



The Weight of Shadows

Alison Strobel

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In *The Weight of Shadows*, by Alison Strobel, after a difficult childhood, Kim has built a successful life for herself ... but she'd leave it all if it meant being rid of the guilt she harbors over a tragic mistake she made years ago. When she meets Rick, she finds everything she needs—including a way to pay for her sins every time he hits her. Kim and Rick's new neighbor, Joshua, knows more than Kim realizes about Rick, but Joshua has battles of his own to fight. Soon to intersect Kim's and Rick's lives is Debbie, who has saved countless women from abuse through the shelter she runs, but Debbie might be as desperate for love as the women she serves. Meanwhile, as Rick's wrath extends to their baby, Kim must decide if her penance is more important than protecting that innocent life—and if she should dare leave Rick when he has the power to bring her hidden crime to light.

The Weight of Shadows Details

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From Reader Review The Weight of Shadows for online ebook

Nora St Laurent says

I just finished the last page of Alison Strobel Morrow's new book and I'm glad I received a review copy of this realistic, haunting look at how each choice we make in life could take us on an unexpected journey. This author shows how easy it is to get in the middle of a bad situation that might seem impossible to get out of.

Alison paints an unnerving but hopeful picture of a young orphan girl desperate for love. Kim hasn't done anything about this deep desire because she's kept busy going to school to be a hair dresser and then found a job in a salon. But one night at her roommates' party, she notices a guy. He notices her too! She can't believe her luck and on her birthday of all days. She hadn't been looking for love, yet here it was! What a nice guy; they had so much to talk about - he even grew up in foster care like she did! What are the chances of that? Kim has finally found someone who gets her and someone she can be herself with.

Alison has another story line going in contrast to Kim's - its Joshua's story. He's a young man who's been in a healthy, loving relationship with his wife, but has lost her to cancer. He's been a Christian for awhile and can't understand why God has taken his young wife and left him to raise their pre-school daughter alone.

The author goes back and forth from Joshua to Kim's story and you wonder if their lives will intersect. Then Joshua moves really close to Kim and the chances of them meeting are great! Both Kim and Joshua's lives have been turned upside down and each is struggling to get their feet on solid ground.

This author writes a very sensitive, thought-provoking book about how women find themselves in the middle of an abusive relationship - one that didn't start out that way. They had fun times. They had hopes and dreams for a happy life...then things turned dark. Little by little the relationship changed until they felt trapped. Then afraid and couldn't see a way out.

Alison also reveals some of the lies that women like Kim believe about themselves that keep them in these relationships. Kim does realize that this is not right and then justifies staying because of what she believes about herself. She has a secret, she's done a horrible thing, and she tells herself that this is the punishment for her terrible deed.

The author talks about statics of abused woman in the book; not all women who are abused come from the foster care system. Abuse happens all over the world and across all different class structures and social statuses. The abusers and manipulators have all different jobs and degrees; they are very convincing and often times will make the woman feel like she's stupid, crazy, clumsy and/or she imagined the things that happened to her. The victim starts to believe these lies and works harder at pleasing the abuser so the pain will stop. They work harder to become perfect but they never arrive.

Kim highlights the aspects about her relationship with Rick that are healthy for her girls group, "...things they should be looking for in a boyfriend. Like how Rick watched out for her, always wanting to know where she was going and when she'd be back, so he'd figure out sooner if something had happened to her. Or how he tried to make life easier, in little ways - like how he ordered for her in restaurants or told her what to make for dinner so she didn't have to come up with something on her own." All these things were thoughtful at first but quickly turn into ways of controlling Kim's every move. She rapidly becomes trapped.

This was not a pie in the sky walk with God. It's gut wrenchingly honest and I like that about this story and the characters. I was thrilled when I heard Alison had a new book out but hesitated when I heard of the

subject matter. I was afraid of where this book might take the reader. I was drawn into the story by the main character, Kim. She was likeable, and a little different than the average bear. I'm happy that the violence in the book is not graphic or drawn out but definitely revealing and enough to show you what goes on behind closed doors and beyond in an abusive relationship. Some of the self talk and the lies Kim believed about herself I found chilling.

