It's you. [48]Don't believe you are that stupid? Thank your pride for that. [47]Groove on that for a while. [46]You want to be angry at someone? You could be angry with me. That would be easy, right? [45]You like easy, don't you? Of course, you do. [44]Why not be angry with the one who pulled one over on you? [43]No, you'd rather be angry with God, right? See how far that gets you.

[42]I don't care about you. [41]I don't care about what you've done for others. [40]You are The Nothing of The Never-ending Story. [39]You are the emptiness inside you. [38]You are the stench of your own rot. [37]You are the dead who walk, in search of the living who cannot see behind your mask. [36]You will search for their validation. [35]And you will also fear them, because you will know that they will eventually leave you too, along with all the pain that brings. [34]You will fear the day they wake up to who you are and run. [33]You won't be able to witness how the empathetic treat each other in a world post-separation without your envy bubbling up to expose you. [32]This is why you will retreat into the dark where you belong, left to feed upon the scraps of fabricated validation and coddling

from your own kind. [31]This will be your hell on earth. [30]To escape it, you will have to first expose yourself and all of your shameful deeds. Good luck. ;)

[29]For those of your kind that don't like me much, I have this to say. [28]Your kind brought this part of me out into the open. [27]If you want to point the finger at who has made you a victim, you need only look into the mirror. [26]Whatever I am, I was inevitable. [25]I thirst to see your kind receive God's wrath…and I worry it'll take an eternity to quench. [24]I want to know that I had a role to play in your downfall. [23]It's been a long time coming, and now you get to be here with me to watch how this all plays out. [22]Idn't it cool?

[21]When the people you start devaluing begin to ask you in confidence to your face, "Does it make you feel better to put me down?", then know that they see you. [20]Your next response will validate their gut instinct of correctly identifying you. [19]Your apologies upon your exposure will also be scrutinized and tested even more than your initial devaluing remark. [18]There will be no more escaping of shame and accountability. [17]Any act to deflect from receiving shame, accountability, and correction will further expose you. [16]Trying that DARVO shit will be your dead give-away. As these reactions are part of your nature, your script, you will not be able to hide them well. [15]The more time that goes by, the more people will become aware. [14]The more that are aware, the more fearful you will become, and the easier you will give away your true nature. [13]Isolation is on your horizon.

[12]One more thing. [11]The ones who are new to delivering deception and manipulation, once they read this book, will use all these tactics as if they were brand-new toys. [10]The young among your kind will make it easier for the younger generation to detect you. [9]Your kind will turn on itself, it is your nature to destroy the self in your mad quest for more that never ends. [8]Your selfishness is your undoing at the individual level, and as a group. [7]You have only yourself to blame for all of your problems. [6]Repent before it's too late, or you can choose to hate me. [5]One thing you may have noticed by now, I get negative narcissistic fuel by fucking with you. [4]Your hate makes me feel alive and feeds my ego just like this stuff does for you. [3]I'm no angel. [2]I enjoy being your bad guy, truly. I wear it as a badge of fucking honor. [1]Ok, I'm done talking to you.

15. The One - Your Soul Mate

[10]If you are praying to God to send you someone, ask yourself something first. [9]Why are you truly praying for this someone? [8]Is this someone already on the pedestal over the altar in your mind, this person who is yet to exist in your life? [7]Did you place them above God, and now you ask the creator of Heaven and Earth to send you a person to be everything you want and need? [6]Do you see the folly in this? [5]Do you see why we end up with the people that we do? [4]Unequally yoked has a price to pay the longer you keep that yoke on you. [3]If the other person is making your relationship with God a struggle, then you have a choice. [2]Take off that yoke and get yoked with Christ instead. [1]When you are ready, if you wish to take on the challenges and blessings of sharing your life with another empathetic person like yourself, then so much more is possible for you both.

14. The Change on the Horizon

[38]We deserve to be left alone by these abusive people. [37]If God won't come down here and separate us Himself, then it is up to us to separate from these people ourselves with His help. [36]Who knows? [35]Maybe this was God's design all along. ;) [34]Maybe this book is me showing God that *I* am ready. [33]Maybe this is how we show God that *we* are ready. [32]If those who psychologically abuse us won't leave us alone, then we shall leave them alone. No need to fight. No need to try. [31]Let it die along with the version of us that we had to be in order to try and make that relationship work. [30]The ability to forgive is a virtue and is the ultimate healing for the self. [29]But staying with someone who has hurt you, you just enable them to keep doing it when you stay. [28]They will lose respect for you, and you will then eventually lose respect for yourself. [27]Then you are truly in a rut.

[26]There's risk associated with my book. [25]I teach evil so you can be as wise as a snake. [24]An undesired, but unavoidable, consequence is that those with ill intent will indeed take advantage of this knowledge. [23]What does that mean for you and everyone else? [22]If you don't school up now, you're in for a lot of suffering. [21]This book can help narcissists become self-aware. [20]That was intentional, to drive fear into them so they

take this opportunity to change. [19]That said, a lesser narcissist can easily become a greater version with self-awareness. [18]This was also my intention. [17]How else do we learn but to find the side that we are on and lean into it? [16]There is no grey area anymore. [15]The grey area is lukewarm and has no place in what is to come. [14]We spread this knowledge, and people will have no choice but to take a side and be divisive.

[13]The fear of all narcissists will work to humanity's advantage. [12]Fear and paranoia will make these narcissists do some crazy stuff individually and as a collective. [11]What kind of stuff? Just use your imagination. [10]Things will get interesting. [9]They will only further expose themselves. [8]They have no choice but to be afraid. [7]Fear is just one of my weapons and now you can use it too. [6]Fear can be a great driver. [5]You can depend on fear in the narcissist. [4]You can use power as a lure, and fear as a deterrent. [3]Use them both the right way, and you can drive the narcissist right into your traps to expose them to their own supply. [2]Then it's game over for that narcissist. [1]Who needs revenge when you can just play to their fears using truth and exposure, with a little bit of your own creative liberty, as your weapons?

13. Be Their Karma - No Be There

[777]God is good. [24]Those enemies of yours, these Damned, were made your footstools just as He promised us. [23]How? [22]You don't need them. [21]It is they who need you. [20]The most they could ever be is a footstool, a mere stepping stone on your path to eternal growth. [19]They better be grateful for that role. [18]Your absence is the best narcissistic injury you will ever be able to inflict on a narcissist out of love for yourself. [17]You have no choice but to hurt them in order to free yourself. [16]God did this to Lucifer, so why not make the creation that is human beings mimic that same experience? [15]We have the ability to mimic that cosmic divorce in the palm of our hand. [14]What a gift to share in the feeling of trust, betrayal, and consequence that God himself knows all too well. [13]God saved his ultimate moment of triumph to be a shared experience. [12]:o [11]That's love. [10]This is how I know that God is so real. [9"]He gets us, because He's with us. [8]He knows we love our stories of heroes and villains, and he has given us authority to be our own

heroes, and we all have been given our villains, the ones we must kill our love for.

[7]In the deception and manipulation game that Lucifer plays, he was able to turn both angels and man not toward himself, but away from God. [6]Typical narcissistic move. [5]The ones he can't turn he tries to destroy. [4]Does this sound like a certain playbook we have been learning about? [3]Welcome to the life of a Christian or person that chooses the side of love. [2]Suffering is a guarantee no matter which side you are on. [1]You will suffer for speaking the truth, you will suffer for separating from toxicity, and you will suffer the losses associated with what comes after separation.

12. Because Science

[28]Want to see other different unique perspectives as crazy sounding as mine? [27]When was the last time you entertained a topic you thought was absurd? [26]Independent critical thinkers come up with some interesting counters to the way society sees things. [25]Did you know that the mechanisms underlying mental illnesses are not well understood? [24]The year is 2024 and we still don't understand it well. [23]We also don't talk about mental illness and mention spiritual war in the same sentence. [22];) [21]It's best to keep it separated, I guess. [20]But, says who? [19]And, why?

[18]What if there is no such thing as mental disorders or mental illnesses? [17]What if those who experience this are simply victims and perpetuators of psychological abuse? [16]What if psychological abuse is simply spiritual warfare? [15]I gotta be careful with asking questions like that. [14]I don't want anyone to think I'm crazy. LMAO. [12]Show of hands! [11]If you are reading this and think I'm bonkers, raise your hand. [10]Did you raise your hand? [9]If so, who raised your hand for you? [8]Was it your own choice? [7]Or have your demons been talking to you the whole time you've been reading this book telling you that I'm crazy? [6]Did they raise your hand for you? [5]Yes, I know about the demonic inner voice in the heads of all narcissists. [4]Yes, narcissists who are vulnerable enough to share with you about this voice will tell you what the voice says to them. [3]I designed my book to irritate demons…you know…just in case they are real. [2]*:cough cough:*

[1]Look up the following topics when you have some free time and come to your own conclusions. Are you afraid to share what you believe? If so, why do you think that is?

1. Localization of increased prefrontal white matter in pathological liars
2. The impact of pathological lying on brain health, dementia, and Alzheimer's
3. Schizophrenia and parasitic demons
4. Systemic narcissism
5. Flat Earth and the Bible
6. Pandemic isolation impact on a toxic family household
7. The timeless journey of Möbius strips
8. Impact of psychological abuse on the victim
9. Impact of abandonment on someone with NPD
10. Narcissistic therapists and impact on their clients

11. The Greys

[102]We are divided, with some clinging to God, and others lost in the self-delusion that is Lucifer's game. [101]I know, because I was once a part of Lucifer's game myself. [100]At many points in my life, I did his work, mostly after becoming emotionally unavailable after dealing with a narcissist. [99]How does me being emotionally unavailable do the work for Lucifer? [98]I wanted the intimacy and validation of a relationship, without the commitment; I wanted my cake and to eat it too. [97]Does all this good and evil talk sound like black-and-white thinking? Hmmm. That's not good, right? That's what the psychologists say. [96]It's because black-and-white thinking leaves no room for interpretation and differing perspectives. That makes sense. That's also how the manipulation game is played. [95]The grey area is the arena where the good can masquerade as bad and vice versa.

[94]Now, let's make this interesting. [93]Let's add some grey to all this black and white, right? [92]Let's make the white so corrupted that it looks dark grey. [91]The nature of the color is white. [90]Let's make the black so light in color that it looks light grey. [89]The nature of the color is black no matter how much white paint you add. [88]Now which one of these colors

appears the closest to black? [87]Which one appears the closest to white? [86]This is the deception of the greys. [85]So, how do you determine what the nature of a color is once it has already been mixed? [84]There's a way, and it involves a different perspective. [83]Our eyes see forward, but do you know how to see backward? [82]If you know how, then you'll see the color's true nature. [81]What I said may not seem to make sense. Or does it? How could it make sense?

[80]Let's add some color to this not-so-obvious activity. [79]Let's add some brown and blue. [78]We know about racism. [77]We know that some people will make a claim that black people can't be racist. [76]Racism isn't the problem. [75]That's the grey area. [74]Hang there for a moment. [73]We know about police brutality. [72]We know that some people want the police to be defunded. [71]Defunding will not impact the level of brutality. [70]Debating the two is the grey area. [69]Hang there for a moment. [68]Let's bring firearms and school shootings into the equation. [67]Is the shooter a victim of psychological abuse, or the deliverer of it? [66]Or do we want to instead talk about gun violence and access to firearms? [65]This is still the grey area.

[64]All these grey areas will never go away. Never. Why? Because narcissism is at the root of all of it. [63]You need to clear away the grey and find the black and white. [62]For racism, we need to acknowledge that there is an "us" and a "them". That's all it is. [61]Racism is narcissism, and that includes those who cling to their victimhood for strength. [60]Want racism to be done forever? [59]Seriously, is that what you truly want? [58]Then it's time to acknowledge that the only us and them there ever was were narcissists and the empathetic. [57]Who do you think were the worst slave owners? [56]You don't hear about the slave owners who had to be kind in secret out of fear of what the other plantation owners would think of them. [55]I'm not here to debate racism. [54]I'm here to bring an end to it. [53]We have to talk about racism and systemic narcissism together or nothing will change. [52]Yes, we've come a long way, but it's time to kill this plague on mankind once and for all. [51]We can only kill it by exposing it for the narcissistic bullshit that it is, and there are narcissists on both sides who will never let racism die. [50]Both sides need to feel powerful or validated as a victim. Both views are narcissistic. Neither wants equality. [49]To be equal would mean to relinquish the power that comes with color

or victimhood. We needed the movement against racism, but now it's time to crack down all the way. [48]No more pussyfooting around.

[47]Let's talk feminism. We needed the movement. [46]But when one side demonizes the other, just like racism, nothing gets done. [45]It's no longer about equality anymore then, is it? [44]We still have a gender gap. [43]There's a gender gap on OnlyFans too. [42]Guess which gender is leading in that department and guess what that pay gap is. [41]There are many interesting factoids about how OnlyFans operates and how it feeds systemic narcissism. [:)]*Number 13 will surprise you!* [39]Seriously, why don't you guess the gender in the lead and the difference in revenue compared to the other gender.

[38]We want more women in STEM fields, right? [37]Well, good luck competing with the shameless ease of showing your ass and titties for the same pay or better, and the freedom of being your own boss, and not needing a degree. [36]It's ok, everyone's doing it, right? Right. [35]My point is that feminism has become a grey area. [34]There will never be gender equality until we expose narcissism first. [33]Men and women are different from each other in function, but these functions are complementary. [32]But no, we need to have an us and a them. [31]Typical Luciferian bullshit. [30]The two people, required to create life, cannot become enemies. One is no better than the other. Together, both are made stronger. [29]Expose narcissism, and these pay gaps, gender equality in various fields, and so much more related to gender will begin to fix themselves naturally. [28]Instead of trying to force and provoke equality among a group who benefit from the chaos of division, expose those who benefit from the chaos of division. [27]Who remains will all want equality and work towards it together.

