

A black and white photograph of a woman with long, straight dark hair, wearing a light-colored, sleeveless dress. She is sitting on a dark horizontal ledge, leaning forward with her head bowed. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky with a bright light source behind the clouds. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

PRISONER  
WITHIN

JENNY FORD

# Prisoner Within

Jenny Ford

## **Prisoner Within**

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## **Acknowledgements**

A big thank you to my family and friends for being there and for believing in me as I continue on my journey.

Thank you too, to you the reader, for your continued support. I would love to know your thoughts about Amy's story as I know it will resonate with a lot of you! Please feel free to leave your feedback/reviews on my website or at the retailer that you purchased this book from. Alternatively you can email me.

[www.jennyfordauthor.com](http://www.jennyfordauthor.com)

[info@jennyfordauthor.com](mailto:info@jennyfordauthor.com)

## **About The Author**



After a dramatic career change when diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, Jenny's life took a complete turnaround. Forced to give up her very successful business as a beauty therapist in her home town of Hertfordshire, in the UK, Jenny had no idea that she would end up becoming an author.

Jenny says: 'No one was more surprised than me when I wrote my first book. I had no interest in writing at all, not even as a child. I literally just fell into it and it has now become my passion. I guess you could say I was Divinely Guided!

Through the process of writing, I have been extremely blessed to have written several books and even adapted this book into a play. I am a strong believer that everything happens for a reason and truly believe that without the knocks and challenges, I certainly wouldn't be where I am today! The main focus of my writing is positivity - I love writing things that make people smile. I am continually inspired and gain motivation by the different people that I meet every day, which drives me to be the best that I can.'

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# **Chapter 1**

As a nine year old boy, Josh lived with his mum, dad and five year old sister, Amy. Things were not the best at home – dad would drink and gamble a lot whilst mum tried to keep everything together. Sometimes things would be very tense in the house, but there were days when everything would be great.

Josh was a quiet boy and very protective of his little sister, Amy. He never had many friends, but instead liked to keep himself to himself. You could say that Amy was his best friend. They were always together, having fun, making each other laugh – that's when they were both at their happiest.

One evening after dinner, dad came home drunk and in a really bad mood. He had been gambling again and by all accounts had lost a lot of money. Mum would get really cross with him.

“Why do you do this all the time? We don't have enough money as it is. How am I supposed to pay the bills and put food on the table?”

Dad never liked it when mum stood up to him. He was one of those men who liked to be controlling of everyone and everything.

“Be quiet woman!” he would shout. “And go and get my dinner!”

“Get it yourself,” mum would shout back at him.

Well that was it, the arguing would start. Dad would call mum lots of nasty names and sometimes even hit her. Josh and Amy would just sit in their room listening to it all. It was

horrible.

“Don't worry Amy,” Josh would say, “one day I will save enough money and take you and mum away from all of this, I promise.”

Next morning, Josh and Amy were up early for school. Mum would get their breakfast and make packed lunches.

“Morning everyone,” came this quiet voice, as dad walked into the room.

“Morning dad,” said Josh and Amy together.

“Children, go and brush your teeth, we don't want to be late for school,” mum would say.

“What's the rush? It would be nice to sit and talk to my children once in a while.”

“Talk with them? I'm surprised you can make sense of anything after the state you always come home in. You should be ashamed of yourself, letting the children see you like that all the time.”

Dad walked out, muttering under his breath.

Mum took Josh and Amy to school. It wasn't far, a ten minute walk from home.

“See you later,” as she kissed them both goodbye at the school gate.

Josh and Amy liked school. They didn't have many friends but enjoyed being with the ones that they did have. Josh only had two more weeks left until he started secondary school.

“Josh, are you scared about going to big school?” asked Amy.

“I am a bit, but also excited at the same time.”

“I’m really going to miss you Josh.”

“You’ll be fine Amy. It won’t be long until we’ll be at the same school again.”

“That’s years away!”

Josh laughed.

Two weeks flew by and it was Josh’s first day at his new school.