I also enjoyed Joshua and his daughter, Maddie. She was adorable and Joshua was a good dad, sticking to his boundaries with his in-laws, who want to draw him into an unhealthy relationship. He sticks to what is right for everyone involved. Joshua realizes that his in-laws are not Christians and they were blaming him for their daughters' death and his lack of care for her. They felt that if Joshua had taken better care their daughter, she would be alive. They believed their own lies. How could he walk in his faith and not enter into an abusive relationship with his in-laws? I liked this about Joshua and the fact that Alison had included this struggle in the book. It contradicted the unhealthy relationship Kim found herself in.

I think this book gives an honest glimpse into a woman's choices that get her into, and keep her in, an abusive situation. I have to say this is definitely not the book I expected it to be...for that I am thankful. It wasn't graphic and depressing. Instead, the book showed ways to recognize someone being abused, how to offer help and how to set healthy boundaries with people, as in Joshua's case. Alison helps the reader see how these abusive relationships start and how women can get help to leave. There is healing and love for their weary soul! Healing takes time and happens on so many levels. This is a powerfully moving story of hurt, hope, healing and forgiveness. It's a tough subject matter but well worth the read.

Disclosure of Material Connection:

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising"

The Book Club Network www.bookfun.org

The Book Club Network blog www.psalms16.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine www.bookfunmagazine.com

Athena Thomas says

how life twists and turns ... the choices we make AND the choices made for us that can shape our path ... finding the true love of Christ to help you move forward -- wonderful story of forgiveness

Debra Slonek says

Powerful, well written book which followed three main characters, all with issues of their own. Kim, a product of the foster care system, had been practicing self-harm, and was led into a physically and mentally abusive relationship. Josh, a young, grieving widower, was putting his life back together, while raising a young daughter and dealing with difficult in-laws. Debbie was running a busy, women's shelter, was overworked and needed more in her life. The descriptive, gritty realism worked well in this book. The storyline led to all three lives intertwining and set all three characters on a road to healing and wholeness.

Each of the main characters were brought out of their hurting shadows and into healing light. Reading this book has given me insight into the shadowed world of abuse.

Jerry says

An emotionally charged drama that had me hooked from the beginning.

Nancy says

The book opens with Kim, the protagonist, attending a party in her apartment. Coincidentally, it is her birthday but nobody knows. Kim grew up foster care and has never celebrated birthdays. Enter Rick, handsome, edgy, charming, and also grew up between foster care and a physically abusive father.

Meanwhile, Joshua, a recently widowed father of 4 year old Maddie, is looking over medical bills and deciding to sell his house in order to pay bills. Recently pink slipped from his job, Joshua and Maddie sell their house, full of memories, and buying a condo.

Debbie is a psychologist at Safe in His Arms women's shelter. She's just been dumped and eating ice cream at the beginning of the book.

Eventually, all of these characters' paths intersect as their stories develop and histories are revealed.

Strobel is an excellent writer. She develops each character to the point where they become real to the reader. She weaves a story of abuse, grief, forgiveness, and grace. The book is strong in heart and writing. The story is different than the usual Christian style book. The issues are real and the conclusion a continuation of the journey.

I loved the book. I am very rarely impressed by Christian writers. They are very nearly always strong on ideals, heart, and good intentions but rarely does the story and characters resonate. This one is amazing. Strongly recommend.

Tiffanie says

Overall good book; story is about a woman who grew up in foster care bounced from family to family and has ended up with a roommate basically renting a room from her. They're not friends and have nothing in common but at one of the parties she throws she meets a guy who seems to be wonderful. 3 months after dating he asks her to move in to his apt with him. Then he starts to beat her, rarely at first making it seem more like an accident. Then she ends up pregnant but he still continues to beat her.

Then there's Josh who lost his wife to cancer over a yr ago and has one daughter. He gets laid off from his job and his in-laws are just awful to him. Always putting down the way he parents say they could raise his daughter better.

