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# **DIRTY**

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PURPOSES ONLY**



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# DIRTY

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**GRACE L. HOLDEN**



# **DIRTY**

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**“I had to endure the Pain,  
while going through the Process,  
to get the Promise.”**

-Grace



# INTRODUCTION

IF I'M SO HEALED, so much better now—especially since I've raised a family of 5 children on my own and protected them best I could with my life... If I'm glad to be alive and don't look like what I've been through... If I'm on the other side, much happier, victorious and refuse to be a victim—why do I get so angry when I hear others talk about how they have been healed?

People talk about how they have overcome; how they are doing just fine after their trauma, as if they really are... ok. Are they really being genuine and honest? Maybe they truly are and I'm just not as lucky. Who are they fooling? Who am I fooling? If I am so healed... so delivered... so brave... why do I still feel so *dirty*?

A scrub brush couldn't take away the scum, dirt, and filth I felt. Some things I remember so vividly. There are others I have forgotten and I can barely remember at all; I'm glad about that. Sometimes I remember at the strangest times... Odd things.

Days, months, and even years seemed to be wiped from my memory. I can't seem to picture it, but I feel it; the residue.

I finally got tired of being silent and living like nothing ever happened. The secret was just so terrible. I was eroding from the inside. I often doubted myself secretly and was mentally exhausted. In spite of this, I was busy, helping others or doing for others.

I wanted to escape the chaos but I couldn't. How could I let anyone know how dirty I really was (or really am)? It became easy to isolate the thoughts from my mind and never tell anyone.

I thought no one could ever see all this dirt, but it sure was gritty; slimy. I often wondered how I could be bleeding so much but couldn't see the blood. Although there was no scratch or visible cut, the wound was always wide open. To make myself happy, I would pretend nothing was ever wrong—not on purpose. It was always a normal day. I wore a fake, plastered-on smile. When the smile wasn't fake, it just wasn't full or did not originate from the inside.

Excuses seemed normal to me. Some call it coping; I knew much later that I was hiding. I was never really in a very happy place. Always watching myself, I hoped not to slip.

I was glad that people liked me and was proud that my family and friends thought I was a smart, talkative person. In their eyes, nothing could ever be wrong with me (that felt like the truth, even though it wasn't). I was glad God didn't expose me or reveal my past secrets of

how dirty I was. When it came close to coming out, I would deflect anything about myself away and look at others. I asked them, “How can I help you?” I would say, “Let’s make you better!” (Can anyone help me, fix me?). If I was so special, so smart, and such a strong girl, why did I still feel so *dirty*?

Why didn’t I cry every day? Why did I smile so much? It was as if my mind separated itself from the pain and began to protect itself. I remember that the pain was too great to bear at times until I accepted it as normal. Hidden down inside of me somewhere was the belief that I was supposed to be okay with being “rewarded” for making him happy. He worked hard to take care of me and my little sister. I was supposed to give him what he needed while my own soul was murdered. What a shame... a low down dirty shame.

The first touch happened in the car. I had to sit on daddy’s lap to learn to drive. He told me to because I was too short.





## Chapter 1

# DIRTY

IT'S NOT NORMAL TO feel like you want amnesia. I made every attempt to try and forget each day what just happened yesterday, the day before yesterday, or last week. It became normal for numb to be the new norm.

It was simple—wake up very early while it was still dark outside. Every now and then, I would look outside to see how dark it was. The moon always made me feel excited when it was full. Because there was so much light out, I thought that really mattered.

Everyone in the house was usually asleep between 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. I would eat my breakfast quickly. It was often a bowl of cereal (I would hide the bowl and spoon in my room), or I would grab a piece of fruit. I would then take a bath very, very quietly. We only had one bathroom in the entire house and it was right next to their bedroom. I always needed two baths—one at night and one in the morning. It took me years to figure out why.

I would get dressed, making sure that my shoes were right at the end of the bed. I often wanted to put them on first, but that would mess

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everything up. It is amazing to me how I could get ready for the day in 30 minutes flat.