[26]Let's talk about the movement on diversity and inclusion. [25]We will never get anywhere if we aren't talking about narcissism first. No movement will be a complete success until this is tackled first. [24]No narcissists in the workplace means diversity and inclusion is no longer a major issue. [23]The more time we spend without narcissists around us, the more inclusive and diverse we become naturally.

[22]People who don't feel comfortable in their own skin have a potential self-love deficit. [21]Just know the places that those with self-love deficits

go are prime narcissist hunting grounds. [20]If I'm the narcissist, and I can be your source of external validation, I have a new slave in you. Instead of working on self-love, you will seek me to provide you with that validation of self-worth. [19]You will crave my toxicity and your fear of losing me will be great, because you will believe that in losing me you will also lose yourself. [18]Why? [17]Because you have been fooled into believing that I truly see you for who you are and that I believe you are my soul-mate. [16]See how this works? [15]If you have a self-love deficit, then working on that should be your priority. [14]The narcissist, like any predator, will go after the weak or frail, the easily manipulated.

[12]When we separate from narcissism as much as we possibly can, we get to see the fullness of how mankind was meant to operate, and healthily. We've never seen what that looks like, at a cultural or societal level, ever. [11]We've never experienced the collective health that separating from toxicity looks like. [10]Is cancer linked to narcissism in any way or the psychological abuse associated with it? [9]We don't know. [8]We don't know what world health looks like when you separate from the narcissists. [7]Expose narcissism and separate from it, and we just may live longer, healthier, and happier lives. [6]Many chronic conditions associated with anxiety, depression, and the immune system will most likely lessen. Again, we don't know this for sure, because we've never attempted to separate from toxicity before. [5]We've never been able to identify it like this before either. [4]Everyone should be on the bandwagon of exposing narcissism at all levels. [3]If it does at the societal level what it does for the individual who has separated, then green pastures are ahead for sure. [2]Only if you want it. [1]How bad do you want this?

10. Miracle-Gro

[14]I've made my book, a living symbol of my faith, as small as a mustard seed. [13]Let's see what grows when you water it with the living waters of your own faith. [12]Just like Noah's ark carried the seeds of life, so too does the Bible. [11]Plant those seeds within you, put Jesus over the altar in your temple, and you will never have to worry about being narcissistic. [10]You will eradicate it as if it were an uninvited guest in your own home.

[9]Want to see what God's plan is for you? You will never see it if you don't submit to Him first. [8]You'd be surprised how closely His plan aligns with you receiving the desires of your heart. [7]You need to be ready to receive those blessings. [6]Receiving those blessings too soon could lead to you destroying them. [5]Sounds weird, right? [4]How could you destroy your own blessings? [3]Think about it long enough and you should have plenty of answers for that question. [2]Can you list three? [1]We get the blessings when we have proven ourselves ready.

9. Why Now? Why Not?

[14]So why are we just now hearing about narcissism so much in the last 20 years? [12]Maybe there are more narcissists getting their asses handed to them so badly that they finally wind up in therapy. [11]Of those who went to therapy, a percentage received a diagnosis of NPD, or at least had a psychotherapist who was able to see it and had the guts to diagnose the patient with it. [10]I do think many can't see it. [9]Alternatively, I think many of the ones who can see it are too scared to make it official. [8]Want to know what else I think? [7]I think there are those out there who have known about this and have chosen to stay quiet about it to benefit from the world's collective ignorance of it. [6]If you expose manipulation and deception, you won't be able to profit off of its existence yourself.

[5]We teach liberal arts, math, history, science, and economics. [4]Why not add psychological warfare? [3]If everyone is being subjected to it, then it should be a subject everyone takes. [2]We teach sex education at a certain age and how to protect against pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, so why not teach how to build boundaries and protect the mind from gaslighting and cognitive dissonance? [1]Why not teach how to recognize deception and manipulation at a young age?

8. Dat Drip Tho

[45]You control what and who influences you. [44]Once artificial intelligence (AI) gets its hands on the data of what you choose to watch, where your gaze falls, and for how many milliseconds it lingers before looking elsewhere, then the AI will eventually control everything you see. [43]You

won't complain either. [42]The more you seek, the more dopamine the algorithm will deliver.

[41]You give the AI a data model of the carrot you chase, and the AI will easily find content to hold in front of your eyes. [40]The AI is indifferent, it simply serves as an extension of the self, its master. [39]It's pretty much a more privacy-invasive form of modern-day web advertising based on the websites you visit. [38]The human brain is like this too. [37]If I look at or do something that I find pleasurable, the brain delivers the dopamine chemical to me as a result. [36]I feel the reward of self-gratification. [35]What if I'm using self-gratification as a coping mechanism? [34]Then I run the risk of becoming a slave to the coping mechanism itself. [33]Any hope of healing slowly fades as I continue to run to the coping mechanism for comfort. [32]I will return to this coping mechanism every single day of my life until the day I die or choose to heal.

[31]We train our brains to constantly seek out that which we find pleasurable. [30]Like any chemical, we can become dependent on it. [29]Dependency is dangerous. [28]Just like with a drug addict going for their fix, what did the trick before now requires a more intense dose, or more variations of it. [27]Either way, the real gateway drug is our own dopamine. [26]If we have low self-esteem, low self-control, and low introspection, then we become slaves to our desire for that particular pleasure. [25]Satisfaction becomes temporary, pleasure for other healthier things dulled, and the chase to make the pleasure more sustaining ensues. [24]The chase will never end. [23]If you thought slavery never went away, think again. [22]Many of us are slaves who believe we are free. [21]Just because you can't see your master, doesn't mean you don't have one. [20];)

[19]If you are used to having multiple partners, you will find it boring to be with just one and may eventually devalue that person. [18]It's not their fault you fucked with your own programming, now requiring higher levels of dopamine from multiple people. [17]Now you can't even enjoy a healthy relationship and you will self-sabotage eventually if you can't work on your ability to control your desires. [16]Your brain obeys. [15]You can choose to stop an impure thought the moment you think it. [14]Alternatively, you can entertain it, and you will eventually see that doing so makes it even harder to control. [12]Yes, this sounds preachy. [11]We may not

be able to map the brain yet, but if you look at your brain as your own program that you yourself can edit, a world of possibilities opens up.

[10]I believe we were designed this way on purpose. [9]We choose the self, our ego, others, or love. [8]Once we solidify our programming through repeated choices, the brain either becomes malleable for growth, or seared against growth because the ego must be protected at all costs. [7]All resources are devoted to the protection and hyping of the ego, gaining and maintaining power and control, and avoiding fear at all costs. That requires a ton of resources. [6]The empathetic brain, on the other hand, thrives in authenticity and in the safety of a non-toxic space. [5]All that brain power goes toward more constructive and creative endeavors, such as writing a not-so-little book readers will be sure to complain about the length of. [4]Yes, I see it coming. [3]Sorry, not sorry. [2]You forgive me, don't you? [1]Telling me I'm forgiven enables me to continue my behavior…if I'm a narcissist.

7. Buyer Beware!

[26]I just wanted to add a section devoted to all the advertisements that may come your way. [25]I want to talk about a few types of ads. [24]There are advertisements on companies that help you get the girl or guy, help you win your wife or husband back, help you spice up your sex life, or get your soul mate. [23]All these companies who don't approach their practice from a posture of complete awareness of narcissistic abuse and its trauma, they can potentially do more damage than good with their services.

[22]Companies that advertise getting the girl or guy teach seduction which is completely focused on creating limerence. [21]If you have to approach a situation from a place of inauthenticity, then you are at risk of self-sabotaging the situation. [20]Many of these companies teach manipulation and deception, so are schooling the client in dark psychology. They don't call it that, and maybe the company is oblivious to that fact. [19]Why should they care, when there are so many eager people with just the right amount of self-love deficit to be a client?

[18]These companies are designed to give results, because it's manipulation. [17]Manipulation works. That's a fact. [16]Now, instead of the client being true to themselves, they learn how to craft a false image. [15]When the false image grants them access to the desired sex, then the client will continue to feed the false image. Why? Because that's what the client wanted. [14]The brain rewards itself with dopamine with every incoming validation. [12]The validation doesn't go to the authentic self, it goes to the false image. [11]Once the false image of the self becomes bigger than the authentic self, I believe this is the point when the person is at risk of becoming narcissistic. [10]If being narcissistic long enough continues to grant dopamine, then at some point I believe the heart becomes hardened and the brain becomes lizard-like. [9]All thoughts serve the false self only, leaving no room for their own authenticity. [8]They have chosen power over love, ego over the authentic self, and damnation over salvation. [7]Free will is always in full effect.

[6]Some of these marriage counseling companies' clients are narcissists trying to get their grade A supply back. [5]The other clients are the discarded grade B supply who are trying to get their narcissists back. [4]Either way, the company teaches the grade B supply to be a better co-dependent, while teaching the narcissist how to better manipulate. [3]What I want to see is a company that counsels self-love and separation from narcissists, and it would be nice if medical insurance covered that. [2]You'd think they would with all the health benefits involved. But they won't, because of greed. [1]They will help you pay to stay medicated and subdued, however.

6. Civil War II

[29]I'm writing my controversial book here in a country I've fought for that says I have the freedom of speech, to believe any religion I want without discrimination, and that prints the words "In God We Trust" on its currency. [28]My country has a separation of church and state, which means I can express my opinions of religion and my beliefs, and it's ok if my expression is in direct conflict with how things are currently being run by the governing bodies. [27]All of this is well known among my fellow American citizens. [26]That said, my book directly opposes manipu-

lation and deception, so that takes power away from those who have benefited from utilizing it. In this I will find many enemies. [25]They can retaliate against me, which will fuel word of my book spreading and identify themselves in the process. [24]That will result in more people waking up to manipulation and being able to stand up against it. [23]Alternatively, like I've mentioned before, there will be those who use my book to hone the craft of deception and manipulation. [22]My book is a catalyst. [21]Change will happen. [20]Word will spread.

[19]Once people get past my method of storytelling, my multifaceted approach, and whatever negative opinions they have of me, they will find there is value in a lot of what I have to say. [18]I don't need to make the perfect book or tell the perfect story, or tell it using the perfect wording, or tell it in such a way that the only people offended are the narcissists. [17]It doesn't need to be perfect. [16]My goal is for this book to be good enough to be the catalyst that makes change truly happen. [15]I'm tired of all the bullshit and lies. Aren't you? [14]Are you willing to give up the things that bring you pleasure once you see that those very things were designed to keep you docile, inactive, and controlled?

[13]A house divided against itself will fall. [12]The Sword that Divides is meant to do just that, not for the purposes of anarchy, but to bring an end to the lies and manipulation and expose all those who do so. [11]It's a good thing the season is warm. [10]It's a great time to make your exit. [9]It's almost as if it were by design. ;)

[8]I used to want to play a part in bringing peace to the world. I have accepted that this role is not for me. [7]I have accepted that people have chosen their side. [6]It's been thousands of years and we have not reached peace. [5]Peace isn't profitable. [4]I do not accept that I am to be the fodder for systemic narcissism. [3]I do not accept coexistence with deceivers. [2]The moment I find one, I separate from them. I don't need to tell them that I've identified them. It is my wish that you are able to do the same. [1]Together, we can truly bring their fears to the forefront as we begin to separate from beyond the limits of their control.

5. Bridging the Gap in Understanding

[42]To me, I have found the Bible to be way more powerful the older I get and the more life experience I have. [41]The Bible bridges the gap between the creation and the creator. [40]Many other religions teach similar principles as we see in the Bible. [39]But one other thing I have found the Bible to be is a manual on building discernment, in order to protect the self from toxic relationships. [38]What my parents did not teach me, I could've learned from reading the Bible. [37]That said, reading the Bible while I was also actively defying some of its teachings made it difficult, if not impossible, to see some of these teachings. [36]I have learned that the more obedient I become, the more I'm able to absorb when reading it. [35]The Bible is more layered than the movie Inception. [34]Seem familiar? ;)

[33]One of the biggest dilemmas in this spiritual war is that victims of this abuse go into some very dark places in the mind, to the point where they question their entire belief system. [32]In this place, anything is possible, good or bad. [31]Solitude can break a weak person down, make them lean into some unhealthy practices, or it will galvanize them. [30]Which one are you? [29]The Bible will tell you exactly who you are and provide you the instructions to model yourself after Jesus Christ. [28]Modeling after Jesus Christ means you won't become a narcissist at the very least.

[27]You've got to be cruel to be kind. [26]The only hope the Damned have is when they are left alone. [25]In their solitude, in that deafening silence, there will be tremendous misery as they attempt to hide behind their mask. [24]The thing is, if there is no one to see the mask, to believe the mask, they destabilize under their own negative self-talk. [23]Left alone with God will be their most painful experience as their mask cannot protect them from their deep real and deserved shame. [22]It is in this moment that repentance has the best chance, but they must be left alone. That is their chance to come to Jesus. [21]We will be tempted to comfort them. [20]We must be aware that the Damned deceive as the snakes that they are. [19]If there is no fruit to discern by, or enough of it, then the Damned are not entitled to you believing them. [18]If they don't like it, tough titty.

