

*Ibukunolu  
Ogunsina*



*Joy's  
Blessings*

A Novel

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Egunsina*



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IBUKUNOLU OGUNSINA  
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A NOVEL

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*Dedicated to*

The Almighty God

&

My Husband...Ayodeji Olusola

My Daughters...Anjolaoluwa, Simisolaoluwa, Ademide

My Son..Tanitoluwa



*The  
Beginning*

## Chapter One

### The Beginning

*12:45noon... Blue House Hostel*

Celine sat on a chair adjacent to the window overlooking the lawn leading to the soccer field. She was wearing her new school uniform. She smiled, gestured and seemed serenely content with what lay ahead, her two suitcases still tucked neatly beside her legs.

Leaving home for the first time, she had worried about what her new lifestyle would be like. Now, she was sitting alone in the house mistress' office, waiting to be assigned to a dormitory.

A fair-skinned girl with two pony tails breezed in, looking smart and neat.... The girl gestured towards Celine.

“Hi there.”

Celine looked up at her and smiled. “Hi.”

The girl walked over and sat next to her.

“My name is Marty Williams”, she said by way of introduction, and then continued, “Well, actually my real name is Matilda, but my parents prefer Marty, so please call me that.”

Celine smiled. "Mine is Celine Doherty. It is nice meeting you."

As they talked, Celine discovered that Marty had also been given admission to St. Dominic's Private College. When the head mistress came into her office, she handed Celine an envelope and, almost immediately, she was excused.

Marty accompanied her into the yet unfamiliar corridor. She opened the envelope with tentative fingers and pulled out a neatly typed note. On it was the name of the dormitory to which she had been assigned. Marty peered over Celine's shoulder and a faint smile appeared on her pretty face. They had both been – as if by a miracle - assigned to the same hostel and the same room!

Two years later....

Celine and Marty had hit it off immediately and became bunk mates and instant best friends. They'd maintained the relationship, because as young as they were, they both shared the same faith in God.

One morning early, Marty woke with a throbbing headache. She had been feeling dizzy for a while now. The previous month she had complained to Celine that she had noticed a trend of heavy bleeding during her menstrual cycle. During the last manual labour at her Blue House Wednesday labour day, she could not do as much cleaning as she was used to, due to shortness of breath.

Celine laid hands on her friend's head, her unruly mop of hair feeling soft to Celine's touch, and they quickly shared a word of prayer for healing before clamoring into the bathroom for a shower.

On their way to the hall for assembly, Marty said that she was feeling a bit better. Celine smiled and threw an arm around her friend's shoulder. But two hours later Marty was slumped across her desk in class and had to be rushed to the sick bay. Celine, who was in the next class, heard the commotion and saw Marty's limp shape pass by. Without thinking, she dashed out of class and ran along the corridor until she reached the sick bay. It did not occur to her that she had rudely stomped out of the class during a geography remedial lesson and she had barely noticed the two boys she pushed out of the way in her maddening rush. When she reached the sick bay the kind nurse, Sister Theresa, called Celine aside. "Marty will be fine. You just have to have faith." Celine had met Sister Theresa in

her first year and had liked her from the start. "Are you sure, Sister?" Celine sniffed, unable to control the tears rolling down her pretty face.

Sister Theresa gently wiped the tears away, stroked Celine's cheek, and nodded her reassurance.

After a day, Marty was well enough to return to her dorm. Her parents, who had been notified earlier, agreed that Marty would need further treatment. It was discovered that she had chronic anemia and would need a constant supply of blood, which was not readily available at her boarding school. It meant that she had to change schools!

The news came as a shock to both girls and they cried bitterly. They already missed the closeness of their two year-long friendship, their shared secrets and, most importantly, their love for each other. They reminisced about hours spent doing homework together, shared laughs and their easy competitiveness; but now they were faced with the reality of separation!

They were still hugging and crying when Marty's parents bade the school principal goodbye and informed the girls that they had to grab Marty's suitcase and all her belongings.