I was never the girly girl. I never wore makeup and my hair was often messy. I was the geek at the school (or I tried to be) on purpose. I worked hard at being unpopular and often wore tattered clothing, but I didn't go unnoticed. I would compete against myself with the 30-minute race to prepare for my day. If I went over the time, I deserved to get what I got. If I beat the clock, I still must have done something wrong because I still got what I got. I never won either way.

When I was ready, I would get back get into my bed and wait... hoping the door wouldn't crack open, making that sound. It was the sound a door makes when it opens real slow and then closes even slower. A few seconds later, my heart would race, pounding fast—so hard that I was sure it could be heard from anywhere in the house.

I would listen for the footsteps, walking across the wooden floor. It took about 7 or 8 of them to reach me. I would practice breathing out of my nose. I tried so hard not to make the blanket move when I heard the sound of the door. I wondered if the blankets completely covered me from head to toe. I waited... 5 minutes. I pulled down the covers very slowly as

I moved into a new position in the bed to make it seem like I was just adjusting.

I always slept with 2 or 3 blankets. It was so hot and hard not to accidentally breathe heavily as I pretended to be asleep. I listened for the footsteps, one at a time (like a drooling/dragging sound). The walk from the door to my bed was about 10 of my footsteps. This became my weekday routine.

Weekends were very different. My 30-minute routine was worth it because sometimes it worked, though sometimes it didn't. When it worked, 20 additional minutes let me know that it was okay to slowly pull the covers down and peek out. I hoped no one would be looking back at me... waiting. No one was there! Time to get up, brush my teeth, grab my bag, kiss my baby sister, say goodbye to mom, and ask, "How was this morning?" Then I'd say, "Tell dad I love him. Love you mom," and then run out of the house.

When it didn't work, the touching was sometimes very quick—he would grab a handful of my breast. As a young girl, I was already well-endowed and very shapely so I always covered myself. It seemed like all the other kids at school didn't have breasts and thighs like I did. I hated them. Why did I get them? Was it a black girl thing? I didn't want to be touched. I didn't ask for T&T, as they taunted me at school, which

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stood for titties (chi-chis) and thighs. Sometimes I was called “Thunder Thighs.” I would always smile really big and walk faster when the boys would say it to me. Internally, I hated it because I knew that he would be grabbing them the next morning.

When he touched me, he grabbed his pants and then unzipped them. I guess he grabbed his penis because he rubbed it very hard and fast. I never wanted to see him or look at his face. The one time I did see him, I saw him roll his eyes backwards and close his eyes like he had gone somewhere. It was like a horror movie, except I had no place to run. I was silenced and couldn't scream. He wouldn't speak until he was done.

I remember the really big grin he would have on his face, like he had when he had a few beers. It was the happy smile (dad was very dark and he had pearly white teeth) he would get whenever he was done touching me. That look was always kind of scary too. He would quietly say to me, “I want to remind you how pretty you are.” Then he would talk about what a good girl I had been.

He never yelled at me, ever. Even when mom was upset with me and wanted him to discipline me (at least I think that's what she wanted), he would tell her I was a good girl. Sometimes I would hear him say, “You know how Grace is.”

Other times he would grab my legs or my inner thighs and touch my breasts—hard—not soft like the handful he would hold when he was grabbing his penis. The worst times were when his hands were in my vaginal area. If I didn't get dressed he would always put his fingers inside of me, poking me there. I would hear him moan and whisper. "That's *good*." He was always behind me. It always hurt and sometimes it would bleed. That kept happening for about 3 or 4 years. Sometimes he did way more than touching.

I partially remember when it all started. I was in my double digits and was barely 10 years old. When I wanted to learn how to drive, I thought I was great at everything so I figured I would be able to drive at 11 years old! I did a lot of things at a young age. I was the first person to work for the City of Seattle Summer Youth Program in the office at the age of 11.