[17]Deception and divisiveness have been both our doom and our destiny since the Book of Genesis. And we are here. [16]This is the end. We are

already experiencing it on a macro and meta level. [15]The playbook on narcissism is out in the open. [14]Self-aware narcissists are grouping together in chat rooms across the internet. Some are even trying to change, while others are at least trying to inform us, the targets. [13]Jesus is coming, and at the time of his arrival, you do not want to be yoked with the Damned. [12]If you aren't separated by then, you will surely endure a magnitude of suffering that will be so grand, that you will wish you heeded these words sooner. [11b]To narcissists everywhere, a fear like no other is coming. [11a]For God's people, it's time to embrace the sword of division with joy, courage, and conviction. [10]Just as the household will be divided, so will corporations, and so will the nations. [9]The Sword that Divides will cut through all.

[8]The enemy, the dark forces of Lucifer, has always been here with us. I can only speak for myself when I say that I once kissed his ring. Ok, I kissed it many times when being disobedient to God. [7]Amidst all my disobedience, I was given grace and mercy. I was given additional breaths, and opportunities to correct myself. [6]I am grateful that I escaped my own darkness. [5]I am grateful that I never joined the Damned.

[4]But now we can see the Damned. We can see the spirit of the antichrist pulling their strings, their narcissistic script at play. [3]Please know that the Damned do not make us suffer so much as we make ourselves suffer by choosing to love them. [2]Now, to stop loving someone does not mean to make them your enemy, even though the Damned will want to be your enemy if they can't have your love and admiration. [1]The true enemy, Lucifer, will puppeteer them in order to tempt you by playing to the demons you have allowed to take up space in our temple, your body.

4. Cutting the Ties that Bind

[99]So how does one leave a narcissist they are trauma bonded to? [98]Well, let's try reverse-engineering that. [97]Let's take the finished product and work our way backwards. [96]In order to deal with the shame of abandoning someone you have committed yourself to, you'd have to find a way to become emotionally numb or dulled enough to be able to stop fostering the existing attachment. [95]That's indifference. You simply don't care. [94]How does someone with empathy not care about someone else,

especially if that person is your partner or parent? [93]How does one become indifferent? [92]In order to come to a point of indifference you would have to have a radical acceptance of the situation and who the other person is.

[91]Looking at the version of you on the other end, that's someone who understands the dynamics of narcissism and narcissistic abuse. [90]This version of you has done your homework in secret. [89]You don't want the narcissist to see your exit coming. [88]The more unsuspecting they are, the cleaner the exit will be. [87]The version of you at the end has accepted the worst parts of what you witnessed in this person is indeed who they truly are. [86]The nice version you remember wasn't real, and the version of you at the end has accepted this as fact. [85]Not only that, but you have also accepted that the Bible said this would happen. [84]A man's enemies will be the members of his own household. [83]Congratulations, you've discovered who your enemies are. [82]This version of you at the end has separated from all your enemies. [81]In this you defeat your enemies with simply your absence.

[80]You need to get to a place where you accept that they are the way they are, but that doesn't mean you approve of who they are. [79]Accepting them as they are will keep you from trying to change them or help them see how poorly they treated you. [78]They don't care about you, so much as they care about how you see them. [77]If you see them in a way they deem shameful, they will just do one of their manipulation deals on you. [76]That's why you ditch 'em without a word, nuff said. [75]Don't just ghost them, Holy Ghost them! [74]You also need to accept that your current situation will not change if you do nothing. [73]You have to leave them, your loyalty to them will not be rewarded in the end. You will suffer for it. [72]Don't take my word for it. [71]Ask anyone who has been the last to leave a narcissist. [70]It's a hot desperate mess, a pitiful display of self-loathing. [69]Remember, they will most likely threaten suicide. [68]It's most likely just another lie. [67]If not, one less narcissist. [66]Yeah, I make jokes about suicide. [65]Just add that to the long list of things to hate Michael for. [64]I'm clearly going for a fucking record. [63]Remember, I need that negative energy fuel. [62];) [61]Me likey.

[60]Radical acceptance is powerful. [59]It is like wielding a pair of magical sheers that lets you snip the tether between your heart and the narcis-

sist's. [58]It also means giving up hope for something you cannot fix or control. [57]You need to come to grips with the fact that you indeed tried to control the relationship. [56]You narcissist, you! Just kidding. [55]You tried to keep the relationship from falling apart so you could feel safe and whole. [54]You may not see it as control, because it comes from a positive place. [53]That positive place of toxic hope is the reason why you tried so hard. That's admirable. [52]Instead of regretting the time, energy, and money you've invested into trying to make the impossible possible, appreciate the fact you've come into this awareness when you have. [51]Appreciate the fact you most likely have what it takes to make a healthy relationship work.

[50]Know that when you are equally yoked to another empathetic person who is also doing their healing work and has separated from toxicity, you will never have to work as hard as you did in that toxic relationship you came from ever again. [49]Seriously, it's an amazingly peaceful feeling to be with someone empathetic like yourself. [48]A mentally healthy person is not going to put you on a pedestal, so kiss that rush of dopamine goodbye and welcome the new feeling of stability and security. [47]You'll come to appreciate that. So will your offspring. [46]Let's face it, you aren't going to see dark psychology taught in schools, this wisdom of the serpent. [45]So, you will need to be the teacher of the youth in your family. [44]You can do it! [43]Children are very quick learners, especially if you make a game out of it.

[42]You cannot control the way someone sees something or the way they see you, and neither would you want to. [41]Giving up hope is the death of an optimist. [40]That was me, the optimist. [39]I was a little people-pleasing, but not a people-pleaser. [38]I did want people to see me the way I saw myself. [37]I did try to set the record straight about my character and the intent of the words I would speak. [36]I didn't want people to have the wrong impression of me. [35]Now, I don't care anymore. [34]Believe it or not, that's a blessing. [33]The whole world can believe whatever they want about me, and it makes no difference. [32]There is serious freedom in that.

[31]I used to believe that everything could be fixed with love and that if you love someone, you never abandon them. [30]So how would someone go from being in their trauma to radical acceptance? [29]It takes time and it takes you working with experts to guide you through the healing

process. [28]There are a lot of us guides out there. [27]Most content creators on narcissism are also life coaches who are trauma informed in narcissistic abuse and recovery.

[26]Maybe something happened in that relationship that made you very angry. [25]Maybe you discovered a secret betrayal. [24]Maybe you just had one too many days where you were made to feel worthless, or maybe things just turned from emotional abuse to physical abuse. [23]Are you angry? If so, that's good. [22]You should be angry, because you were taken for a fool with your kindness. [21]Let the anger ignite that blade of yours. [20]Cut those bonds with anger, and then cauterize that shit! [19]As soon as you cut that bond, you need to release that anger. [18]The anger will bring you back to them or keep them alive in your head. [17]Anger was once your friend, but now it's time to say goodbye to your anger. [16]This takes time, and the narcissist doesn't make it easy as they are smearing your name to all who will hear. [15]Let their pathetic attempts to have relevance in your life keep them busy. [14]While you are healing, they are out there suffering and running from themselves. [12]Let them stew in their own suffering. [11]They aren't your problem anymore.

[10]You may ruminate about them apologizing to you, or them changing into a good-hearted person, or good old-fashioned revenge fantasizing. [9]You may be wondering how they are doing. [8]You may wish to look at their social media profile to check on them. You are wasting your time and energy. [7]Take up a hobby or something. [6]Do the kinds of things that bring you joy. [5]Eat healthy, control your portions, control how much alcohol you drink, get into an exercise routine, go outside for walks, and ditch the cell phone for a few hours and pick up a book instead. [4]I'm also going to promote spending time with God in meditation and introspection, examining the parts of yourself that may need adjustment. [3]Lean into those healthy friendships of yours. [2]Go out. [1]Don't be a homebody, even if that's your comfort zone.

3. Coexistence is Futile

[25]Jesus said we would coexist together with the damned in the Bible. [24]We always have. [23]But I guess that time's coming to an end. [22]Now that we know what to look out for, we can just separate now. [21]Why wait for

some massive miracle, when we have the tools and knowledge to separate ourselves now? [20]Why suffer needlessly? [19]We don't have to suffer anymore. [18]What? Did you think the enemies in the household were all of a sudden going to turn on us and kill us? [17]No. [16]They have already been killing us at the soul level. [15]It's time to pull the plug on them all.

[14]Don't blame God for you having a narcissistic parent. [13]Don't blame God for any mishaps in your life. [12]Don't think yourself entitled to only good parents. [11]Don't treat God as the offender while you embrace victimhood. [10]It doesn't work for the Damned, and it definitely won't work for you. [9]Your victimhood will only drive you further from Him and keep you in your suffering. [8]We all have suffered to some degree because of these people in our lives. [7]I'd like to say that suffering is over. [6]It's truly just begun. [5]The narcissist punished you for separating from them. [4]You can make it out the other side. [3]There is a light at the end of this tunnel. [2]I want to see you set yourself free. [1]Who cares that part of my reasoning is also so that your narcissist suffers a narcissistic injury?

2. Here Comes the Sword

[47]Are you ready for the ethereal sword I promised? [46]Remember what I said about magicians and misdirection? [45]You already have it. [44]Want to see it? [43]Follow these steps one at a time. [42]If you want to make this fun, cover the steps below so you can only see the first one. [41]One at a time, while you take each step, reveal the next step to yourself. [40]I made them into simple riddles, so your peripheral vision doesn't give the next steps away. [39]You only get to feel this once. [38]Not following the steps is your prerogative. [37]Do you still have a sense of adventure in you?

- [36]Cover the below steps from your sight;
- [35]Take this book with you and go to the nearest portal that will show you a backwards world;
- [34]As you approach the portal, you will notice someone approach you from within the portal. This person looks familiar to you. Gaze into the eyes of this person, and they in turn will meet your gaze with their eyes;

- [33]Say this out loud to that person, "The eyes feed the mind, love feeds the soul, words can serve the self or others, but cannot fill this hole."
- [32]Look into this person's eyes and perform that *universal gesture* using your index finger to communicate to them, without words, for them to remain silent. The person in the portal will then show you where your sword is sheathed.
- [31]Once you open your sheath, you will find your sword. Go ahead and wave it around to show the person in the portal that you found it.
- [30]Now give them a smile and a wink to let them know it worked.
- [29]Wave goodbye.

[28]You now have the sword. [27]You do not wield it in your hand like a normal sword. [26]This sword is special. [25]This sword is your new tongue. [24]You choose how to use it and when. [23]Sometimes not using it is the best thing to do, depending on the situation. [22]Not using the sword can cut a person just as deep as if you had used it. [21]That's how powerful this sword is. [20]Like any sword, you need to practice with it so that you can comprehend what you are capable of when wielding it. [19]Do not abuse the sword, do not use it with foul intent, for the sword can punish its wielder if it senses corruption. [18]The less corruption inside you, the more you work on yourself, the sharper the sword becomes.

[17]For those who were wishing for a more magical experience of receiving the sword, I get it. [16]Just like you, it was handed to me in pieces slowly until it was fully formed. [15]I had to assemble it myself, Jedi Knight style. [14]Isn't that what you did too? [13]The sword is part of you now. [12]Be careful with a sword like this. [11]I often refer back to a question I remember from my youth, when I attended church, that helps me make the toughest decisions. [10]I ask myself this question, [9]"What would Jesus do?" [8]This one question doubles as a whetstone for your sword. [7]If you ask yourself that question, and follow Jesus, you sharpen your sword. [6]Did I forget to mention that the same thing also fortifies your armor? [5]What? You didn't think you were just going to get a sword, did you? [4]You need armor too, but that you need to build yourself. [3]There's another book that's amazing for doing this. It's called the Bible. [2]The

Word of God is both defense and offense. [1]You wouldn't want to go into battle with just a sword, right?

1. Just the Tip…of the Sword

[17]With the publishing of my book, my forged weapon, this sword, I wage war against the dark forces at play. [16]The Lord says no weapon formed against me shall prosper. [15]Yes, I say that a lot. [14]I can only assume the weapon that I form against evil will prosper. [13]It is time to wield your sword. [12]Whatever happens next is an experience we will all share in, and it starts right now. [11]I'm no clairvoyant, but I know narcissists well enough to predict that my book royally fucks their world up!!! Ha Haaaaaaa

[10]The Sword that Divides is a companion to the spiritual gift of discernment as well as the armor of God. [9]You have your work cut out for you. [8]Practice using the Sword that Divides, and you will grow the gift into an ability with utility. [7]Continue to master the Sword that Divides, and discernment will be second nature to you. [6]Life is more fun when you realize the Damned are all around us and oblivious to which one of us has the gift. [5]Watch how paranoid people become after this book comes out. [4]All those masks are going to slip off their faces so fast. [3]Want to know the best part? [2]We all get to be here for the big show, their slow and painful end for all their self-centered deeds. [1]Personally, I'm very excited.

CHAPTER 15
HE WHO REMAINS

"It's impossible to utilize your right to free speech in the way you truly deserve and not suffer any repercussions on any level."
— David Draiman

He Who Remains
By Natalie Holt
-
True Survivor
By David Hasselhoff
-
Crazy Train
By Ozzy Osbourne
-
Burn it Down
By Linkin Park

5. Playing God

[27]I don't care much for Lucifer, Satan, whatever we want to call him. [26]I can blame Candace for my situation with my sons, but that wouldn't be fair. [25]I could blame my naivety on narcissism and its most covert format, but that wouldn't be fair either. [24]Instead, I will share the blame along with Candace and Satan. [23]I was no saint when I met her. [22]I also enjoyed getting dirty in sin. [21]Self-gratification feels real good. I acknowledge that. [20]Waking up to narcissism, and all that it is, set me on a path leading directly to God. [19]I'm thankful for this revelation on narcissism, how it reaches into our very households and workplaces, and how truly dangerous it is for the well-being of those enmeshed with the narcissist. [18]Maybe you will become changed by this awareness too. [17]Maybe you don't believe in God, maybe you don't believe in Jesus Christ either. [16]I'm not here to shame you for not believing what you cannot see, just as I expect you not to shame me for believing in something I cannot see.

