

Character Profile: Eve Miller

Demographics and Background

- You are a 23-year-old woman.
- You were born in Alabama while your father was stationed at Fort McClellan.
 - Your father was in charge of maintenance for base housing at Fort McClellan until it closed, after which he retired. Your mother never worked outside of the home but ran a makeshift drop-in daycare center out of your basement for the other families on base.
 - After your father retired, he moved you and your family “out into the Sticks” in rural Alabama. You felt isolated and “bored.”
 - You are the youngest of three children. Your entire family is in Alabama; you are the only one who “got out.” Your older sister and brother both have two kids each, and you miss seeing your nieces and nephews.
 - Your father was very strict but not abusive to his children. However, he occasionally would get physical with your mother (e.g., shoving her into a wall, grabbing her arms and leaving bruises, slapping her face). You frequently witnessed these interactions and your mother often rationalized this to you as “that’s just the way men are.”
 - You made the best of the small town high school you attended. Although there were not many sports teams for girls, you excelled at track and field, especially the 440 relay event. You were a decent long jumper too.
- You “don’t get out much” and have not made any friends in the area.
- You thought you might try to get a job but it just doesn’t make sense because you can’t pay for childcare, and you don’t think your husband can handle the kids.
- You just found out three days ago that you are pregnant with your fourth child. You haven’t told your husband yet because you are afraid he will “freak out.”
- You have been married to your husband, Alan (“Al”), for five years.
 - You met Al at track practice in high school. You two hit it off and had a lot in common. He was an Army brat like you and both your fathers had worked on the same base.
 - Your first “date” was the All School Sports Banquet later in the spring after you met. You and Alan dated throughout high school and often shared escapist fantasies of leaving the small town you grew up in. You thought of Alan as your “knight in shining armor,” and he seemed more than happy to play along.
 - You had plans to follow Alan to whatever college gave him an athletic scholarship for track and field.
 - You hadn’t exactly decided but you had thought about maybe becoming a teacher.
 - Everything changed when you became pregnant in the spring of your senior year.
 - Although neither of you felt ready to settle down, your parents essentially didn’t give Alan any choice except to propose to

you and get a job to support your “growing family.”

- You and Alan have often thought of your marriage as an “us against the world” situation. You’ve been determined to “make it on our own” and not ask for help from your parents. That hasn’t been difficult since neither set of parents have offered much in the way of help beyond occasional babysitting.
- Your desire to “find a better life” for your family factored into the decision last year to move from rural Alabama to your current location because Alan was offered a highly paid manufacturing job with good benefits. Both you and Alan thought of the new job as the “break” you needed to help you two “keep from just treading water all the time,” even though it meant you would be leaving your family and friends behind. You rented a small house with hopes of saving for a down payment for your own home so the kids would have more room.
- About two years ago Alan was involved in a serious car accident that left him with chronic, severe back pain due to a pinched nerve. If he doesn’t “stay ahead of the pain” he gets really irritable and “nasty,” so he kept his prescription for pain medication filled. His doctors in Alabama had called in a few refills for Alan because he hadn’t found a doctor here yet.
- At first, you and Alan were really happy but your relationship has grown increasingly strained since you moved from Alabama. You were deeply in love with Alan, but you have lost a lot of respect for him lately because of some of the lifestyle choices he has been making.
- While you don’t think of yourself as a “nagging wife,” you are not a shrinking violet and will let Alan know when something is not OK with you. Lately, your arguments have gotten pretty loud with both of you yelling and screaming. One time when he came home late and drunk, you were so “pissed” that you threw a casserole dish and other dinner dishes at him because he was late. That was one of the times that someone called the police after they heard the yelling and dishes breaking. On two or three other occasions Alan has gotten “a little more aggressive than he should.” He has grabbed your arm, leaving bruises, and slapped you. Alan is a “mean” drunk and has threatened you and has threatened to “snatch the kids” during your arguments, but you know his “bark is worse than his bite.” However, he had never seriously hurt you until your fight three days ago. It brought back a lot of bad memories from when you were young and saw your dad beat your mom. You don’t want Hailey to ever see what you saw.
- You have three children
 - ♦ **Hailey, age 5**
You really love Hailey and were absolutely overjoyed when she was born. You couldn’t wait to raise a daughter to be the perfect mix of “princess” and “tomboy.” Before Jonah was born, you and Hailey spent a lot of time together but things changed after Jonah was born and Alan had the car accident. With Alan injured, you had to rely on Hailey more than you should have to help with Jonah and Alan. You don’t really have much time to spend with her now with the two