HE sells his house to help cover costs and moves into the apt next to Kim who's being abused.

He overhears all the abuse and doesn't know what to do. Til he meets a woman who works at Safe in His Arms

woman shelter and gives him a job as an accountant. He starts telling her about his neighbor and she tells him all he can do is offer the help. She has to decide to leave on her own.

One day Kim asks for his help after Rick starts hitting their newborn baby. He gets her to safety in his arms where things start to look up. But she turns herself into the police for a crime she committed over 7 yrs ago.

Renee says

If you're in the mood for a light, fluffy read you probably won't want to read this book but if you want a dramatic, gritty, realistic book, pick up *The Weight of Shadows*! This is my first encounter with author Alison Strobel's work and I'm really glad that I had the opportunity to "meet" her through blogging and reading her book.

As a person who knows someone who is currently dealing with a domestic violence I can say that Alison's portrayal of Kim's story is very authentic. I couldn't help but cry for Kim and Anne and their abusive situation. The secondary characters are very well written too. Even though they are trying to help Kim, they have problems of their own, which in my opinion, makes this story even more true to life.

The story grabbed and held my attention so much so that I could barely put it down and considering that it isn't a romance or historical book, that's a miracle! I look forward to reading what Alison pens next.

I received my free review copy from the publisher in exchange for my honest review and participation in the tour.

Laura says

After living in foster care most of her life, bouncing from home to home, Kim had acquired a beautician's license, working in a salon with several other women. She feels successful other than not being married and raising a family.

Rick grew up in foster care for a few years, then lived the balance of his life with his father, who was an alcoholic and abusive.

Kim and Rick meet and quickly move in together, getting pregnant early on despite using precautions. Rick's abuse starts early in their relationship, and continues throughout the pregnancy, but Kim stayed because she felt she deserved the abuse. Why?

Joshua and his daughter lived in the same complex as Kim and Rick, after selling his house to make ends meet after losing his job and wife. He has issues with his in-laws trying to get custody of his daughter, so he tries to lay low despite hearing the abuse next door--deciding when or if he should get involved.

Debbie runs the women's shelter in town, and has relationship issues all her own. But a little romance seeps in when she least expects it.

I, personally, grew up with brothers, so I learned early to stand up for myself. Had one boyfriend who I now know became an abuser, but because I didn't say the right thing (giving up my girlfriend's friendship for him), it was 'Adios.' Little did I know that that was a telltale sign of an abuser. So I've had a difficult time

understanding why abused women stayed with abusive men, married or not.

Alison openly yet sensitively dissects the mindset of abused women to understand why they stay in the relationship until they finally decide to get out before being killed. She reveals their perspectives of themselves, their views of love and attention, denial of what's happening, and their desires to be loved and accepted. She describes how the woman's psyche needs healing, restoration and redemption. Alison also displays the behaviors of an abuser and how he controls the woman in his life. It's an eye-opening experience, realizing it's a difficult situation to diffuse.

If you know of someone in this position, this could be the book to help them come to grips with the reality of their situation and what to do. Please take the time to grab it and read it, and possibly pass on to a friend in need.

This book was supplied by Alison through her publisher, Zondervan, in exchange for my honest review.

Kim says

2.5 stars, couldn't stand Josh's in-laws.

Jennifer says

From My Blog...[return][return]The Weight of Shadows by Alison Strobel is a beautiful and heart-wrenching novel about the redemptive powers of forgiveness and love. Kim meets Rick at a party, the first guy she has ever dated and falls in love and it is not too long before he becomes abusive, yet Kim believes she deserves the abuse. Debbie Truman runs the Safe In His Arms shelter for women of domestic abuse. While she helps women every day she is unable to unburden herself of the guilt she clings to surrounding her sister. Joshua Miller is dealing with his wife's recent death, raising their 4-year-old daughter by himself, losing his job and now his in-laws want to prove him unfit and gain custody of their granddaughter. Strobel writes a deeply moving novel, rich in character description, depth, and imagery. The reader will feel rather close to Kim, Debbie, and Joshua as they each struggle with their own personal demons. While The Weight of Shadows is a Christian novel, it is not in your face preachy, rather is an extraordinarily beautiful and at times heart-breaking story of three average people caught up in circumstances they would prefer not to be in as they do the best they can to overcome their situations. Strobel appears to have done her research as scenes are very detailed and the emotions of the victims are very realistic. I truly enjoyed reading this book and I would highly recommend The Weight of Shadows to any adult or discussion group.