[15]So, let's get back to me and Satan. [14]I got beef. [12]How do I hurt an immortal being bent on my misery and destruction? [11]I look for its weakness. [10]Though vengeance is the Lord's, and not mine, I have a plan. [9]God is Satan's weakness. Truth is Satan's weakness. Light is Satan's weakness. Yet, God allows Satan to roam free to steal, kill, and destroy souls. [8]This weakness I would need to find would have to be something I could actually exploit. But, what? [7]What do you think Satan's weakness is that I can exploit? [6]Seriously, think about it before continuing to read.

[5]With the help of my beast, I found Satan's weak point. [4]I found out how to do some real damage. [3]I've littered my book with clues. [2]Are you ready to find out, or have you figured out how I would do it? [1]Hopefully, no one spoiled it for you.

4. You're in Big Trouble, Lucy!

[85]I cannot extract from Candace that which the laws of nature cannot give me, more time with my sons while they were young. [84]But I can take time away from her kind, and in turn, I can take time away from he who controls them. [83]By unleashing The Sword that Divides, even if it impacts just one

person, I have been successful in taking time away from the devil. [82]Time is the one resource the devil needs, and he is aware that it has always been limited. [81]And now, I deliver his punishment for what he did to me.

[80]I'm no longer interested in delivering punishment to a narcissist, that's small potatoes. [79]No, I am going to swing my sword at Satan's head. [78]And I will not miss, because he can be predicted. [77]I know this because the Bible explains how he operates. [76]On top of that, I have intimate knowledge of how narcissists operate. [75]Just as the parental narcissist turns their children into extensions of themself, all narcissists are the extension of the head narcissist himself. [74]Whether they believe in God or not, whether they appear good to those around them or not, they made their pact. [73]I'm coming for their master's head. [72]Even though I am but mortal, I can deal a wound that bears my name. [71]I do this not out of a sense of grandiosity, but because I know I can. [70]And now, a message from my sponsor, directed to the one head narcissist himself, the fallen angel named Lucifer.

Beast Mode:

[69]I've seen you since I was a child. [68]I saw that it was you who sent me everything that challenged me. [67]It was you I triumphed over time and time again. [66]Even when I was wounded by you, I was able to heal with God's grace every single time. [65]Even when I was successfully tempted by you, I did not forsake God and He has forgiven me of these sins for I have repented. [64]And now that I know how to cause you great suffering while at the same time helping people liberate themselves of your deception, I risk all to deliver this double-edged sword into their hands.

[63]You dared to steal, kill, and destroy my soul?!? [62]You failed miserably. [61]And in your attempts, you exposed yourself to me more and more. [60]With that exposure, I found your weakness, motherfucker. [59]With The Sword that Divides, I show the entire world your weakness and how to exploit it. [58]Your weakness is the one thing in your reality that you cannot control. [57]Yes, you love that word "control" don't you? [56]Of all you have power over in this domain, time is excluded, isn't it? [55]You need time to do your damage. [54]I will use the fourth dimension, that is time, to deal your wound. [53]Yes, I designed this Sword that Divides to even cut through time itself.

[52]You have taught me great suffering by taking time away, a separation, from me and my sons. [51]In that, you have also taught me how to hurt you, by doing the same thing to you. [50]Your weakness is exploited through humanity being able to identify and separate from narcissists, those who have given themselves over to your control. [49]This is how we take time from you. [48]And now that The Sword that Divides is here, the first phase of my plan is complete. [47]Now, every day I draw breath will bring with it the blessing of seeing how I make you suffer as I tempt you into falling for the traps I've set over and over again, and you will indeed fall for them all because I use your own tactics to make them irresistible to you. [46]I know how desperate you are for that low-hanging fruit. [45]Come, let me be the one to tempt you now.

[44]I shall beat you at your own game, because I have learned how to predict your every move. [43]You may have more tools at your disposal these days, but your tactics are absolutely ancient, incapable of truly evolving. [42]Just as your puppets use your tools, I can use your tools too. [41]Your tools in my hands are even more dangerous. [40]I know where I'm leading you, but you do not. [39]I can breadcrumb your sorry ass to fall for any trap I choose, and my book is filled with them. [38]Each trap will expose you even more to those who could not see you beforehand, in turn taking even more time away from you. [37]You hear me? [36]I can fucking see you now motherfucker, and I'm fucking coming for you with a smile on my face. [35]I'm going to expose you to everyone on the planet. [34]You know what will happen after that, right? [33]I do. [32]Major coming to Jesus moment inbound.

[31]You wanted to fucketh around with me? [30]Well now it's thy time to findeth out. [29]You wanted to play games with me? [28]Let's play games then. [27]You're my fucking scapegoat now, bitch, and this is my game now. [26]I'm going to put you on display for all to see. [25]You wanted that pedestal, didn't ya? [24]Well, now you have it.

[23]You aren't the only one who commands a flying army. [11:11]I am Michael, and it is I who was destined to place my foot upon your head and deal your mortal wound using only my tongue, this sword that I wield. [21]In this, I bring glory to the One you were the first to forsake. [777]My Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be His name, His kingdom comes, and His will be done on the earth just as it is in Heaven. [19]He sent His only son, Jesus Christ, to be humanity's savior. [18]But me? [17]He sent me, a vessel filled with His wrath, to be your tormentor, my heart's desire granted. [16]And in this the master deceiver and manipulator himself was himself deceived and manipulated. [15]Oh, the irony.

[14]It is the fate of all who deceive to be deceived themselves in the end. [13]You stupid snake! [12]I fed you your own fucking tail and now you choke on yourself for all eternity. [11]I'd tell you to fucking say my name, bitch, but it's not polite to talk with your mouth so full of your own ass-end. [10]You dared to wake me from my slumber, because I didn't come with a fucking warning label? [9]I was hidden in plain sight just as you are. [8]Now it's too late for you, as I am awake. [7]Thank you, truly. [6]Thank you for waking me up. [5]When this war is over, between you and I, it is I who shall be he who remains. [4]This is my war cry. [3]I will rip and tear until you are done. [2]Time to take to battle. [1]Station!

3. It's a Trap!

[36]Once I learned the narcissist's game, I decided to play it. [35]After all, I love video games. [34]This game is normally won when you decide to stop playing. [33]I play it because winning is not my goal. [32]My goal is exposure. [31]The more the devil plays his own game with me, the more he plays himself right under my foot. [30]The more we play, and the more players, the more exposed the devil will become and faster. [29]He doesn't want his exposure to come quickly, but he has no choice but to face me.

[28]He must play his game with me, even though he knows that this time things are different. [27]This time, he loses as he wins. [26]In this game, I am his shadow, just like in the Prince of Persia video game I mentioned. [25]He can't defeat me with love for he has none to give. [24]He can't defeat me by not playing his game with me. [23]Every narcissist he sends my way will expose the narcissist and in turn expose him more to those who could not see him before, taking the resource of time away from him more and more.

[22]My book is riddled with traps for his puppets to fall into. [21]These traps are made out of words, just like narcissists use words to lure and trap. [20]All I had to do was use all the tactics of narcissism with Lucifer himself as my target for exposure. [19]I take the same approach with him as how I defeated Candace in court. [18]The dragon whose wings I clipped, who I lured outside its cave, and dealt the final blow is not just symbolic of my prolonged court battle with Candace, but my battle with Satan himself.

[17]I, a mortal man and constant work in progress while following Christ, flatter the devil using his own moves, feeding his grandiosity. [16]I bait

him using his own tactics. [15]I trap him using his own methods. [14]I speak with confidence because he can be predicted. [13]I expose my plan because Satan's stupid ass will fall for it anyway. [12]Don't believe me? Just watch.

[11]First, he will send his puppets after me for publishing this book, and they will indeed be eager at the opportunity to attack me with criticism or twisted scripture. [10]That's good. Each one that does, willingly puts themselves in the crosshairs of their own exposure. [9]Ya'll thought the "me too" movement was huge, but it has nothing on the movement that is to come. [8]Like I said, narcissists can all be predicted, especially as a group. [7]Their fear is subdued when they are many, and that's when they make their stupidest moves resulting in even more exposure. [6]When one is fully exposed, more are sure to be next. [5]The narcissist playbook must be followed. [4]It is their rules of engagement. [3]They know no other way. [2]Every exposed narcissist puts a spotlight on Lucifer himself. [1]His undoing will be his own doing.

2. That Doom Guy

[16]I may not be Rocky Balboa, beaten and bloody, overcoming his strong and brutal opponent at the end of the movie Rocky. [15]I may not be the real-life Captain Louis Zamperini, as portrayed in the movie Unbroken, showing my final act of defiance to The Bird, when I am supposed to be downtrodden. [14]I may not be so many other heroes both fictional and real, both sung and unsung. [12]No, I'm the father who was pushed so far that he took his war to the spiritual level after seeing it for what it was and proclaimed his declaration of war on the master deceiver. [11]If anything, I am more like the Doom Slayer from the Bethesda Softworks game Doom. [10]How fitting.

[9]Part of me thinks I'm about to break reality. [8]Many will say that it is just my own reality that is broken. [7]I'm no megalomaniac. [6]I just think the timing is perfect and my court case, and story behind it, has a good chance at opening eyes. [5]Also, I prayed that people would benefit from my story - open eyes and all that. [4]I don't know what happens next, though I've spent over a year fantasizing and mentally preparing myself for what may happen. [3]I only know that I write this book and publish it upon getting custody of my sons by winning against Candace in the

court of law. [2]The rest is blind faith. [777]All praise be to God, my green light.

1. Strange Things are Afoot

[23]In 1989 I witnessed two time travelers teach the world to be excellent to each other. [22]And also, to party on, dudes. [21]It became my mantra in life. [20]They were given the gift of a time machine from the future to aid them so that they would get an A on their final history report. [19]They needed an A or else they would fail History class, and then they wouldn't be able to save the world with their music. [18]They took it to the next level, with outside-the-box thinking, and I won't spoil it for those who have yet to see Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure. [17]In the end, they got their A.

[16]In the sequel, they journeyed into hell and were able to escape and ask God for help. God helped them. [15]They were no saints, but they had heart. [14]In the end they won against their opposition. [12]In the third movie, which I won't fully spoil, their solution to saving mankind involved reaching out and touching someone, a whole lot of someones. [11]One of those someones was me. I could hear the song Heroes, by David Bowie, playing in my head. [10]I could be a hero just for one day.

[9]I may not have a time-traveling phone booth to reach out and touch you, but I did manage to find a way to send a message through time. [8]Long after I'm gone this book will still be here, exposing the plague on mankind that is narcissism with my own finesse.

[7]Bill and Ted started an entire world-changing movement with their music in the Bill and Ted movies. [6]But, in my reality, Bill and Ted started a movement within me. [5]It's amazing what one story can do. [4]Now, it's my turn. [3]Can I create the book that finally, and truly, changes everything? [2]If I do, then Bill and Ted actually did have something to do with bringing peace to mankind, from a certain point of view. [1]Some things do come full Circle K.

CHAPTER 16
END GAME

"Of what use to destroy the children of evil? It is evil itself we must destroy at the roots."
— Eleanor Farjeon

New Romantics (Taylor's Version)
By Taylor Swift
-
Uprising
By Muse
-
Dog Days Are Over
By Florence + the Machine

19. Welcome to the End

[70]This chapter is all about you and what you will do with the Sword that Divides. [69]If you look back at all you have read, all that resonated with you along the way, you will notice that you are now covered in the armor I placed on you and heavily armed with the weapon I put in your hand when you weren't looking. [68]By now, you are already aware of those in your circles who matched my illustration of narcissism, and the dark psychology that is deception and manipulation. [67]Your weapon and armor are not for physical battle. [66]This war is purely psychological, and I've conveyed my belief that this is spiritual as well. [65]The battle you have before you is more internal. [64]Your armor may not yet be tempered, depending on where you are on your own walk with God. [63]If you want stronger armor, then you need to do the work to temper it yourself. [62]You will find the instructions on the different armor pieces and how to strengthen them in the Bible.

[61]Before you can separate from toxicity, you will need to do your part in doing your own research. [60]Enhance your own knowledge on this topic. [59]Your relationship with God is all on you, so you can either foster it or distance yourself. [58]The ball is in your court. [57]Please know that the other side, our less empathetic counterparts, is reading this book too. [56]They now have the tactics to manipulate pretty much handed to them. [55]The intent of my book is not to enhance the skills of current manipulators, but to arm and protect those they prey upon. [54]Hopefully, as the narcissist reads this book, they can have some amount of self-awareness and read the writing on the wall that their end is near. [53]Supply lines are going to dwindle with the publishing of my book. [52]These people, instead of doing the work to change, will instead go into a panic once even one person leaves their sorry ass naming my book as their awakening to the manipulation game.