“How are you feeling son?” asked mum.

“A bit nervous.”

“Just go and have fun, make lots of new friends.”

After a few weeks, Josh had settled in well. He didn’t really go out of his way to make friends, but there was one boy in particular whom he connected with and they became good friends. Todd was a quiet boy and like Josh, preferred to keep himself to himself. They spent lots of time together much to Amy’s disapproval!

“You never spend time with me anymore Josh, you’re always with Todd!”

“Don’t be silly Amy, I spend lots of time with you. When you go to big school you’ll make new friends as well. Just because I’m friends with Todd doesn’t mean you’re not important to me anymore. You’ll always be my little sis and my best friend. I’ll always be here for you, squirt!” as Josh rubbed the top of her

head. Amy smiled.

Things seemed to be a bit more relaxed at home lately. Dad wasn't drinking and gambling as much which meant fewer arguments. For the first time in years there was a sense of peace!

It was coming up to Josh and Amy's birthday. As they were so close together, mum thought it would be nice for them to have a few friends round for a small party, now that things seemed more settled.

Amy was so excited. Josh, being that bit older, was more laid back about it although he was just as excited really.

“So who’s coming to your party then?” mum asked Amy.

“I’ve invited Jackie, Sandra and Molly. Josh has invited Todd, James and Roger.”

“Thank you Amy,” laughed Josh, “I can speak for myself!”

It was the day of the party. Mum had made a real effort to make things look nice. There were balloons, party hats, games and lots of yummy food, and of course, a birthday cake.

Amy waited eagerly, looking out of the window for her friends to arrive. Josh hung back a bit, pretending not to be too eager.

“They’re here,” screeched Amy, rushing to open the door.

“Amy, calm down,” mum laughed.

The party had been going for two hours. Josh and Amy were having so much fun with their friends. There had not been that much laughter in the house for a very long time. Then dad

arrived home.

“Hello children, are you all having a good time?”

“Yes thank you!”

They were enjoying themselves too much to notice that dad was drunk.

*No, not today*, thought mum.

Thankfully, it was the end of the party and time for the children to leave.

“Thank you for our presents, hope you had a good time,” said Josh and Amy in unison.

“Where's everyone going?” slurred dad. “Come dance with me,” as he grabbed mum by the arm. Mum shrugged away from him. “I said dance with me!”

Josh and Amy could see where this was going. They got their presents and went to their bedroom.

“How could you, today of all days? You knew Josh and Amy were having a party, you couldn't leave it just for one day.”

“Don't go on woman, I've only had a couple of drinks.”

“Don't go on? It's your children's birthdays. For the first time since, well never, they have friends over for a party and you walk in drunk.”

“I am not drunk!” he shouted, getting a beer out of his bag.

“Oh no you don't.”

Mum grabbed the beer from him. Just then his fist came up and punched her in the face.

“Get out of here before I call the police!” screamed mum. Dad left the room, laughing on his way out.

Josh and Amy came out of their room and saw the blood running down mum's face.

“Are you okay, mum?” asked Josh, passing her a cloth.

“I'm fine my darling. I'm so sorry that dad spoiled your day.”

Amy held on to mum tight. “Don't worry, mummy, we'll look after you.”

From that day, things just got worse.

Josh and Amy were growing up fast.

“Amy, are you ready? You don't want to be late on your first day.”

“Coming mum,” shouted Amy.

It was Amy's first day at secondary school.

“How are you feeling?” asked Josh.

“Scared.”

“There's nothing to be scared of. It seems a bit overwhelming at first but once you find where your different classes are, you'll be fine.”

“Thanks bruv.”

Just like Josh, Amy settled in well. It was nice to be in the same school again, even if it was for a short time.

The next year seemed to pass quickly. Amy had made some new friends and was enjoying her lessons. Before they knew it, it was the end of school term.

“Where has the time gone?” said mum.

Josh had now left school and Amy was going in to her second year. Things at home were pretty much the same; dad still drinking and gambling and mum still putting up with his ways.