Marty's father, Dr Alex Williams, was grateful for the timely intervention of the school physician and of course, God's protection of their daughter. Being a doctor as well, he had a full understanding of his daughter's condition and, though a hard decision for the two friends, it was a life-saving one that had to be made. It was time for the two girls to part. They both stood in a corner of their dorm room, held each other's hands, prayed together one more time and both vowed that they will always cherish their love for each other.

As Marty turned to leave, tears brimming, Celine grabbed her friend's arm and turned her so that she faced Celine again, unable to keep the tears from her own eyes.

"Marty, if you should be blessed with a daughter one day, save her for my future son!"

Marty would have laughed, but seeing her friend's tears, she smiled and nodded.

"I will do so, my special friend!"

Marty turned and ran to her parents' car, sobbing, unable to turn again and bid Celine a final goodbye.



*The Parting:  
A suitcase  
of hope*

## Chapter Two

### The Parting: A Suitcase Of Hope

*Thirty three years later...*

The summer heat had taken a drastic turn for the worse in the quiet town of Corner Brook. In the country side of Corona, the Maxwell's' beautiful house was one of several others on the paved street, with manicured lawns and lovely gardens. The suburb was usually full of young children on bikes and teenagers listening to country music booming off the local radio channel.

The carefree mood on the streets could however not lift the feeling of gloom and anxiety in the Maxwell home. Timmy was about to return to his home country, Nigeria. There had been a difference of opinion in his family about the choice of college after he completed high school. He'd had to stay at home and fill a two-year gap after graduating from senior school. His dad had wanted him to go to the great Umptom College University (UCU), his father's alma mater, and then settle in Corner Brook or any part of the lovely district of Corona.

Having lived all his life in Corona, Timmy had had enough of the countryside. He was so familiar with the area that he used to brag to his friends that he could drive through the streets of Corner Brook with his eyes closed. Although his mother wanted him to return to Nigeria and experience a sense of home, secretly she also prayed that he would meet a lovely Nigerian woman.

Although Timmy loved the mountains, the rivers, the cliffs and most of all, the snow - he simply adored the purity of the white covered mountains, which

reminded him of God's holiness - Timmy was ready for a change of scenery.

Timmy's mother was a bit apprehensive, being an only child herself. This made her unnecessarily protective of him. She had come a long way since that day during a school rally, when she fainted and was helped by a young doctor, who later became her husband. She had every reason to be happy; she was alive because of God's grace. She believed that if her son also became a doctor he would also – like his father – be able to help people. As a staunch Christian, she had taken the matter to the Lord months' before and had peace that Timmy should return to his native home to study. The mother in her, however, grew ever more anxious as the day drew near.

Despite her perhaps misguided apprehension about her son's well-being in Nigeria, what with a grandfather who owned an estate and was sure to care for all his needs, she helped Timmy do the last of his packing and a few hours later, amidst tears of joy and sadness and with prayers in their hearts, the Maxwell's watched their only child striding purposefully towards the Departure gates.

After this first trip to the airport, the Maxwell's grew into the habit of seeing Timmy off each time he came home and headed back to school. Slowly, they adjusted and returned to the life they led before his entrance into their lives... But with each trip to the airport the pain of separation lingered on in Mrs. Maxwell's heart for months, only to be turned to joy when she set eyes on her precious son again.



*Disaster....  
What A Loss*

## Chapter Three

### Disaster.... What A Loss

*February 2011 Two and a half years later*

**T**immy Maxwell had settled down comfortably into college life and as a third year medical student at the Umptom College University, he joined his colleagues in welcoming the new students. He'd grown into a handsome young man, with a tinge of a foreign accent, friendly and humble and a smile always a part of his wardrobe. All the new students seemed to notice him. He had volunteered to join the new students' welcoming committee, because he loved to help the new students get around the campus.

The Students Union Government (SUG) had organized a week-long program, which included an orientation lecture and everyone had gathered in the school hall. The leaders of the SUG sat on the podium, while the members of the welcoming committee ushered the new students in and tried to get them to settle down before the Dean of students' affairs gave his welcoming address.