It was summertime, and as promised I was learning to drive. I was in the car and sitting on his lap. He helped me get everything adjusted in the car. I remember him touching me, my breasts and my legs. He said he had to hold me up because I was so short and pulled me back so that my chest wouldn't hit the steering wheel. I thought it was cool to sit on daddy's lap while he taught me to drive. Actually, everyone thought it was cool.

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It didn't matter how long dad's day was at work. Every other day he found time to take me out to drive; I wanted to learn so badly. After about 5 or 6 times, I thought it was time for me to sit in the driver's seat by myself. Daddy didn't think so and he said I wasn't ready.

One day I was telling one of my teachers about learning to drive. She suggested that we get some phone books for me to sit on so I could see. I recall running home to tell dad all about them. He told me it wouldn't work because then my feet couldn't reach the pedal and it would be too hard to shift. He said I wasn't ready to shift. I cried about it and he said no.

Several days later when we went out, dad touched both of my thighs, opened them wider and pulled me down more strongly on him. He told me this is how we have to drive if I wanted to learn. I remember when I was on his lap that day his penis poked out through his pants. I didn't know what was going on, but it didn't feel like that all the other times I sat on his lap. It poked out each time we drove. It was weird and it hurt.

I didn't want to learn to drive anymore. I would always say I had too much homework or was too busy with chores. I started to make up all sorts of stories and excuses. I didn't want to be the good girl anymore.

I even began to get into trouble at school. School was very important to me. I never missed even one day of school and made sure that I was never sick. I had perfect attendance until I missed one day in high school. My mom had to punish me somehow for not doing the dishes right once, and school was the most important thing to me.

Besides being one of the good girls, I was very disciplined. I began to act out, disappear, and tell crazy stories at school to make up reasons why I would miss my bus to not go home on time. I would find a way to have to walk home so that it was very late when I got there. The ultimate goal was so that we couldn't drive that night or it would be too late.

It would drive my mother crazy that I seemingly was misbehaving in such an outlandish way. She said every day she knew when she woke up she was going to have to have to spank me for something and she didn't understand what was going on. I would rather take the spankings.

One day I had no choice but to drive; dad made a big fuss about it and dad never fusses at his girls. I let daddy down. It was important to always make daddy happy. Dad said I had to get back on track. Dad never disciplined me, only mom. He said in order for me to get better at driving, we have to practice. I thought that I was

already pretty good. He even said he would make driving a part of my allowance that week. I was a big saver and always had money to buy gifts for my family and friends. I thought most of the time I got money was because I always did my chores and got good grades; now it was when we went driving.

It's very hard to believe that at almost 12 years old, I knew I was never a quitter. I didn't understand completely, but the knowledge I did have at that age was something inherent within me—like a gift given to me. I wanted to drive so badly, I just understand the “other” stuff. At the end of the day, the decision was made for me. Back to driving lessons. I drove again. We drove again, and it happened again

After several weeks of “that,” the same as before (what appeared to be the new normal), I learned to drive and was able to do so on my own. He finally had to let me drive on my own so then the mornings became the new driving lane. I guess touching me from the passenger seat was obviously not okay—I mean, he just didn't really have a reason to do it, I suppose. I never thought anything of it.

The excitement of driving on my own was so cool. I was working a job at 11 and 12 years old. It was so amazing and always having money in my pocket was so great.



Dad was a gardener. He was always out in his garden growing greens, tomatoes, cabbage all sorts of things. Of course, I always had to help.

Mom was not up early, just me and dad. My sister seemed to always be asleep. The early mornings became daddy and daughter time. Daddy would come get me before the sun came up at the same time most mornings. It was almost like I had a body clock built in because I felt it when he was coming.

I went to sleep quickly at night so I could be up before him and wait. I could hear everything. It was always the same before we went to the garden. He felt on me and touched me like he was supposed to. He always acted like it was normal.