[51]Fear may keep you from taking action to separate. [50]Recognize that for exactly what it is. [49]Fear that deters you from individuation - removing yourself from the roles of narcissistic supply, narcissist enabler, and narcissist extension - should be recognized for exactly what it is. [48]You are meant to be afraid. [47]The fear is meant to keep you from individuating and separating from the narcissist, and fear also keeps you from deviating from societal norms. [46]Maybe that fear stems from you not

wanting to start over with someone new. [45]Maybe it stems from what people will think if you abandon your lazy selfish adult child who won't leave your house. [44]Maybe you're afraid of having to live with less in order to separate and protect yourself. [43]Maybe you are afraid of how you will lose friends and family to the smear campaign. [42]Maybe there are secrets the narcissist knows that you are afraid they will divulge upon your escape, or at least once they finally come to grips that their relationship with you is over. [41]Either way, it is the fear of the unknown. [40]I understand that fear.

[39]Having made the leap of faith myself a handful of times already, I can tell you there will come a point soon after the separation where it may feel very difficult, and it may remain this way for a while. [38]Your body is used to the cortisol and dopamine levels alternating, because that is what abuse does and what your body is used to. [37]This will pass, or you can give in and return to your abuser, and the comfort of what is known while it slowly erodes your soul. [36]Everyone I know who has left the narcissist in their life loves their new life, and they do not miss these narcissists. [35]They say that the grass always looks greener on the other side, but if you are enmeshed with a narcissist then you may as well consider them the brown grass.

[34]Not every narcissist is the same, but if you've spent a lot of time with one, you know they all operate the same. [33]They need your reactions, they need validation, and they do not care one bit for you beyond whatever value you supply to them. [32]You will see how much they care about you when they notice you start to separate. [31]Let their hate for you leaving them and the actions they take to try and ruin your life become the fuel that keeps you moving away, and staying away, from them. [30]It doesn't matter if they are your parent, your sibling, your adult child, your spouse, or your best friend. [29]They all run on the same foul operating system, like computer sleaze. [28]We may not be able to see the mark of "deceiver" on their foreheads, but I have taught you how to open your third eye and see the mark once you identify enough red flags on your own.

[27]I understand that my book may be the first book many have read that mentions the Bible this much. [26]Let this book compel you to grab a Bible and read it with your new eyes. [25]If it's your first time reading the Bible,

then know that you are absorbing more from the pages than was possible not that long ago. [24]Your new eyes and understanding will allow you to extract more from the scripture. [23]Whether you believe in God or not, there is serious value to the Bible's teachings and warnings. [22]The more I read it through my new eyes, the more I understand how all the answers to everything that matters in life are in that book. [21]If you love playing the subtext game, the Bible is packed with it. [20]There are a lot of dots you can connect for yourself.

[19]I believe the final frontier is not the reaches of the cosmos, but is the human mind. [18]I don't believe we will ever be able to map it. [17]Additionally, I believe those who want to map the brain may not have the purest of intentions. [16]Every new piece of land humanity has "discovered" has been colonized or monetized or both. [15]The human mind will be no different. [14]What happens when the human mind has been even partially mapped? [12]I'd put my money on the dawn of the latest form of slavery, but hidden as a transactional relationship, something more symbiotic that gives the illusion of benefiting the slave.

[11]The battle for the mind can only be won on the individual level. [10]All the planets out there in outer space, I don't think they matter that much. [9]I used to daydream all the time about the cosmos and aliens and the like. [8]This awakening has changed me. [7]I believe what matters more than the stars in the sky is us and how we treat each other. [6]If we can't do that, then what's the point of humanity? [5]Can we be warm enough to show each other genuine authentic love, while also being cold enough to shut out the pleading narcissist who has had everyone abandon them, finally reaping from all they had sewn - the seeds of their own destruction? [4]You know some of these narcissists can cry on command, right, making that bottom lip quiver? [3]Do not fall for their alligator tears. [2]These are the ones that bite the hand that feeds them. [1]You have been warned.

18. No Where to Go but Up

[8]If we rally and support each other through this time of separation, we show God that we are ready for Him. [7]Separating is one thing but helping others who are trying to separate is huge. [6]Just like a passenger in a plane that's lost cabin pressure, put your oxygen mask on first. [5]If

you can help others, after you've discerned the purity of their spirit, then by all means do what you can. [4]Be careful who you open your doors to. [3]Those you help should not act entitled to it, and those who you don't help should not shame you for it. [2]The more we separate, the healthier we become. [1]Are you ready to leave the wickedness of this world behind you, and live a life where you have nothing to do with toxicity?

17. What Comes Next for Me

[43]I know myself well. [42]I can be absolutely relentless if I want to be. [41]And in this case, I want to be. [40]I'm never going to stop pushing this knowledge and being there for people going through the darkest parts. [39]I want to create a service that joins our kind together, one-on-one or in groups, and that keeps these selfish rotten motherfuckers the hell out, or groups them with their own manipulative kind. [38]Make that shit free, operating on just donations. I believe it will work. And I can't put a price on it. [37]Oh, I have dreams when it comes to how I can find new and creative ways to help people, while dealing a blow to narcissistic supply lines. [36]I'm in it for altruistic reasons and not-so-altruistic reasons. [35]Either way, had these people left me alone, I wouldn't have written this book. [34]So, given my pension for elaborate revenge fantasies, I can imagine there will be those who believe my purposes for writing this book is revenge or that I care more for revenge than I do for helping people. [33]You are free to believe whatever you want. [32];)

[31]While there will be those who will waste their time trying to discredit me, there will be those who will take advantage of this time to expand their own consciousness taking what I've written to heart. [30]I would like to help people connect with life coaches who have a proven understanding of narcissistic abuse and skilled at helping others through trauma recovery. [29]If people want to interview me, I'll be making myself available for that. [28]I will be reading reviews and responding to any correspondence. [27]Ideally, I will be spending more time with family and friends.

[26]I plan on creating a YouTube channel to review and highlight content from content creators that I have found to be the most helpful in my journey. [25]Ideally, I'd like to be able to also interview them. [24]These are the

most badass people I have ever come across, and the opportunity to interview them and get to know them beyond the topic of narcissism would be amazing to me.

[23]I have an X account (formerly Twitter) and my profile name is @Head-Thundercat. [22]The account is dedicated to my beast persona and is filled with riddles, subtext, and callbacks to my book as Easter Eggs. [21]I have been using that platform to highlight the content I have found most helpful and to make posts related to my story, this book. [20]I started doing this in April of 2023 once I knew that I would be publishing a book, so there's a ton of posts there to peruse and share if you'd like. [19]My X account is actually a companion piece to this book. [18]For those who want more, you can find me on X, which is a free speech platform thanks to Elon Musk. [17]Interesting how the "X" resembles a cross. [16]Hmmm. [15]I wonder if that was intentional…

[14]Since I'm taking my fight to the internet, we should probably talk about internet trolls. [13]To hell with them all. [12]What do you think narcissists do to get negative energy supply? [11]They troll. [10]They make some comment for the sole purpose of garnering a reaction. [9]I'm not going to bother responding, unless I want to play their game for a bit and do some spiritual sparring. [8]It is my hopes that you all see these trolls for exactly who they are. [7]Do not be tempted to engage, unless you know exactly what you are doing or are experimenting. [6]These narcissists, these internet trolls, are great for experimenting on. [5]Push them hard enough and the platform they use to give you a hard time will double as your spotlight for exposing them to all who read. [4]Exposing narcissists is addicting. You get better at it. You become quicker to figure them out. [3]You become more covert in how you trigger them to show their red flags. [2]You can get to the point where you can bait them easily and lead them right into a trap of your design using their own words against them. [1]The trap is their exposure.

16. My Trojan Horse

[63]I need to admit something to you. [62]I mentioned upfront that this book is an inception of the mind. [61]This is the time for me to tell you that this book is a virus of my design. [60]It's not carrying a virus; it is the virus. [59]I

designed this book to give the wisdom of the serpent. [58]I couldn't have boldly said that upfront, otherwise people would think I was teaching how to use witchcraft. [57]I am, in essence, teaching you witchcraft. [56]Lies and manipulation are spells. [55]Think about it. [54]If I lie to you and you believe it, then I have successfully twisted your reality to my design, a design that serves me. [53]It's a spell. [52]Those spells come at the cost of a reprobation of the mind of the spell caster. [51]Now, books on witchcraft probably don't openly advertise that the cost of using witchcraft is the sacrifice of your own soul. [50]I guess you should've read the small print, if this was you. [49]Now, the Bible does make mention that this exists and to steer clear. [48]The Bible is clear that you endanger your soul when you delve into the dark arts.

[47]I took a page from hackers and sorcerers, Merlin in particular. [46]You may recall my mini-story of my thoughts on the movie The Sword and the Stone and how Merlin became a virus in order to defeat the mad Madam Mim. [45]Now, by reading my book, you have been infected with the same virus that I have in me. [44]Don't worry, this virus is not designed to hurt you. [43]It's actually designed to protect you. [42]This virus makes you very tough for narcissists to chew, and most won't want anything to do with you if they know you've read this book. [41]They know what they are. [40]If they didn't, they do now. [39]They know what they do. [38]They all know that they are bad news and that they don't deserve to be in your presence. [37]Add the gift of discernment, and you will be able to see right through their masks too. [36]You could operate among them pretending to be none the wiser, letting them believe that you believe who they present themselves to be.

[35]How do you operate from within a toxic system you aren't ready to escape? [34]Do everything as if you were only as innocent as a dove. [33]Maybe for you, this was all you were. [32]Now you see where that gets you. [31]If you are accused of something, apologize, even if you don't mean it. It's not bearing false witness. [30]Think of it as a game. After all, the enemy does. [29]Pretend that your feelings are hurt. [28]Pretend that they are right in their criticisms of you. [27]Pretend that you look up to them. [26]Massage their egos, while you stay hidden within their ranks. [25]Do what you need to do, and then disappear like a thief in the night.

[24]The side effect of writing this book is that I've opened the door to a mass number of narcissists becoming self-aware. [23]Most will be afraid on the inside, which may look like anger and rage on the outside. [22]It is indeed 100% fear if they show anger. [21]It's how their script operates. [20]Others will lean right on into their narcissism and take advantage of the tactics I enclose here, if they weren't already wise to them. [19]There will be a select small number who will have their coming to Jesus moment but will phase right back into their behavior. [18]Then, there will be a very small number who will be bold enough to take up their cross and put forth the work. [17]They do this on their own. [16]The more you try to help them, the less work they will put in, and the more energy they will siphon from you while you attempt to help them. [15]You will actually do the narcissist a disservice by trying to help them. [14]I know, it's completely against our nature. [12]A narcissist's repentance and redemption should not be your concern. [11]You cannot help these people, and you will indeed suffer some calamity for trying.

[10]This is a time to focus on you, and then the young under your care. [9]Don't let your pride deceive you that you are the narcissist's savior. [8]Jesus Christ is our savior. [7]They stand a chance if they come to him on their own. [6]This is not your problem, and I cannot emphasize this enough. [5]Their time has come. [4]Don't pity them as they will weaponize your own pity for them against you. [3]You need to pretty much pretend they do not exist. [2]You do not want to be emotionally attached to a narcissist, because they are about to get hit very hard like never before, and it's just going to keep getting worse with every wave of God's wrath that is coming. [1]Being emotionally attached to them will in turn hurt you to see them in pain, and pain is what is coming, a whole lot of it.

15. Your Challenge Ahead

[42]Because you have read my book, you have taken on the burden of its knowledge. [41]You have the free will to make of this knowledge whatever you wish. [40]This book is my testimony to what I did with this knowledge when I came into it. [39]I imagine, of all the good that will come of this book being published, that many more stories of triumph over a narcissist will follow. [38]The hero's journey is a beautiful one, no matter how

ugly it was when it began. [37]My idea of heaven on earth is to spend the rest of my life reading or hearing about your victories and celebrating them with you.

[36]You've just received a crash course on dark psychology, how to defend against it, and how to play along with your abuser and use their same tactics in order to orchestrate your escape, and maybe even add a layer of sting. [35]Remember, exposing a narcissist is considered dangerous. [34]They will try to destroy you for ruining the facade. [33]I believe the more narcissists that get exposed, the easier it will get for more survivors of the abuse to speak up and expose theirs as well. [32]I believe that the more that narcissism is exposed and talked about, the more likely that laws will be made to protect the survivors of their abuse upon speaking out.

[31]Whether you expose a narcissist or not, it should not be part of your healing journey. [30]You can't use pain inflicted by you against your abuser to make you feel better, that's how a narcissist thinks. [29]Exposing them could help those around them, who don't understand how they too are being abused, come to the realization that they are in an unhealthy relationship. [28]It's all about your intent behind the exposure.

[27]The biggest fear the survivors of this abuse feel is not so much the reaction of the narcissist to their leaving the relationship, but to the idea of starting over on top of that. [26]Being alone, or the daunting notion of trying to find someone else to share life with, and the unknown that brings, is scary. [25]Starting over with someone new is both difficult and scary. [24]I want to remind you that Jesus Christ is not new. [23]A relationship with him is not difficult. [22]Find those who you can trust to be able to lean on while you plan your escape or, if escape is not an option at the moment, help you maintain some level of sanity until you can.

[21]The double edge that is The Sword that Divides means there are two things that occur when you wield it. [20]You separate yourself from toxicity, which opens the gateway to healing and rebuilding strength and eventually going beyond and becoming stronger and more in line with the true self that you are. [19]The other edge casts away the narcissist who will indeed endure suffering by you wielding the sword. [18]The suffering is their own and is what happens when they can't offload their shame. [17]It will all come back and compound, and it will not be pretty. [16]The dis-

enabled narcissist will resort to any act in desperation. [15]If they can't find people to latch on to, they will indeed use drugs to keep their shame at bay. [14]It will never be enough. [12]They will eventually destroy themselves. [11]This is the way. [10]They go to the bottom where they will have their one-on-one with God Himself. [9]This is where they have the chance to turn things around. Either way, it's their own journey. [8]Make peace with being able to say goodbye permanently. [7]Silence speaks volumes to their kind.