There was a hush and then a giggle from somewhere in the hall. Some girls were gossiping and a group of boys were chatting animatedly along the aisles, as the excited freshmen tried to contain their restlessness and frayed nerves. Stella Simmon, a first year accounting student, walked into the hall and looked around for any familiar faces. She could not find one. She thought, 'they are all strangers.' She found a spot near the window and gazed out at the beautiful campus scenery.

Stella was lost in the campus view and in her private thoughts; when her attention was called upon by the head of the welcoming committee who introduced himself through the public address system, and then asked all the first year students to settle down. The murmuring died down to complete stillness. The Dean gave a welcome address, followed by a brief from the SUG president. The leader of the welcoming committee then divided the students into four groups. They were all informed about the different plans for the new students and the island tour that would take place towards the end of the school year in November. Stella was excited about the prospect of a tour and of camping. As the only girl in a family of six, all the female company she'd ever had was her mother's and that was not much, because her mother had always worked. Her three brothers had turned her into a tomboy with a golden heart, though she was beautiful and still feminine in an "I don't mind playing rough"- kind of way, slender, highly intelligent and confident at just 18 years old.

After the announcements, she joined the other students, some of whom she recognized, and was, assigned to the dashing Timmy Maxwell's group for the school tour. The week went by in a flash with all the places to discover, the tours around the huge private university and all the new people, which left them tired with only a few days to rest before lectures began.

Four months went by...

Timmy and Stella became friends during the tour and welcoming programme and exchanged mobile numbers, calling each other every once in a while.

There were none of the expected boy-girl sparks, but they enjoyed each other's company and shared a mutual respect for one another. Stella, having grown up with three handsome brothers, was not as taken by Timmy's unique good looks as most of the other girls seemed to be... however, as she got to know him better, she found she liked him more than her other friends. But, being the independent girl that she was, she calculated what a possible relationship would cost her with regards to her first year of studies and made up her mind to take things slowly.

October came and with it, the school exams. With students doing their last round of promotional exams, Timmy was very busy studying. Stella, who was also hard at work, had lost quite a bit of weight due to exam stress.

She was in the cafeteria one afternoon, grabbing a chicken burger - her favorite - before going in for revision for her last paper scheduled for the next day, when she ran into Timmy. They both said hallo and exchanged a few words about the exams and the upcoming school tour scheduled for next month. They were both excited to see each other and Timmy teased Stella that she was looking less like a model and more like a worn-out student! Their friendly banter was comforting and a sense of happiness lingered with them both as they went their separate ways again.

By November the exams were finally over and students were in an exuberant mood. Students who were mere first year juniors 8 months earlier were about to become second year students. What now lay ahead was the annual island tour to Canary Deville's. It was to be a week of fun in the sun!

There was joy, and excitement in the first year hostel, as the students packed for the trip.

The Welcoming Committee and some of the final year students were also going along. Timmy had already informed his parents that he would not be visiting his grandfather because of the tour programme for the first year students. His grandfather was a well-known politician and a man of great wealth in Eleko. He assured them that as soon as they returned, he would head to his Grandfather's palatial mansion.

Stella hummed as she packed her suitcase. She had just informed her parents of the awards she would be receiving at the end of the school term in December. She was elated when her supervisor told her she had achieved good marks in some of her major courses. Also, that she would receive the award for the best student in accounting for the year. Adding to her elation and the butterflies in her stomach was the fact that she would see Timmy on the island. Her heart skipped a beat, although she would not admit to herself that she was anything more than friends with him. Even Sherry Timad, her closest friend, had teased her endlessly.

Stella and Sherry had met in one of their classes and discovered they were studying the same course. Since then, they had checked up on each other, exchanged textbooks and helped each other as they prepared for exams.... They'd also planned to catch as much fun as possible together on the tour.

It was Monday morning, 6:45a.m. There was a loud noise signifying the arrival of the four school buses that would take the students to the airport. They would embark on a 55-minute flight to the Canary Deville's Island, a resort well-known for its peace and tranquility. The Canary family, hence the name Canary Deville, bought the island many years before and had been maintaining it for more than four generations with funds they received from various events such as school rallies and government excursions. The resort management allocated sections of the island to different schools for different occasions. Management ensured the island was well-kept and could only be visited with prior permission and advance-booking.

