

INTRODUCTION

You can't save anyone from themselves. You will lose everything by attempting to play savior. You will never heal the wounded. You cannot repair the damage already done by selfish parents, vicious ex-lovers, child molesters, tyrants, poverty, depression or simple chemical imbalance.

You can't undo psychic wounds, bandage old scars, kiss away ancient bruises. You can't make the pain go away. You can't shout down the voices in other people's heads. You can't make anyone feel special. They will never feel beautiful enough, no matter how beautiful they are to you. They will never feel loved enough, no matter how much you adore them.

You will never be able to save the battered from battling back at a world they've grown to hate. They will always find a way to pick up where the bullies have left off. They will in turn become bullies. They will turn you into the enemy. They will always find a new method in which to punish themselves, thereby punishing you.

No matter how much you've convinced yourself that you have done absolutely everything in your power to prove your undying devotion, unfaltering commitment and unending encouragement, you will never be able to save a miserable bastard from their self.

The wounded will always find a way to spread their pain over a vast terrain, like an emotional tsunami that devastates the surround-

ing landscape; an ever-expanding firewall that will singe everything and everyone in its wake. The longer you love a damaged person, the more it will hurt you.

They will mock your generosity, abuse your kindness, expect your forgiveness, try your patience, sap your energy and eventually murder your soul. They will not be happy until you are as miserable as they are. Then their incredible self-loathing will be justified by the perpetuation of a cycle from which there is little recourse.

Once you enter their free fall, it will be virtually impossible to turn your back on them. You will be racked with guilt, frustrated by your own impotence and made furious for ever buying into their shit in the first place. Of course the more damaged, the more charismatic, the more brilliant. The more sexually intoxicating. The more dangerous to your own mental health.

Love is a battlefield, a land mine, a slaughterhouse, a refugee camp, a whorehouse, an insane asylum, a prison; a purgatory of abusive repetition rippling off into infinity; a twisted funhouse mirror that mimics Dante's Nine Circles of Hell. A place where the lonely souls of the eternally damned dance a wicked dervish steeped in the desperation of those determined to throw themselves deep into the pit of a flaming volcano, seeking a baptism of fire, in search of paradise, nirvana, heaven, a return to the Garden from which they have and always will be banished.

Jonathan Shaw's *Narcisa: Our Lady of Ashes* is a heartbreaking tome of diseased lust that oozes a tortured poetry of bloody sweat and sperm; a grotesquely beautiful love song steeped in the perpetual twilight horror of an unbearable trauma bond. An Odyssey in which the twin Furies of Addiction and Codependency bitch-slap you with a big dick whose own insatiable hunger attempts to feast again and again. And in return it feeds back to the victim-turned-victimizer a mad love, an overwhelming sex-magick magnet to the darkest forces of our own primordial essence.

Narcisa is mandatory reading for anyone who has ever been fucked-up, fucked over or fucked with to their very core in a fit of possession; anyone who's been blindsided by love and lust and shackled by passion to a lowlife scum-sucking junkie vampire whose devastating beauty and raw animal magnetism painted them as Dark Angel and Ancient Mystic—a purifying fire-breathing, flesh-eating demon, whose warpath and wrath against the world and everything in it, by some twisted kink in our own psyche, became the tortured path we willingly spiraled into, in search of our own redemption, in the desperate hope of saving our mirrored reflection from the bottomless pit of love's eternal negation.

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