Tina Viscusi says

This book was great- pulled me in and kept me reading and I especially liked how the author pulled all the main characters together in a seemingly karmic way. The God references were reassuring as well.

I liked the book up til the end- the ending was flat and left you wondering what the hell just happened and there was no resolution of everyone's story line- just Kim's.

I would definitely read more from this author based on what I read in this book.

Christy Lockstein says

The Weight of Shadows by Alison Strobel is a moving novel about the power of secrets. Kim has been running from a terrible night seven years ago while trying to build a life for herself after a childhood in foster care. Rick seems to be everything she's ever wanted, but their relationship moves so fast, they've moved in together after only three months. Their neighbor Joshua is starting over with his four-year-old daughter Maddie after the death of his wife from breast cancer. After the loss of his job, he's forced to sell their home and move into the apartment next to Rick & Kim because of the mountainous medical bills. What he hears through the thin walls between their apartments will threaten his life with Maddie. Debbie hasn't been able to have a healthy relationship with a man since the death of her sister Gina. Instead she's thrown all of her energy into working at a women's shelter, trying to rescue them after failing Gina. Strobel, the author of *Violette Between*, has a unique voice in Christian fiction. She takes three very disparate voices who each have a tragic past and brings them together in a way that will offer true healing. She accurately depicts a woman trapped in an abusive relationship with compassion and respect. As the violence escalates, so does the tension until it's nearly impossible to put the book down. (I stayed up until 2 am to finish it!) Beautifully written with a message of hope, Strobel is a writer to watch.

Libby says

An excellently written book. It explores the subject of domestic violence. Three different stories are woven and then they come together in an unexpected way. I highly recommend it. One of the things that I really liked about the book is the fact that the author brought out that women from all different walks of life can become victims of domestic violence. Because the breaking down happens gradually and warning signs early on in the relationship aren't recognized or are brushed aside. And often the abusers when they aren't abusing can be extremely charming people . This book focuses on women as victims but I know that there are men that are victims as well. I love it when fiction explores hard issues, deep issues, heart issues. Another fiction book I would highly recommend that is along the same genre is "Wings of Glass".

Theresa says

"The Weight of Shadows" is an extremely well written book about domestic violence and abuse. Alison delicately, but truthfully, handles the subject and makes this a book that every female should read. Although it has some disturbing situations, this one is going to be required reading for my daughter. Abuse is not always seen by the person involved until it's too late, and this book points out those signs, while incorporating them into a gripping story.

This is a book I couldn't put down. It was painful to read at times, but still one that kept me captive until the very end. To deal with domestic abuse and to be able to crawl inside the head of a victim is a gift. Alison was blessed with that gift. Kim, the main character, felt real - too real. Many times, I wanted to save her, to shake her and have her wake up. It was difficult at times to sit behind the pages of the book, knowing that there was nothing I could do except go along for the ride. Hmmm - just like the real thing.... Watching an abused woman until she decides it is time to get help.

I highly recommend this book to all females. I would suggest that parents read this before giving it to their teens. It is full of information that should be discussed between parents and their children. Knowing that abuse is not the victim's fault and that they never deserve it, may just prevent a potential problem in their future.

Parental note: Contains domestic abuse, violence, cutting, discussions of women wanting to kill their husbands and living together outside of marriage.

Shirley Conley says

What a story the characters so real you feel like you know them. The story of guilt, abuse, faith and grace. You want to know more about these people and the long term outcomes. Loved it.