“Why do you still stay with him? He treats you so badly,” Josh said to her one day.

“I really don't know,” Josh's mum would say, “I guess I keep hoping that one day he will see what he is doing to us and change his ways.”

“But it's not nice for me and Amy,” replied Josh.

“I know, my darling, and I am so sorry, but things will get sorted out, I promise.”

But Josh knew that it never would. Amy never said much about what went on; she just knew that as long as she was with Josh she would be safe.

Josh decided it was time for him to look for work, as that way, he could save money to help his mum and Amy find a safe place to live. He did all kinds of jobs, from working early hours in a bakery to cleaning offices in the evening. Josh did anything he could find, just so he could save that money. He would give a little to mum and the rest he would hide in a safe place, so his dad couldn't get his hands on it to spend on drinking and gambling.

It was a cold evening. They had just finished dinner when dad rolled in, drunk as usual and in a worse mood than normal. Josh and Amy thought it was best to go to their room; and then it all started again. From what Josh could hear, it sounded like dad had lost his job.

“What are we supposed to do now?” mum shouted. “How can you do this to our family? We’ve lost everything because of your drinking and gambling.”

“Why do you think I do it?” dad shouted back. “It’s so I can drown out the sound of your moaning!”

“Don’t you blame me for your addictions. It’s about time you faced up to what you do instead of blaming everyone else.”

The next thing, all Josh and Amy could hear were mum’s screams. They knew dad was hitting her. They had heard this so many times before but this time, the screams were worse. Josh couldn’t stand it anymore, he knew he had to help mum.

“Wait here Amy, I’m going to get help.”

Amy hid under the covers to drown out the screams.

When Josh went into the room he was horrified to see the blood and cuts on mum’s face. It was awful.

“Don’t worry mum, I’m going to get help.”

“You’re not going anywhere, my boy,” dad snarled. “Go back to your room unless you want some of the same.”

Dad was about to give mum another punch to the face. Josh ran at him screaming, “Leave mum alone!”

Dad got hold of Josh and threw him as hard as he could. As Josh landed, his head caught on something sharp, blood poured from his head and he fell unconscious.

“Josh!” shouted mum. “What have you done to my baby?”

That was the last straw. Mum picked up a knife from the side and went for dad. As they both struggled, the knife plunged into his chest, but he managed to lunge forward at her. Mum tried to move out of the way as dad landed on top of her. As they tumbled backwards, she fell onto a large piece of broken glass that went right through her, and died instantly. Dad was already dead.

Everything went quiet. Amy came out from under the covers, slowly went to the door and opened it. At first, all she could see was broken furniture everywhere. As she went further into the room she saw Josh lying there with a pool of blood around his head.

“Josh! Josh! Wake up! Can you hear me?” For a split second Josh opened his eyes, looked at Amy and whispered, “Sorry.” Then he passed away.

Amy looked around and saw her parents. *This can't be happening*, she thought. She managed to find the phone and called the police.

## Chapter 2

Amy was now all alone. She had no other family so she was put into foster care. As she was gathering her things together, she remembered to take the money Josh had been saving for them to use to find a safe place to live. When it was time to leave the house, Amy walked out with tears in her eyes. For a moment she stopped, but she didn't and couldn't look back. She got into the waiting car and left.

Amy arrived at the foster home feeling very scared and alone. The social worker took Amy inside.

“Amy, this is where you will be living now, with Mr and Mrs Robins. They'll take good care of you.”

“Hello dear,” said Mrs Robins. “Let me show you to your room.” Amy's room was big and bright with lots of butterflies on the wall. “I'll leave you to settle in.”

Amy sat on the bed and looked around the room, not really taking it all in. She lay down and cried and cried until she fell asleep. By the time Amy woke up it was the morning. *Where am I, what am I doing here?* thought Amy. She got up from the bed and went downstairs.

“Morning Amy,” said Mrs Robins. “Come and sit down, I'll make you some breakfast.”

“What am I doing here?” said Amy.

“Don't you remember, dear? You were brought here last night.”