He wanted to touch me in my bedroom. I don't remember how long he touched just my breasts before he began going into my panties. He used to just touch my private area and then he put his fingers inside of me. It hurt and it was red in my panties. I always had to take a bath afterwards.

I was almost 13 when I started my monthly cycle. He never touched me down there when I was on my cycle and he always knew when it was. He still felt on me and rubbed on my breasts often. It was just before the second summer of me working in the SSYEP (Seattle Summer Youth Employment Program) when

the mornings turned into me hiding under the covers.

Not too long after the touching in my panties with clothes on, daddy began to get in the bed with me, moving up and down on me; moaning and groaning. He then took off his pants and would rub on his penis and look at me and say, “Girl, you sure are pretty.” I can’t remember how many times he did that, but I remember when he put his penis on me and it touched me and he kept touching himself. This happened for several months.

I felt like crying. I didn’t want to upset him so I didn’t cry, but it hurt so badly. His fingers begin to go in and out of me. At first, it was just a little bit. I couldn’t understand why he was hurting me. I would try to think of something else, but didn’t know what to think about. It was strange to me that I was so sore down there. I started to get used to the pain.

He finally did it—put his penis inside of me. I cried all the time after he left. After the door shut, we had to go to work outside or I had to go to school. Nothing he said made me feel good, it was just normal.

What was it like, to have a penis inside of me at least once or twice per week? Sometimes it was more. Most of the actual penetration I don’t think about... but I do know I hated the sound of the door when it was opening slowly.

I hated 4:00 and 5:00 in the morning, but I didn't hate daddy. I was just scared all the time. I hoped the new plan I made up—the getting up early plan—would work and he would stop. We already read how that went.

One day I just began to look forward to it and find a way to like it. I was supposed to like it, right? That *is* why he did it, right?

I remember when it started to be okay. When it finally stopped hurting, I was almost 15. It actually felt good. It all felt good—the touch, the looks, the attention, the affirmation... my daddy loved me. He made sure he told me how good I was. He always gave me money and he told me I was smart. Then the mornings began. Before school started, he would come into my room before he went to work. He reminded me that I was a good girl and pretty. He told me to be good at school. I would respond with a conversation. He just smiled.

Maybe I was less aware of how scared I was. As time went on, I became a talker even though I was often scared. Many times, I didn't know what to say. I started to ask him questions and he told me never tell anyone our secret—it was just for me and him. It would really upset him if I told anyone.

He said I was special. He said I made him feel good. I remember asking him if I could tell mom. The look on his face was horrifying, like

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the look I would see every now and then when he was inside of me and I would catch a glimpse of his face.

Daddy blew his lid and grabbed my mouth really hard. Every grab and move was rough; he held me down very forcefully. He was so strong! I couldn't move, even a little bit. If I tried, he pushed inside me even harder. He told me that this is what he will do if I can't keep my mouth shut. He was furious and told me how dumb I was for my opening my big mouth. *Why would I tell mom? He takes care of me.*

He thought I was smart and knew better. I really messed up. That time often haunts my memories the most because that's when the nightmares became regular. I remember the first time more than all the other times he was inside of me. The hurt I felt was like a punch in my stomach. That feeling eventually became normal. If I said anything wrong or asked if I could tell my friend, he did it again. Sometimes he did it just because.

It was so important for me to make mom and daddy happy—especially daddy. I made a promise to myself to never get anything other than an A grade and to always keep the house the way mom liked it.

Even though I tried really hard, I still managed to get in trouble for something. If it wasn't talking too much in class or at home, it

was my parents thinking I was picking on my sister or doing something “grown.”

Mom had so many sayings it was hard to keep up; but there was one saying or rule I remember clearly. Mom used to always say, “What happens in this house stays in this house.” I’d better not be at school running my mouth about everything. She didn’t know about our little secret but I felt that no matter what secrets there were, mine were meant to be kept. I became a chamber of secrets.

I now realize that I coped with everything in odd ways. At least I didn’t know that was what I was doing. I stayed busy because I felt like I was praised more than I was when I was touched; I really wasn’t.