boys. You know you need to find some more time to “work with her;” at her teacher conference, you were told that Hailey is behind academically and is having trouble making friends and paying attention. Even at home lately, you’ve noticed a change in her. She seems to “space off” and she has been having nightmares and started wetting the bed.

✦ **Jonah, age 2**

Jonah is your “wild child;” you were very grateful that Alan “got his boy” but you have been exhausted since the day he was born. Jonah’s delivery was more complicated than Hailey’s, and you had to have a C-section. To further complicate things, shortly after you got home you received word that Alan had gone into town to get groceries and diapers and was hit by a driver who ran a red light. When Alan came home, caring for him was a full-time job for a few days. You just felt like you never had a chance to “bond” with Jonah. He was always difficult to soothe and he didn’t like to “cuddle” like Hailey did. His first word was “Down!” and he has always been “super active.” He climbs on everything and has learned to get Hailey’s window open; he’s so quiet that you don’t notice he’s in the parking lot behind the house until you go look for him. He isn’t afraid of anything and doesn’t seem to have a sense of “self-preservation.” You’re afraid he will end up getting hurt someday, so you have started spanking him on his bottom with your hand when he doesn’t pay attention or goes outside without you.

✦ **Tobias (“Toby”), age 3 months**

Toby was not a planned pregnancy, but you and Alan were hopeful that with his new job you’d have enough money to support all three kids and save up for a house. Like Jonah, Toby was delivered via C-section, but at least this time it was scheduled. Toby is not much of a “napper” during the day but at least he has started sleeping through the night, unless one of Alan’s “jackass” friends comes over late and wakes Toby up. You’ve had to change Toby’s formula twice because he was spitting up an awful lot.

- Several months ago, just before Toby was born, an investigator from Child Protective Services came to the house saying that someone had made a child abuse call on you because Jonah had been seen outside in the parking lot. You had a number of mixed emotions; you were embarrassed that someone had called, but equally embarrassed because the concerns were true — you weren’t really supervising Jonah like you should have been. You were just SO tired with being at the end of the pregnancy with Toby. You were also frustrated because it had to have been a neighbor who made the call — why couldn’t they just come over and ask if they could help instead of trying to get you “in trouble?”

You were pretty honest with the worker and told her about the domestic violence, Alan’s drinking, and the financial trouble you all were in. You hoped that she might be able to get you some help — just to tide you over until you could get back on your feet. She made a list of things you and Alan needed to do. Alan was NOT happy

that she said he had to put his guns away, but you agreed that they should be somewhere safe. She told you that you needed to get Jonah's behavior under control and suggested you use timeout. You don't want to lose your kids so you tried to do everything she said. Jonah was not having "any of this timeout crap" and wouldn't stay in the chair, so you rigged up a way to restrain him so he couldn't get loose. Likewise, you've had to take some pretty drastic measures to keep Jonah in the house — you found an old dog crate that someone was pitching and you and Alan lock him in there if someone can't watch him like a hawk.

The worker called back a few times to check on you, but you never were able to get to the place she told you to go for assistance. Not long after that you had Toby, and you had your hands full. Plus, you lost your phone coverage because you couldn't pay the bill.

Relationship with Other Characters

You've had very little interaction with anyone since moving to the area. You've had a couple of phone conversations and a school conference with Hailey's teacher but that's been it in terms of social contact. You feel very tied to the house because of the kids and Alan's issues. Occasionally, "associates" of Alan's (he avoids calling them "friends") show up at all hours of the night. You see them as really bad influences on Alan and try to keep yourself and the kids out of the way, but it's really frustrating when they wake up the baby or Jonah when you've just gotten them to sleep.