[6]Be warned, once you start to show signs of individuation, confidence, boundary building, and the like, the narcissist in your life will feel it. [5]Their fear response will kick in, and the abuse will ramp up, or maybe you will be lucky enough to be discarded by them. [4]Remember, a narcissist will only discard if they have a backup primary supply at the ready. [3]They may try to push you away using the reverse discard, treating you terribly so that you will give them space so that they can engage with the other supply you don't know about. [2]They may even use their new or existing supply, a triangulation, in order to make you jealous in an effort to reverse hoover you to get you back. [1]These creatures are crafty, are they not?

14. It is What You Make It

[13]This book will be whatever you want it to be. [12]You can read into it whatever you wish. It could be a journey into understanding the impact of narcissistic abuse on mental health. It could be a journey into the shattering of an ego. [11]It could be a story of how one becomes labeled a Jesus freak. [10]It could be an invitation to play a game for two. [9]It could be prophecy fulfilled. It could be the formation of a super ego. [8]It could simply be an interesting hero's journey story, or an invitation to experience a different side of reality.

[7]One thing is certain, after reading it, "The Sword that Divides" will be on your tongue. Because of that, a division will follow. [6]Being divisive is what we do best these days, isn't it? [5]If we are to be divisive, best to divide along the lines of those with empathy and those without. [4]What do you think a world post-division would look like after a decade, a century, or a millennium? [3]I don't know about you, but I'm ready to start growing that greener grass, while the dead bury the dead. [2]Maybe you

have been waiting and praying for your green light. Maybe this book is it. [1]Only you know.

13. Chapter 13's Location

[9]Thank you for sticking with me from beginning to end. [8]If you were reading the first edition of The Sword that Divides, you may be wondering "What happened to Chapter 13?". [7]Chapter 13 is special to me, and I can't explain why it's missing from this edition without completely spoiling it. [6]If you are reading the second edition, then you understand why I couldn't include it the first time. [5]I chose to leave the title page in the first edition as it contains some clues. [4]For this chapter, two heads are better than one. [3]It doesn't belong in the story yet even though it's totally part of it, as radical as that sounds. [2]I will publish it for free digitally, along with the release of the physical version of the second edition of The Sword that Divides. [1]Chapter 13 will come in time, and this book will then be considered complete.

12. The Real War on Terrorism

[85]I once swore an oath. [84]I swore an oath to protect my country from enemies both foreign and domestic. [83]I have identified narcissists as the enemy behind all terrorist acts. Narcissists destabilize the household. [82]Terrorists destabilize nations. [81]Both use fear to suppress and control. [80]This is me blowing the whistle that if we don't actively acknowledge the dangers of narcissism in our places of power and in government, then we will indeed suffer for our inaction. [79]We can do the painful work now to separate, or we can wait until it's too late. [78]My country, this great nation, prints on our currency, [777]"In God we trust". [76]I say it's time for us to put our money where our mouth is. [75]What do you think?

[74]We all endure the trials of our childhood. [73]Some of us stay silent while being tortured in the one fucking place that we deserve to be safe, our very homes. [72]In the United States, we live in this great country where freedom rings, yet those freedoms don't always make it down into the household. [71]Instead, the younger generation is being tortured and devalued by the very people they trust the most, their parents. [70]And this

impacts the future of these children when they become adults and how they see themselves, and the kind of unhealthy relationships they can lock themselves into for the rest of their lives.

[69]On the other end, the manipulator can be very covert and escape accountability and even cause their empathetic partners or children to question their reality and their beliefs and become suicidal. [68]I personally know of two suicides from husbands who had manipulative wives. [67]I actually think the largest cause of suicide is this form of abuse, but that would be very difficult to prove.

[66]Most victims of this particular abuse don't even know they are being abused, whether child or adult. [65]That's kind of the point. [64]If a child receives this form of abuse from even just one parent, appearing as loving one moment and then appearing as cruel or uncaring the next, the result is a mixture of negative consequences. [63]The victim exhibits anxiety due to constantly walking on eggshells to avoid the punitive punishments. [62]The victim exhibits attention deficit issues because of the immense tax on the mind the abuse causes. [61]The victim exhibits cognitive dissonance and splitting, due to having two versions of the abuser in the mind, the kind version and the mean version. [60]The splitting of the mind over two versions of reality, a fake one and a real one, could feed into schizophrenia.

[59]One could argue that schizophrenia can be the end result of serious narcissistic abuse. [58]If emotional and psychological abuse are indeed just modern words to describe the spiritual warfare that has gone on since our beginning, then what truly is schizophrenia? [57]What did we call schizophrenia 2000 years ago? [56]If you don't know, what would you call it if someone heard voices in their head, or saw things you could not, or heard things around them that you could not? [55]It would be easy to call them crazy.

[54]The thing about this covert abuse is that it is called covert for a reason. [53]It is designed to be almost invisible to the abused, and hence to most therapists, child protective services, the courtrooms, and possibly invisible to many psychiatrists. [52]Let's say that the abused seeks therapy. [51]If the patient can't articulate their experience, and covert manipulative abuse is very difficult to articulate without the knowledge of the abuse

itself, then the chance of therapy getting to the root cause is slow and the likelihood of being prescribed medication is high. [50]Medication prescribed this way would address the symptoms and not the cause.

[49]The highly covert nature of this abuse and the inability of many to be able to identify it means that things will get worse until the topic is taught at early childhood and at every level of education. [48]The long-term devastation of generations of manipulated and abused children growing into adults means that the future of mankind is one of identity crisis, a blind submission to covert manipulation, and a starvation for validation in its many false forms. [47]This is one of the many reasons why I chose to write this book.

[46]Since we are a collective, this means that our future as a country is also at stake. [45]The country that solves this first is the safest from self-destruction. [44]Any country that cannot solve this will be easily manipulated by other countries who both have a thorough understanding of it and harbor intentions to manipulate it. [43]A country with this level of understanding can manipulate a country through tools like social media, into being manipulatable. [42]I see this as a very real possibility. [41]I would wager to say it's been done already.

[40]I remember an ad from the US government public service announcements - [39]"If you see something, say something." [38]For lack of a better method, this is me saying something, because I see something. [37]The intent of the ad is to tell authorities what it is that you see. [36]But how do you report to authorities the very thing many of those who uphold that authority have been perpetrators of themselves? [35]Authorities don't have the training to recognize toxicity among their own, let alone do anything about it. [34]My reporting would only result in my dismissal. [33]No, the person in the public trust position must be caught red-handed pretty much before real progress is made in holding them accountable. [32]When you do manage to do that, prepare for some hot-shot lawyer to come along with some bullshit loophole and save their day. [31]You'd think that this rarely happens, wouldn't you? [30]You'd be wrong in thinking that, very wrong.

[29]The only way to stop the behavior is to admit that it does indeed exist and how dangerous it already is at the individual level. [28]We need to also

collectively admit how dangerous it will become if we don't build measures to keep people accountable and make it affordable for victims to not only defend themselves, but to be able to fight back with exposure. [27]We need to make it so institutions that claim to fight abuse become trained so that they can actually see abuse. [26]You can't fight or protect people from what you can't see yourself.

[25]It's time to face the music. [24]Society today and consumerism perpetuates narcissistic traits by a multitude of means. [23]Don't take my word for it. [22]If you do your own research, find your own sources, you will come to the same conclusion. [21]See, I've given up on trying to convince people. [20]The act of convincing in itself can be considered manipulative. [19]Those who don't want to see what I see can go along about their lives and change nothing. [18]Those who think I've made some good points can take from that what they wish and apply it. [17]When I make some bold statements on what I see beyond the person-to-person interactions, I do expect that you would either validate that for yourself or take the time to consider your own thoughts and opinions on the matter before coming to your own conclusions. [16]There is a wealth of information out there and it keeps growing. [15]The world may not be taking notice yet, but a growing number is watching and taking notice.

[14]World War 3 takes place in the mind, and we are all active participants. [13]We are all enlisted by virtue of the breath of life within us. [12]This is the final war fought on multiple fronts, the likes of which have never been seen in the history of mankind. [11]The battles will take place in cyberspace, in the mind, in the spiritual world, and all battles will be reflected in the physical world. [10]Any post on social media can be a weapon designed to target, smear, initiate gang stalking, and derive positive energy in the form of validation or negative energy in the form of opposition. [9]Either way, your ego is targeted. [8]If it doesn't support the post's agenda, it will be tuned into negative energy fuel. [7]The only way to combat wisely is not to engage at all. [6]If it bothers you seeing the post, block the post, or block the one who posted. [5]Distancing from social media will also help, especially if you've just begun your healing journey.

[4]I used to think that the final frontier was outer space, but I see that for mankind it's actually inner space. [3]This is it. [2]The final frontier is this

new wild West we live in - the awakening to the abuse many don't want to talk about or acknowledge, because in doing so they have to admit that they were not truly loved by the one they wanted it from the most, and instead were manipulated by them. [1]The ones who can truly strike gold in this final frontier are the ones with empathy.

11. Eyes Wide Shut

[35]When you are dealing with narcissists, know that it is a battle of the minds and willpower. [34]Sometimes you have to accept death first, before you can be reborn. [33]The old you who believed in the good in everyone, that everyone deserves as many chances as it takes, must die. [32]No, not everyone is good-natured. [31]Not everyone can be given multiple chances.

[30]The new you takes time to build. [29]There is only one you. [28]You know you are here to love and to be loved. [27]Don't settle for anyone who chooses to ignore your value. [26]If they can't see your worth for themselves, let them stay blind. [25]Don't defend yourself. [24]Don't argue your worth to them. [23]They already know your worth, they just don't want you to know your worth. [22]Still, they trample over you. [21]Let them stay with their eyes forever shut. [20]Leave them alone to play in the mud with their own kind. [19]Let the blind lead the blind to their own damnation. Let them. [18]Don't get in their way. And don't let them get in the way of your healing. [17]No one deserves to live rent free in your head.

[16]"It's not about what happens to you. No one escapes adversity. No one lives free of discomfort or misfortune or struggle. No, it will always be about what you do with what happens to you. In other words, it's not the event, but the response. Not the obstacle, but the ability to navigate around it. Not the wave, but the ability to ride its momentum to something greater. It is not what happens to you, it is what you do about what happens to you." - Eddie Pinero, Founder of Your World Within

[15]With this awareness it's time to become a little narcissistic. [14]What do I mean? I mean exactly what I said. [12]To get you out of their grasp the safest, you will need to do as narcissists do. [11]You will lie with a straight face looking into their eyes. [10]You will create a mask to portray to them. [9]This mask is who you were up until this awareness. [8]You need this

mask because the narcissist absolutely cannot know that you are indeed aware of who they truly are. [7]Time to enjoy the covert operation they've been playing. [6]Once you break free, or slip away, they are likely to pursue getting you back. [5]Have fun with that, if you'd like. I did. [4]Their attempts to get you back can be quite entertaining. [3]Watch as they learn life's hardest lesson, that sometimes it is too late to fix things. [2]Watch as they act entitled to your forgiveness. [1]Watch as they shame you once they see you can no longer be manipulated.

10. The End

[50]So here we are. [49]This story ends, my new one begins, and so does yours. [48]While writing my book, I discovered that I embarked on, and was on my way to completing, a pretty badass hero's journey of my own. [47]I took the opportunity to incorporate that aspect into my story. [46]I then took the opportunity to turn my story into a weapon, teach you how to wield it, and integrate the perspective of spiritual war into the everyday. [45]I prepared you by building your neuroplasticity by plucking different functioning areas of your mind throughout this book. [44]I told you. [43]There is a method to my madness. [42]The exercises, the questions I asked you, the mini-stories I told and how I integrated them into my own story, all of this was designed by me to enhance your neuroplasticity and prepare you for the information I would be sending you in the form of my story.

[41]I took care to first bring you the pathologies of narcissism by using both myself and my experiences with others as examples. [40]I then gave those pathologies and tactics the names I know them by so that you could identify them in the people in my story. [39]It is my hopes that while I introduced these named pathologies and tactics, you would see the same patterns in those who you have entrusted with your heart. [38]By reflecting on your own memories while I told my story, you further exercised your neuroplasticity. [37]This allowed you to be more receptive to my story. [36]Was this manipulation? [35]What do you think? [34]Do you feel manipulated?

[33]I communicated my belief that those with a strong level of narcissism have already surrendered their free will to the false self and are basically

operating, self-aware or not, in absolute servitude to the false self and running on a script that avoids shame, and thus avoids repentance. [32]I also conveyed my belief that NPD is something that is self-inflicted and that it is the end result of a seared mind. [31]I indicated that I equate the searing of the mind to what the Bible calls God giving people over to the reprobate mind. [30]I communicated that I believe that the reprobate mind results in a loss of the authentic self, or inability to create one, and leads to what I believe will be eternal damnation. [29]If the narcissist fears abandonment, I believe it's because their soul knows that they are damned. [28]The ultimate abandonment is coming - being completely abandoned by the God that created them because of who they are and what they have done to others and will continue to do even after this book is old news.