Talking was a really good outlet for me, so I found many subjects to discuss. I loved talking and I needed to be heard—for of all sorts of reasons. Talking all day long helped me go to sleep right away at night. I had nightmares all the time, but I only remembered them for a few minutes after waking up. I think it was hard to remember them because I had to beat the door like I was in a race... no time to remember a nightmare when it was getting ready to happen.

Get up, Grace! It was just another average day. No one to talk *to*; only people to talk *at*.

I didn’t know how to talk to God or really know who He was until I was almost 13 years

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old. At that age, I couldn't control where I worshipped, or even if I could. It was my older sister who introduced me to God. Going to church just wasn't something we did—much less talking to God. What was normal for me was to feel and be *dirty*.

# REVEALED

The truth about the truth is, I know you. I may not have ever met you. I may not have lived just like you, but I know you. I know the thoughts you have thought or tried not to think. I know the agony you may have endured. I know you had no voice, I know the pain—how it was intense and then it became numb. I know what realizing being *dirty* is like.

I have survived all types of abuse including molestation, domestic violence, trauma, bullying, sex-trafficking, rape, and self-inflicted sabotage of my body. Then there was my son and what he endured—his rape. I didn't protect him, not when a cousin had free reign to take him and penetrate him with his male parts before he was 10 years old. I became Momma who didn't protect. Part of me deteriorated from the inside out from that, and so I allowed him to have anything he wanted and helped give him a sense of entitlement that I was responsible for.

## **My Mental Anguish**

This is how I talked to myself and sabotaged myself when I was lonely or alone: I told myself I wanted him. I wanted to feel him, I wanted to hear him tell me I was pretty. I needed to hear him tell me that he loved me or how smart I was. I longed for my dad secretly and hated him secretly too.

## **What I Thought Was Good for Me**

The cost of self-deception often left me feeling inadequate; like I was seriously lacking in most areas of my life. I can't imagine how I even made it through college with all of the self-destructive behavior I picked up. Partying, meeting strange men after parties, and getting paid to be a date. I gave up on myself to get the attention I desired. However, no one could measure up to the attention my dad gave—how he caressed me, praised me and eventually I didn't think it hurt as much.

I became a target for sexual failures—one after the next. It wasn't a large number, but it was the same consistent ones who requested me. Sleeping with the enemy, I went back over and over again to men I knew had no good intentions.



I decided being a dancer and flaunting myself was a form of freedom. I didn't mind being bought... it was normal and seemed easy. Often, it was fun. It wasn't fun when they took advantage of me and were rough with me, but that was one of the costs of self-deception. I thought I was to blame! It was:

My mouth  
My walk  
My swag  
Me! The blame! Dirty.

It was just me. Daddy didn't have anybody else. He just did this to me and now he is gone and still controlled me from the grave.

I discovered a riveting example of death. Whether a myth or true, this story has been shared throughout the years. Pre-dating Roman law—punishment to murderers. It was once said that punishment for murdering another was one of the most severe punishments of the law. The dead body of the victim was to be literally bound with chains to the murderer and placed face-to-face, hand-to-hand, and toe-to-toe. This meant the killer would spend the rest of his life chained to the body; a decaying corpse.

In warmer environments, the decomposition process accelerated. Think about the murderer trying to eat food for survival or attempting to

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function normally. This must have been almost impossible with a wrapped up, stiff, rigid corpse in front of you with rigor mortis setting in. How could anyone function, eat, sit, or sleep with death dominating every waking moment of their lives? There would have been no escaping the constant reminder of the crime committed. The condemned may have been so tormented that he would have likely lost his mind if he didn't first die from inhaling the putrefaction that emanates from a dead body.

Imagine this is correlation to how victims handle abusers or molesters. We bind ourselves to the very people that killed us and attempted to take our souls. They begin to stink so badly that we begin to decompose as they release their toxins into us. We tie them to us like we need them. We can't eat right, sleep properly, or have enjoyment in life because we are dragging around our killer with all of the toxins and dirt they left behind. Dirty stinks.

