

**Excerpt From [Out of the Miry Clay: Freedom From Childhood Sexual Abuse](#)  
by [Linda M. Fossen](#)**

I froze as a sinister eeriness crept into the room. The only sound was the clanging of a series of mechanical gates opening and closing as I entered into the Minnesota State Prison at Stillwater. My heart was pounding in my throat. I had walked through these gates so many times before in the many years I had been visiting my husband. Improbable as it seems it was here within these infamous walls that I had met and married the man of my dreams. Normally I was excited during this ritual procedure of entering the prison for I would soon be in the arms of the man I loved. But today there was a sense of foreboding that I just could not shake. Once inside the last gate, I saw a guard with a set of handcuffs dangling from her rubber-gloved hands and I heard the disgust in her voice as she turned them over to the control center. "Don't touch these!" she shrieked, "they are contaminated!" The way she said the word "contaminated" made me feel so dirty and ashamed. Contaminated! What did she mean? As if reading my mind, she turned to me and said "with AIDS".



Suddenly I heard profanity behind me and turned. In the pale light I saw him. His face was so dark, so hollow and so full of hate. His eyes pierced right through me. I shuddered; glad for the security of the bars that separated us. There he sat in a dank holding cell. So it was he who had contaminated the handcuffs. I looked from the convict to the handcuffs to the guard and looked into her eyes. It was then that I understood that she made no distinction between us. We were all contaminated in her eyes – the scum of the earth. I knew she hated convicts and anyone who visited them.

I tried to ignore him, to remind myself that he was just another convict, one of the hundreds that I had seen over the years I had been visiting my husband in this wretched place. But his eyes beckoned me to look at him again. His face will be forever etched in my memory. I wondered to myself what could make a human being have such intense hatred. I shivered as I felt the guard's venomous hatred for both of us and it pained me but it in no way compared to his hatred. Somehow I felt and understood his hatred. There was a familiarity about it. It was like meeting a very old friend. His eyes seemed to peer into my broken soul and I just could not take the scrutiny. I quickly walked past his sinister gaze and snapped back to attention. I angrily told myself that it was ridiculous that he could understand me. After all, I was a preacher's daughter and he was a complete reprobate! How could he possibly know what was inside of me? But somehow I knew that he did. It was as if he had read my heart and saw past my phony facade. He had seen the real me –

the one that not even I understood. In a glimpse, he had exposed my pain and I knew I would never forget him. I pulled myself back to reality and put on my smile again but there was a hollowness that would thereafter haunt me. Little did I know that in the years to come, I would have to face my own toxic emotions and that I would find that same evil hatred, his kind of hatred - a hatred so intense that it would literally eat at my soul like an acid. For the time being, everyone could easily see the hatred in his evil eyes; it was much harder to see mine behind the smile. But my facade was already beginning to wear thin and it would just be a matter of time before life would disintegrate before my eyes. Soon I would find myself completely buried in the miry, mucky clay of my past. There in my slimy pit, I would find the love I had craved for a lifetime. But until then I was a ticking time bomb waiting to explode.