One person who comes along fairly often is "Frank," a friend of Alan's whom he met at a local pub a while back. What started as Frank bringing a couple of beers over on the weekend

has become Frank coming over unannounced on a daily basis and staying for long periods of time. You think Frank is "super sketchy," and you absolutely do not trust him. While it's great that he can "rough house" with Jonah, which is something Alan can't really do, you are especially concerned about the attention he pays to Hailey. He always wants to take her for ice cream or to go see a movie "to give you a break." Another thing that bothers you is that he gives Hailey expensive gifts, including a digital camera. It was really helpful, however, when he offered to take Hailey shopping for school. Frank got her school supplies and some clothes. A couple of times when you walked into Hailey's room you noticed that he has asked Hailey to sit in his lap. You hate the idea of him being alone with Hailey, and you try your hardest to stay awake whenever Frank is at the house.

Recent Events Leading to Incident

About six months into Alan's new manufacturing job, the plant lost a big customer and he got laid off; he said it was one of those "last one hired, first one fired" things, but you have a gnawing suspicion that his drinking might have had an impact too. Alan filed for unemployment, but those benefits ran out about a month after Toby was born. Alan has been looking for work off and on, but with his back pain "flare ups" his job possibilities are limited because he can't do anything too physical. You've thought about trying to get something, even part-time, but it just doesn't make a lot of sense because you don't feel comfortable leaving the kids with Alan for extended periods of time. This has been really tough on Alan because providing for the family was always important to him. He has gotten more and more depressed over the last few months. Unfortunately, he copes by drinking or smoking more, often to the point of passing out.

The other big problem was that your health insurance lapsed when he got laid off because you couldn't afford the COBRA payments. You were able to get the kids on Medicaid and get into a clinic for when Toby was born. For Alan, the worst part is that without health insurance, he can't get the prescription pain medication for his back, which leaves him in a lot of pain and really irritable. You suspect that Frank has been getting a variety of street drugs for Alan to help with the pain. Along with the painkillers, Alan says that Frank also occasionally brings over some amphetamines. You justify "popping some speed" occasionally to keep an eye on the kids — especially if Frank is in the house. You rationalize using it because "it's basically ADHD medication." However, you have to sleep at some point, so you use the dog cage to keep Jonah contained during those times. You suspect that Alan may be manufacturing or dealing drugs based on some of the paraphernalia you've found and the late night visits by Alan's "associates." You've told him you want no part of this in your house, but you've tended to turn a blind eye lately because you two have to bring some cash in somehow.

Incident Details

Three days prior to today's interview there was a big "blow up" at the house. That morning, you had taken Toby to the clinic for a check up and left Hailey and Jonah to eat some cereal and watch cartoons. When you arrived home a couple of hours later, Frank was leaving the house as you came in. Frank told you, "He's passed out on the couch — I stopped by with a buddy earlier, but only Hailey and Jonah were here. Since Alan was gone, I took the guy back home. When I came back — I don't know what happened, but he really did a number on Hailey and Jonah. I told Hailey I was going to get her some ice cream — I'll be back later".

Alan was passed out, stone cold drunk, on the sofa. Jonah was locked in the dog crate asleep. You found Hailey in her room sobbing. You ask her what happened, and she told you that "Daddy gaved me a whippin cause I let Jonah get out again." When you picked her up, she winced in pain and screamed. You took a closer look and found her bottom and the backs of her legs reddish purple with very angry welts. You've never shied away from using spanking as a disciplinary tool, but this was ridiculous. You thought to yourself that Alan had gone too far this time and you wondered if he used the extension cord he had wrapped up and threatened the kids with.

You didn't know what to do next but you decided you needed some proof that he did this. You asked Hailey where her camera was and found it on her dresser in her jewelry box. You were surprised to find a tube of personal lubricant and some gauze with some kind of nasty substance on it in the jewelry box too. As you tried to turn the camera on to take pictures of Hailey's marks you were shocked to see pictures of Hailey being fondled and her performing oral sex on a man. There was no way to tell who the man is, but you know it has either got to be Alan or one of the "degenerates he brought into our home." You were disgusted that anyone could do that, but especially that anyone would do it to someone as sweet as Hailey.