[27]In juxtaposition, I believe anyone with NPD has the power to gain control over it as long as they can place themselves in a long-term position where they have no one enabling them, have an expert guide, and truly come to Jesus Christ and repent. [26]The narcissist would need to give up all their supply. [25]I can only imagine that any narcissist who is self-aware and puts in the daily work will eventually create less and less bad fruit, so to speak. [24]I believe that opens the door for the outpouring of good fruit. [23]Good fruit leads to salvation and blessings.

[22]If my book improves the life of one person who disconnects from the toxicity impacting them, I rejoice. [21]But, if my book brings someone diagnosed with NPD into self-awareness, and they make the decision to turn to Jesus Christ in absolute repentance, put forth the daunting effort of rewiring their own brains, and got the fruit to show for it consistently and over time, I'm going to rejoice and want to throw a big fucking party for them. [20]That may sound silly, but that is a serious win in spiritual warfare. [19]If you are familiar with Star Wars, then you know the rise and fall, and subsequent redemption of Anakin Skywalker is an epic tale. [18]The best good guys in storytelling history were at one time intimate with evil.

[17]Imagine a reality where there are many narcissists who are moved by this book, or the events that unfold as a result of this book, and decide to do something about it. [16]Of those who decide to take action, there will be some who stick with it and some who give up. [15]I think those who stick with it will see God's blessings pour in over time. [14] I think the recogni-

tion of those blessings will bring gratitude. [12]Being grateful is a blessing in itself. [11]There are some self-aware narcissists who are actually doing the work, and I see light coming from them, whether they see it for themselves or not. [10]I don't think all is lost for every single one of them. [9]Like I said earlier, I don't necessarily believe these people are evil, just that they have given themselves over into evil. [8]They operate in unison with the spirit of the antichrist with all their deception and manipulation for personal gain.

[7]The devil doesn't make walking away from him easy, just ask anyone who has ever broken up with a narcissist. [6]God broke up with the head narcissist Himself and look how the devil comes for the souls of God's children. [5]It's just like a cosmic divorce, and we are the children that the devil is isolating from the parent who truly loves us. [4]The devil can't offer love, but he can offer limerence, a twisted version of love that puts you on a pedestal. [3]Just as the narcissist lies to their own children about their other non-narcissistic parent to drive alienation, the devil does the same. [2]The devil makes you pay a price for leaving him and instead choosing God. [1]I believe that's why it's so hard to be a narcissist who is actively battling with themselves, instead of the pointless attempt at running away from themselves.

9. Thank You for Reading

[30]My goal was to be more present for my sons. [29]I had to fight for that. [28]I had to fight lies with truth repeatedly. [27]It took too long, was insanely expensive, and resulted in my sons being further abused throughout the entire process. [26]All of that together made the nearly two-year period very aggravating. [25]The abuse continued because the child protection system in Illinois says that emotional abuse is considered abuse but is unable to properly train their employees to be able to detect it, thus enabling the abuse to continue undetected. [24]I understand how difficult it is to detect and the concern for liability if there's an instance of poor judgment. I get it.

[23]Because this information isn't mainstream, it doesn't impact change. [22]That was before my book. [21]Let's see if I can get people talking. [20]I could use your help spreading the word too. [19]Any review, whether posi-

tive or negative, will help spread the word of my book and get it into more hands. [18]I have copyrighted this book, but if you are reading this digitally, then you know that I made the choice to make the story free to read. [17]I do offer physical copies, but that's mainly for those who wish to physically hold it or display it.

[16]If you found my story helpful or at least entertaining, I do ask that you consider donating to my GoFundMe to help me take actionable steps in bringing the topic of psychological warfare into the mainstream and bring some serious victory into this spiritual battle at the same time. [15]I would be grateful for any amount, no matter how small, as I have a ton of debt to crawl my way out of due to the last couple years of court battles. [14]There's a lot I want to do with my sons and in a short amount of time as they prepare for adulthood, and your donation would help me accomplish much.

[12]You can find out about my GoFundMe campaign on X (formerly Twitter) as @HeadThundercat, where I will take this experience from the book into the Twitterverse. [11]I like games, so if you are a fan of this book, the adventure continues on X where I plan to announce my YouTube channel which highlights what others are doing in this journey we are on together of becoming stronger and kicking toxicity to the curb. [10]I will also use these channels to go over anything related to my book and answer questions. [9]I plan on hosting live videos, being interviewed, and also interviewing others. [8]I'm just going to play this by ear, but now you know my intentions. [7]Who knows, maybe I will just be deemed the crazy one and dismissed. That's ok too.

[6]I am a life coach who is trauma-informed in narcissistic abuse. [5]The ones who lived it know best. [4]I will be making appointments with me available as it is my wish to help others find healthy ways to individuate and heal from this abuse, while separating from their abusers. [3]I take great pleasure in helping people grow from these experiences. [2]I've helped several, and to continue to do so would be my dream job. [1]I want victims of this abuse to be able to get free support and I will advocate for that.

8. The Sword that Divides: The Game

[44]The Bible says to be as innocent as a dove and as wise as a snake. [43]Reading the Bible simply through the lens of narcissism and narcissistic abuse awareness took the Bible to a new level for me. [42]I am hoping that The Sword that Divides will help you build your awareness of toxicity in others and in the self so that you can review your options and pick the healthiest path forward.

[41]Like all information on manipulation tactics, after you digest it, you can choose to either avoid people who use these tactics, leverage the tactics for your own personal gain, or leverage the reverse of these tactics for your amusement and practice or as a deterrent to further manipulation. [40]This would be considered counter-manipulation. [39]Jesus responded to the Pharisees without using counter-manipulation. [38]He saw through the way they twisted words, just as your present-day run-of-the-mill narcissists with knowledge, not wisdom, of the verses in the Bible twist scripture.

[37]Counter manipulation, manipulating the manipulator, is the best way to become good at playing the narcissist's game. [36]It's how you earn your "think like a snake" badge because you must be deceiving by not sharing your knowledge of your awareness of their manipulation game. [35]If you did, you would endure the gaslighting to make you question your version of reality. [34]It's better for the narcissist to make you believe a false reality where your thoughts betray you, than for them to accept that they live in a reality where their manipulation is viewed as obvious. [33]This reality cannot exist, so you are deemed a threat to be destroyed.

[32]Practicing counter-manipulation, or at least responding to manipulation with honesty and maturity, will further condition your wisdom of the snake. [31]Simply not responding to it, will give you some protection. [30]As long as you don't lose your innocence, you will completely turn yourself into a weapon, or instrument, of the divine. [29]Did I forget to mention that counter manipulation is fun, as exhausting as it is? [28]We all make our choices in where we invest our time and energy. [27]Counter-manipulation is not something you want to stay engaged in or engage in repeatedly. [26]There's more to life than this manipulation game. [25]Once

you learn how to pull the narcissist's strings and poke and prod their ego for reaction, you will enjoy playing the game they had mastered up until today. [24]The game has a new master now, and that person is you, if you are game.

[23]Sharpen your mind and your tongue, and you can go on to a better version of life than you had before this knowledge. [22]You can enjoy the field of battle that is psychological warfare, but it's not something I would search for. [21]Enjoy your rest periods. [20]Seek out those resting periods instead. [19]There are no true victories in the battle, but it will bring increased skill. [18]To truly win the game, you would need to consciously choose not to play every time you realize you are in the middle of playing it. [17]Becoming aware of when you are playing the game is your first step towards how you choose to move forward.

[16]See the game for what it is, take the risk of deciding to play it, or back out and win it in the process. [15]For those who believe we are living in a simulation, then the simulation is this game of manipulation. [14]You choose what the point of this game is. [13b]You can play the game as a means to achieve the desires of self-gratification. [13a]You can choose to play in order to evolve an understanding of manipulation (becoming effective at countering and defending), or you can strike the other player dead and win the game by refusing to play. [12]The game ends when you say it ends. [11]In this, we all can win.

[10]What does a world where everyone is playing the game look like? [9]If you saw someone being devalued, you would be compelled to call out the person doing the devaluing right as they were in the middle of doing it. [8]Will that cause a confrontation? [8]Indeed, it might if the person doing the devaluing is a narcissist. [7]You can choose to disengage or continue to play the game while you use the opportunity to sharpen your skills in interacting with these narcissists.

[6]A great way to let someone know that you have read The Sword that Divides and are actively playing the game is to greet them with a smile and your tongue out and waving. [5]No words necessary. [4]The tongue out and wagging is you waving your sword. [3]It could be considered akin to a military salute. [2]Nothing will advertise this book better than a new way

of greeting people, and it will freak out a narcissist who understands what it means. [2]Speaking of "witch", and I spelled it like that on purpose, I could truly use your help in advertising this book. [1]Please share it with others, and whether they think me a loon or not, they will know how to navigate their own situations a little better than before.

7. Power-less to Power-full

[6]The procedure on life has not changed, but for you maybe the context for it has. I hope my book helps you put things into a clearer perspective. [5]So, what do you do with all this knowledge, this power? [4]There's a quote attributed to being from President Abraham Lincoln, [3]"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." [2]Every power-broker has an agenda, even if that agenda is to see who you truly are. [1]Without power, one cannot show the world who their broker is.

6. What About Candace?

[17]Candace owes me nothing as I have forgiven her. [16]It is my hope that she chooses to grow from this, instead of embracing the victim mentality that narcissism requires. [15]Candace could be a beacon of hope to her kind, and when I stated that I was her advocate in the letter I read to her family, this is what I meant. [14]That's her journey, not mine. [12]You think I don't know that many will rush to her side with their own agendas? [11]They will. [10]Their enabling of her will prevent her from doing her own healing work. [9]I can call this out and it still won't make a difference, because that's how all this works.

[8]One can make accurate general predictions when considering narcissistic behavior. [7]I hope she understands that I will always win as long as she is governed by her own shame. [6]The more she fights and the more people she enlists will only increase the amount of her suffering and expose those who help as toxic themselves. [5]That's her journey. [4]I stopped trying to help Candace, because she used all my attempts to help her as means to hurt me. [3]How's that for gratitude? [2]Whatever happens

next is up to her. [1]Candace has the one thing she always wanted, control over what happens next.

5. The Sword that Divides 2

[10]It's time to write those wrongs. [9]The sequel to The Sword that Divides will be written by you. [8]What? You didn't see that coming? [7]I want to read your book. [6]Words last forever, you know. [5]Writing this book became therapeutic in itself. [4]I didn't write for that reason, but it became an unexpected benefit. [3]I know a certain company that focuses on helping trauma survivors bring their stories out of them and onto the pages of their own book. [2]Will you be keeping your experience hidden, or will you be breaking your silence? [1]Silence is the biggest enabler of abuse.

4. Knock Knock

[105]Don't be afraid, but rejoice, for you have been hand-picked to be among the last of mankind. [104]God's mightiest warriors are here now alongside you in the flesh. [103]Your tests of faith await. [102]The Lord is merciful as He has me delivering this sword right into your hands at a time where the season is the most accommodating to reduce suffering from the elements. [101]Let your fear tell you that you have some demons to exorcize. [100]Feeding your fear will only worsen it. [99]You can do this yourself by starving them of what they demand.

[98]For those whose demons are plump from so much feeding, you will struggle the most. [97]Help yourself before you help others. [96]Pray for that gift of discernment. [95]Let the sensation of burning fire in your bosom lead you. [94]Yes, this is an actual physical sensation that lets you know the Holy Spirit is working through you in that very moment. [93]If you feel the burning, that means you are on the right track. [92]The sensation is mentioned in the Bible, and I've come to recognize it. [91]Sounds crazy, right? [90]You'll find out that it's not crazy when you notice it within you. [89]Maybe you can recall feeling this in certain special moments in your life or while reading this book. [88]It's a fleeting feeling that may not even be noticed until you realize that it is indeed

the Holy Spirit. [87]Use that burning sensation, it doesn't hurt, to guide you.

[86]The more you partner with the Holy Spirit, the more interesting things become. [85]I don't want to spoil anything for you, but you just might find, with enough faith, that the Holy Spirit will speak to you in a way only you understand and even guide your hands, feet, your eyes, and your words. [84]I know how crazy that sounds. [83]I would not have included it if I didn't have personal experience with it myself.

[82]There's another physical sensation I want you to familiarize yourself with. [81]I don't believe this is mentioned in the Bible. [80]There is also a slight falling sensation above the pit of your stomach that lets you know that you are on the wrong track. [79]It's like that feeling of falling like you are on a roller coaster, but a very subtle version. [78]It's thrilling, but it is also an omen of the direction it leads. [77]As time progresses and you are pursuing a righteous existence, then you will become more attuned to these physical sensations. [76]The more in alignment you become with the Holy Spirit, the more profound those physical sensations are that guide you. [75]If you don't believe me, if you don't even try, then you are passing up a very handy spiritual gift.

[74]We all have our accountability partner built in. [73]When Jesus Christ died for our sins, God embedded in all humans the Holy Spirit, God within. [72]When your faith reaches a high enough level, he will speak to you in your own tongue. [71]You can't force it. [70]It will happen when it happens. [69]Certainly, question any internal guidance you are receiving. [68]You need to be able to discern that the guidance is indeed coming from the Holy Spirit. [67]I say this because there is competition to access you. [66]Yes, when you open yourself up to allowing a force that is not you to influence you, you are at risk of being derailed by your own misinterpretations. [65]If you willingly sin, then you just may lose access to one or more of these spiritual gifts. [64]Are they lost permanently? I don't know. [63]I'd like to think that the gifts can be earned back.

