

Excerpt from Taken by Sue O'Callaghan; Chapter 6

I could not speak. I could not eat. I was utterly numb with disbelief. Shock tore through my weak body, ripping it further into shreds that could no longer hold together. I felt mutilated by the torment of not having properly cuddled my children for so long and hearing of their suffering through the court. I was now like a robot, just going through the motions. I had a scan which told me the baby was still there but how could that mean anything at all when I was so totally absent? I had disappeared into a distant place of pain and could not come out. I sat in the kitchen and the agony ate away at me like a mouse with fresh cheese, holes appeared in places of my inner being that I thought had already gone and my mind was going into deep dark places.

Thoughts raced around my head. Had I abused my children? Was I mentally ill? If I hadn't and if I wasn't, what had I done to deserve all this? How could I lose my children in an English judicial system that was supposedly honest and fair? The thought of what Harry, Annie and Alfred were going through was worse still, as was the knowledge that I could not be there for them as they cried for comfort in the nights when they woke, nor explain my love to each of them. All I wanted was to just hold them and absorb some of their anguish and confusion and feel it drain from their tiny bodies, still so very young.

Night time brought darkness which was not blacker than the place I was already in, and I lay alone in an empty bed longing for a deep sleep to take me, as there seemed no hope to remain awake for. I just lay there for what seemed like an eternity too distraught to even move from the horizontal position gripping the pillow soaked in my tears. I had lost everything. Memories of all the past nights haunted me and I was uncertain how I could manage another. The thought of the children suffering so badly and not being able to rescue them, protect them or comfort them was simply more than I was able to comprehend. The days were bad enough but the nights were excessively long and exorbitantly painful. My whole body ached intensely, and there were no tablets or remedies that could heal or numb it. On and on it went and the tears kept surging from a never ending supply that seemed unable to end.