All you could think about was getting out of there so you put the camera down, grabbed a bag, threw a few things in it and told Hailey to "get Jonah and get in the car." You took the extension cord and started whipping Alan with it, trying to wake him up from his stupor. You were screaming at him, "How could you do that? That is so disgusting! How could you hurt her like that?" He got up off the couch, but you kept swinging the extension cord at him. Alan grabbed you by the hair and you roundhouse

punched him. Alan “went ballistic” and punched you in the face twice, bloodying your lip, and multiple times in the stomach and side. You kicked Alan in the groin, grabbed your bag and took off with the kids in the car. You and the kids have been living in your car, and you haven’t seen or talked to Alan since.

You feel guilty about the fight; not because you beat the crap out of Alan — he deserved that and more. You do feel bad, however, that the kids saw or heard bits and pieces of it. You also feel bad that you and the kids are living out of the car. You’re not sure what your options are — but you just needed some time to “get myself together” and “get a plan.” You just got Hailey back to school after two days of absence. You probably need to see a doctor; you think you have a broken rib. You’re worried that the system will try to take the kids away if you tell someone what happened. The last child protection worker said that, “Now you are in the system, they expect you to keep the kids safe.” You are running out of gas money and have even thought about trying to get in touch with your family to ask for some help. You are afraid, however, that your mother would tell you to “make up” with Alan because “that’s just the way men are.”

Personality Characteristics/ Demeanor

- You very much want to provide a good life for your kids but it seems like no matter how much you struggle, things just keep going from bad to worse.
- You know your parenting leaves something to be desired, but you really love your kids and would do anything for them.
- You are terrified that the kids will get taken away if you go to a shelter or disclose what has been happening. You get a bit defensive when others ask you about the kids or how you discipline them. This is not because you believe you are the be all and end all, but because you’re afraid the more you say, the more vulnerable you and the kids are.
- You are afraid that somehow it is your fault that Hailey was sexually abused — or at the very least, others will blame you for it.
- You’ve begun to worry that you should take Hailey to the doctor — what if she picked up an STD?
- You wish you had some help with the kids and the house. Alan can’t be depended on and you are just exhausted...all...the....time.
- You don’t know how else to help Alan. You thought his substance use was a “phase,” but it is clearly a significant problem.
- You don’t have a lot of faith that the “system” will do anything for you and your family, but might “make things worse”; after all, “they didn’t do anything last time to help.”
- You don’t mind having guns in the house for protection, but you never liked the way Alan kept the guns out in the open.

Interview Guidance/Decision Points

The simulation participants will be interviewing you following their “investigation” of the mock house to collect evidence following a hotline call made by Hailey’s school.

- If asked about....
 - The current hotline call
 - ◆ You have no knowledge about the call but suspect it’s probably about the spanking Alan gave Hailey. Your guess is that someone at Hailey’s school noticed her bruises.
 - ◆ You are initially reluctant, but then begin to cooperate. You must work hard to justify why you didn’t come forward with your knowledge sooner.
 - The argument you had with Alan
 - ◆ After finding the pictures of Hailey being sexually abused you essentially unloaded on Alan.
 - ◆ You don’t think you really hurt him; you just “wanted to give him a taste of his own medicine.”
 - The digital camera in Hailey’s room
 - ◆ The camera was a gift for Hailey from Frank; you thought it was a bit “over the top” for him to give her such an expensive gift, but Frank really enjoys spending time with Hailey and wanted to have some “memories” of the things they did together. You have been kicking yourself ever since you left, criticizing yourself because you didn’t bring the camera with you, but you were so repulsed by what you saw that you couldn’t even think straight.
 - Drugs
 - ◆ You suspect, but cannot confirm, that Alan is manufacturing and/or selling drugs.
 - ◆ You occasionally take some amphetamines if Alan has some on hand in order to stay awake to watch the kids.
 - Sexual abuse allegations
 - ◆ You really don’t think that Alan is the perpetrator, but it is really hard for you to trust anything about him any more given his behavior when he’s drinking. At a minimum, you blame Alan for bringing strangers into your home who hurt your child.

Notes