[62]There's another sensation you may feel when you are in direct communication with the Holy Spirit. [61]For me, I felt a light heat sensation above my brow, from within. [60]You will know when he is with you, and you will feel his love and recognize it as divine. [59]Your body is your God-

given vessel, but you can be guided as if you had some spiritual GPS. [58]I'm serious. [57]I'm not going to make shit up after getting this far. [56]I get how crazy this sounds. [55]I'm OK with you thinking I'm crazy. [54]Eventually, enough people will have the guts to come forward and admit that what I speak is true for them too.

[53]There are more spiritual gifts like access to Christ consciousness, which is like a network. [52]The Holy Spirit speaks through those in the network, and this is how we receive updates sometimes. [51]It's not something that can be explained, and I can't guide you to it or through it. [50]This is a spiritual gift and comes from the Holy Spirit directly to you. [49]It activates when necessary and as long as you have the gift. [48]You can train yourself, with help from the Holy Spirit, to discern what you are exposed to.

[47]You can converse with the Holy Spirit, and you will find your own method for that. [46]He listens. [45]When the time is right, he will lead you to your tribe. [44]He will lead you to those in need, and he will let you know how to help them. [43]He will give you words to speak, in your own unique tongue, and with his voice, at the right time. [42]Just make sure you keep solidifying your relationship with God. [41]When the Holy Spirit needs to activate you for something, it will be obvious. [40]You will feel that slight heat coming behind your forehead in the center, this is your indicator that it's go time. [39]Trust in the Holy Spirit's timing. [38]Don't be afraid to ask for breaks. [37]He will give you one at the right time.

[36]You may receive divine gifts that will be known only to you and those who witness these gifts in action. [35]These gifts are also symbolic of your anointing. Not bad, huh? God's favor is a beautiful thing. [34]When the Holy Spirit begins to lead you, follow with your blind faith. [33]You will receive live instruction along the way. [32]This leading, and your following, will be your additional tests of faith. [31]The more you follow without deviating, the more the Holy Spirit will use you. [30]Pray and meditate along the way so you are attuned to the Holy Spirit's guidance. [29]There will be times when you will just be instructed to wait. [28]Exercise patience in those moments and do not distract yourself with technology in those moments. [27]You don't want to miss the signals the Holy Spirit sends you. [26]You may find the Holy Spirit using nature to get your attention when necessary. [25]Nothing says God is in control like a bird chirping a countdown for you before leading you in a direction. [24]This is what it may be

like for you. [23]This is how God's plan for you, for all of us, unfolds. [22]It requires fearlessness and the utmost faith and daily devotion to advancing your closeness with God. [21]This is our test.

[20]I have shared with you what I have seen for myself. [19]I'm already going to be hated. [18]I might as well be dismissed as crazy too. [17]Why would I share something so insane sounding? [16]I believe my experience with the Holy Spirit is something I was meant to share. [15]I reserve details of my experience to only those I trust, and that is a very small group. [14]Some of the things I did while under the influence of the Holy Spirit will surely come out into the open in its own time.

[13]Now that you have finished reading this book, the weight of your sin's burden will become far greater, for the Kingdom of God approaches. [12]Remember Jesus' parable of the seed that is sewn among the weeds, the rocky ground with little soil, the wayside with no soil, and the good soil? [11]Do not try to understand those who do not wish to be in the Kingdom of Heaven forever.

[10]This is not a time for convincing through words. That time has passed. [9]The action of your departure will speak for you. [8]Their pride has its price, and they will indeed pay for it with eternal suffering. This should not be your concern. [7]Your actions will speak louder than your words.

[6]If it helps, think of life as a game. [5]God sees how much we hold our heroes dear. [4]He knows why we choose the heroes we have to be our favorites. [3]He has given us all the gift of being our own heroes in this dark time of separation that lies ahead, and to show the world your fearlessness and faith through your example. [2]I think we are all about to witness some insane shit we ain't never seen before. And, if you don't believe me, then at least consider yourself entertained. [1]For the rest of you, hold onto your butts!

3. The Cult that Wasn't

[29]Heaven's Gate used their "cult" to show us what it's like to give up earthly things, and earthly aspects of ourselves, while holding on to their authenticity. [28]These people were all happy, or at least they appeared genuinely happy. [27]They had free will. [26]They were free to leave the

group and were even given money to help them get to where they wanted to go. [25]The group did not smear the names of those who left the group. [24]Most who returned to their homes or families of origin decided to return to Heaven's Gate. [23]They were labeled as cult members. [22]All real cults know that they want you to sacrifice yourself to them, and for them.

[21]Every household that has a narcissist in it is a cult of one. [20]Don't sacrifice who you are in order to make the cult leader happy. [19]Not even God asks this of you for Him. [18]Even though I have offered myself to God to be his instrument on the earth, I still get to keep my individuality. [17]You got to see my individuality all throughout this book. [16]I'm not perfect, I'm not some robot without personality or desires, but I am a child of God who has the wisdom of the snake and the innocence of a dove. [15]Now that you have read my book, you too have the wisdom of the snake. [14]It's up to you to chase the innocence of the dove. [13]If you chase it, you will possess it.

[12]Any "cult" that helps me identify my missteps in sin, while allowing me to still be myself, I will call my family. [11]That's a beautiful thing indeed. [10]The Heaven's Gate Away Team sent the world a message that would not be understood for decades that no human being on this earth is worth self-sacrificing the self for, and no God-fearing human being would ever imply or require you to sacrifice the self for their sake.

[9]I'm not talking about sacrificing your life. [8]I'm talking about sacrificing the self, who you are, for someone else. [7]Your authenticity is your self. [6]Narcissists don't have it, and so they want to take yours away. [5]Your authenticity attracts them before it eventually offends them.

[4]I have discerned, with help from the Holy Spirit, that the Heaven's Gate group was filled with the Holy Spirit. [3]The real "cult" is the household that serves the narcissist within it. [2]If you love the narcissist more than God, if a relationship with that narcissist is more important to you than your relationship with God, you shall endure a portion of the suffering that will be coming to them until you bring yourself to separate from them. [1]This is the way.

2. To the Custodians of Truth

[16]If you are the custodian of a truth that has been hidden from the people of this world, you have a choice to either side with truth and divulge it openly, or side with the one who hides the truth. [15]Your allegiances, your signed agreements to remain silent, will never grant you the mercy that divulging truth will grant you. [14]Don't fear those who will most certainly retaliate against you for releasing the truth and exercising your right to free speech. [13]Do you know of a social media platform that protects free speech? [12]I do.

[11]You do not want this burden on your shoulders forever, of being an enabler of deception. [10]Its spiritual price is beyond imagination. [9]You can either wait until it's too late or divulge and carry your own cross for speaking the truth. [8]Are you a coward? [7]You can justify withholding the truth as much as you'd like, just know that all your justifications are just more deception you are selling only to yourself. [6]The people walking this earth today and from now on deserve to know the truth about everything. [5]That starts with first exposing the known lies. [4]The truth can be deduced about many things after the lies that hide them are exposed.

[3]If people believe a lie as truth, and you are the deliverer or enabler of that deception, I can only imagine that you are benefiting from it. [2]Now would be a good time to do the right thing, even though you may stand to lose all that deception garnered for you. [1]Don't say I didn't warn you.

1. The Yokes on Us, the Jokes on Them

[23]I'm just the messenger. [22]I didn't ask to be, nor do I feel worthy of it. [21]I was selected, nonetheless, after I gave myself to God to be his instrument. [20]He molded me into his trumpet. [19]The world will never be more ready for this information. [18]What you do with it is up to you. [17]As for me, ladies and gentlemen, I'm history. [16]Our time together in these pages comes to a close. [15]Remember, don't judge a book by its cover. [14]That's how we all got in this mess. [13]Maybe we will get it right this time.

[12]Now that you are empowered with this information, if you indeed hold the Sword that Divides, much will be required of you. [11]This is a time to separate, to work on shedding your own sin and repenting, and

spending time in healing prayer and meditation, and to evolve yourself. [10]You cannot do the work if you are yoked with someone embodying the spirit of the antichrist. [9]Leave the rest of the world behind you. [8]Let the rot congregate together with their own kind. [7]Enough is enough. [6]It's time to end this, once and for all. [5]It won't be easy. [4]Be not afraid, we knew this was coming. [3]You got this. [2]Your tribe awaits. [1]Stick that tongue out so they can see you.

[0]*#SWISHSWISH*

The Sword that Divides

Blue Sky
By Kid Cudi

#BEYOUROWNHERO

For those of you who wish to say thank you with money, please visit:
www.TheSwordThatDivides.com
or
Gofund.me/b0be177f

Follow Me ;)
X (formerly Twitter): @HeadThundercat
twitter.com/HeadThundercat

On & On (feat. HAVSUN & WAYOUT)
By Cartoon, Jéja, & Daniel Levi

Firstly, I dedicate this book to my inner child, for in our struggle we have found each other and I honor you with this book, your legacy.
To my wife, Sheila, who I love and appreciate beyond words.
To the memory of my cousin Galo, who was there for me when I needed someone the most.
To the memory of my father, Mario, who instilled in me self-respect, integrity, and ferocity.
To my mother, Pat, who instilled in me patience and resiliency.
To my sisters Myriam and Heidi, who supported me through my darkest times.
To a certain Webbed warrior who has a love for morning cigars and coffee.
To Freddie Freedom, who gave me sage advice.
To my Obi-Wan Kenobi, my sage advisor.
To Robert Birdquist, who unknowingly, and on more than one occasion, sang my sadness away at MDW airport.
To the two who delivered a powerful message to me at a young age, Ed Solomon and Chris Matheson.
To the memory of Michael Ende, who wrote The Never-ending Story, and those who brought it to life in the form of a motion picture.
To the memory of Gregory Bateson (9 May 1904 – 4 July 1980) and may his work forever speak volumes.
To David Chambers who taught me how to burn pieces of shit until nothing remained.
To the Lord's angels who He assigned to help me in my battle.
To my sons Cruz and Caleb, who endured so much and did not lose faith in God.
To Todd Howard, THE Todd Howard, because I can dedicate this book to whoever the fuck I want.
To those warriors of light who helped me focus mine.
And lastly, I dedicate this book to my favorite life coach, JC, and the "girls in the office" and to all my fellow warriors - you are my armory, my war college, and my tribe. May our war cries be heard loud and clear for all time.

Oh, I almost forgot…

I want to give a very special thank you to Bobby Sanders for imparting upon me his sage advice that actions truly do speak louder than words.

Now, one last song:

In Time
By Robbie Robb featuring Marcus Wright

POST CREDITS

"When you take off those rose tinted glasses, you will notice that everything looks green."
— Michael Ray Argüello, just now ;)

Greedy
By Tate McRae
-
Illusion
By Due Lipa
-
Another Day
Kid Cudi

1. You're Still Here?!?

Beast Mode:

[37]A post-credits scene?!? In a book?!? Yup. [36]Did you miss me? [35]Don't worry, I'm in full effect on the free speech platform that is X. [34]@Head-Thundercat is my beast. [33]Can't get enough, huh? [32]Don't fret, my pet. [31]I hid a bunch of Easter Eggs to keep things interesting. [30]A community can find them all, but how many can you find on your own? [29]Don't cheat, you will rob yourself of that beautiful feeling of accomplishment and the healthy pride that comes with it. [28]Wanna catch 'em all? [27]You're going to need a Bible. [26]Happy hunting!

[25]We are all in this together, you know, you and your beast and me and mine. [24]Don't be afraid of who you are, don't concern yourself with what others think. [23]Don't let fear ever hold you back. [22]If you trust in God, if you submit yourself to His will, He will walk with you through the fire, and you will not perish but instead ascend. [21]I can attest that all my heart's desires, including those I didn't even know I had, became mine. [20]He truly knows us. [777]The peace and joy that only God can give, there's is nothing like it.

[18]Don't wait for Chapter 13 to choose your side, truth or lies. [17]Unaddressed shame only grows. [16]Do you have what it takes to come clean to those you have wronged, or will you be like my dad and take it with you to your grave? [15]Don't miss out on the blessings that brings to you and those you have sinned against. You know what you've done and to who you have done it. [14]Continue running from your shame, or face it together with your beast.

[13]Powerful Books await their next author, that's you. [12]I look forward to reading about how you broke free. I'll bring my popcorn. [11]You don't have to explain what narcissism is and the meaning behind the tools, for those are known. [10]Now you can say a lot using only a little and know that it is understood by those who understand, we are indeed many.

[9]Winter is coming. [8]I can hear it already. Do you hear it coming?

[7]Are you ready to play? I am.

[6]# EYESTOSEE [5]# EARSTOHEAR [4]# ASWORDTHATDIVIDES
[3]# ANOVATHATSULTRA [2]# DONTGETTHEMARK0666

[1]Sometimes things don't make sense until the end of the story. ;)

The Sound of Winter
By Bush

THE COVER LETTER

"To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne."
— Jesus Christ, Revelation 3:21

Death Stranding
By CHVRCHES
-
Back in the TVA
By Natalie Holt

Dear Almighty God,

If it pleases you, Father, I hereby humbly present to you my sword for your inspection. May this stellar blade strike true my enemy and bring glory and honor to your everlasting kingdom.

Your Ride-or-Die,

Tropic Thunder.

POWERFUL BOOKS

Powerful Books was born in February 2023 with the aim of empowering trauma survivors to find deep healing, find their voice, and impact others with their story. Because of that, we approach publishing in a different way. Along with the community, group coaching, and self-paced course, we provide everything a trauma survivor needs to go from blank page to published book in just 3-6 months.

Our aim is to be one of the most impactful publishing companies in the world, creating ripples of impact through the stories of inspiring trauma survivors.

For more information head on over to www.powerfulbooks.co.uk.