It compromises our senses. We forget the burden we carry can't be revealed because we are covered in it like pigs waddling in a pigpen. The mess dries up all over us.

Cut off the rope! Break the chain! Let go of the dirt being dragged around. Let the story you once hid be revealed. Blame no more.

What will be exposed after the dirt has been removed can be good for us. It may be a

humbling experience. There is an interesting characteristic about dirt—when it's all dried up, cleaning it off can work just like an exfoliant.

Let's not put the pain we have in the same place where hope, joy, peace, goodness, success, freedom, or even God is supposed to be. All of it wants to dwell there together, but it can't. God can't get in because there is no room! Make space for what was for you in the first place. Failure, discouragement, depression, insecurity, and evil like dirty places, dead corpses and dirty houses. That's why negativity has free reign to taunt us in our minds; all of that is fighting to coexist.

Don't let your time or important moments slip away. I was told once that opportunity is like a bald-headed man—once it runs past you and you try to grab its head to get it back, you can't. The key is not to let it pass you. Clean out the dirt from your mind; your mental home.

# CONCLUSION

Daddy, you may have played the game unfairly. You threw fields of dirt on top me and the scum all over me seemed impossible to get off. The door and the footsteps across the floor, are all reminders of when I wasn't the free, purpose-driven Grace. I was the innocent, unprotected child whose soul was in the process of being stolen from me. I was still dirty due to the residue I let stay with me for years.

Now aware, what's next? **Dirty** is awareness and revelation; the foundation for the next. The next is the worldwide movement **DADS—Dads Against Dirty**.

**Dirty's** purpose:

- **Dirty** exposes and brings awareness to sexual, mental, physical abuse, and social injustice.
- **Dirty** un-sweeps what gets swept under the rug so often in families.
- **Dirty** brings awareness to violence of many sorts and calls to action a **STOP**.

- **Dirty** speaks to the accuser (s)
- **Dirty** speaks to false love and perpetual love abuse.
- **Dirty** is the repository for your tears.
- **Dirty** brings hope to all (boys, girls, adult women, sex-trafficked people, social injustice victim and mistreatment).
- **Dirty** is led by **DADS Dad's Against Dirty** and **ALL** (women and children) who stand against violence.
- A person against **Dirty** can be anyone who has lived through violence, knows someone who has, and believes the violence should STOP.

**Dirty/DADS** is and will be the world's largest movement against Violence

**Dirty/DADS** stands for stopping the violence (STV's).

**Dirty/DADS** is the voice for the community, led by men; co-led by women and families.

**Dirty/DADS** brings awareness to the residue so many carry around from violent acts and provides resources for help, advocates for hurting girls, women, boys, or men seeking a safe place to release.

**Dirty /DADS** is awareness.

**Dirty/DADS** and **FADS** (Families Against Dirty).

This movement will help people know the difference between **Dirty Dad** and show what a **Divine Dad** looks like.

# AN INTRODUCTION TO “DARK”

When I started to write this book, it was *Dark: The Journey to Dirty*. I was divorced and I felt like people would reject me. I was paralyzed 95 percent of the time writing this book. I couldn't write, function or hardly think about most hindrances. Life wasn't balanced. I was in and out of relationships. I was in a dark place. So much happened in the dark and every bit will be unveiled in *Dark*.

The delivery of *Dirty* was like intense labor without pain medication. The delivery of *Dark* will be like having been drugged up prior to delivery.

In the dark, there is no light; it's cold, it's hot, it's lonely, it's desolate. It felt like the darkest place of dark! There was often no proper armor in the dark. I was unguarded in the dark. There was no need to surrender... it was dark. I was trapped in the dark while being tested in the flesh. Death was in the dark, but this was my real life. I had finally reached the point when I could recognize, embrace, handle, and finally deal with *Dirty*. It is now the time to talk about *Dark*.