On their arrival, the students were sorted into groups. Timmy once again found himself heading Stella's group. The two chatted briefly and laughed at the coincidence of being in the same group twice.

Timmy spent a great deal of his time on the island assisting with the supervision of the younger students. As he saw more and more of Stella, he began to realise that he was looking forward to the times they would spend together. He had to ask himself if he was falling in love with Stella Simmon....

The first day on the island was filled with lots of pomp and pageantry and was rounded off with a fashion show organized by the final year students. Everyone watched with excitement. Stella located Sherry and they briefly exchanged a few words, saw a few familiar faces and promised to catch up later after dinner.

The second day started with instructions to meet at the bay by nine in their swimming trunks, for a quick tour around the island by ship and an opportunity to swim in the calm ocean. Timmy and Stella paired up and they were inseparable throughout the tour, which lasted five hours with an hour's break for brunch. Sherry noticed the two of them together and winked from afar. Stella winked back and giggled.

At about two in the afternoon, on their way back, strange sounds were heard. Everyone noticed, but at first no one really bothered, until the boat tilted sharply to the right and then to the left. A few students lost their foothold, toppling each other. Timmy grabbed Stella, who stifled a scream. Timmy's strong arm around her shoulder was reassuring and she leaned into him instinctively.

The ship stabilized and as the panic subsided, Timmy slowly let go of Stella. Without really knowing why, Timmy suddenly and almost awkwardly blurted out his feelings for Stella, who seemed almost shy. Then, without thinking about the other students grouped close to them, Timmy tilted her head upwards and kissed her lightly, promising to love her forever. Stella stared up at him, her eyes bright with joy. And too soon, they were disembarking, and although a bit shaken by the experience, Timmy and Stella seemed overwhelmed by their new-found awareness of each other.

The students returned to their dorms, where they changed for a formal dinner. Stella was excited and nervous all at once, as she set her hair in soft curls and pulled the thin straps of her cream-coloured dress over her shoulders. The students met at the function hall and danced the night away. Amidst the dancing and the laughing, Timmy and Stella were together, talking about their plans for the future.

It seemed to Timmy and Stella that the earth shook and, in fact it did, as the dance floor suddenly shifted. The tremor only lasted a few seconds and then calm was restored. The management of the Canary Deville's Island arrived to allay everyone's fears. The tremors did occur once in a while, but were always quick to abate.

At about 2:05am, with music still playing, some students dancing while others were chatting with their mates, Timmy and Stella found a quiet spot far from the others and crawled into each other's arms. With glasses of champagne brimming over, a few stolen kisses and the alcohol streaming through their veins, their thinking faculties were deluded. Sacred instructions by the Creator were forgotten in an instance of love. Intoxicated with love and uncontrollable desire searing through their veins, they fell victims to the waiting hands of the tempter.

Stella felt the searing pain, but was overwhelmed by the sweet things Timmy was saying to her. He felt it too, and held and kissed her through it. Both loved each other even more. Timmy promised Stella he would marry no one else except her. They sealed their love with a kiss and a few minutes later they both fell asleep in each other's arms, with the muted sounds of the far-away music coming from the hall.

Three hours later, still a bit intoxicated, they were both woken by the waves, water rushing by, people screaming, more water gushing. Horrified, they both struggled to their feet, Timmy holding on to Stella. The next moment a rush of sea water engulfed them.

What many of the hysterical students thought was a hurricane turned out to be a TSUNAMI! The tilting experienced on the ship earlier and the earth tremors a few hours later were merely the warning-signs of a Tsunami!

A Tsunami that would claim the lives of so many of the UC students that fateful morning. A tidal wave that would render so many families downcast.

A tsunami that had never before been experienced in the Canary Deville's Island....

Timmy lost his grip on Stella's arms and the churning waves washed him farther away. Stella's legs were caught on the soft sand by the branches of an oak and as the waves rushed in, she gulped water into her lungs. As more water filled her lungs, she screamed for Timmy.....until she could scream no more... then she fainted and all went black.

A few steps away alarms were going off, screams were being heard, people were scattered and bodies were floating out to sea. There was pandemonium and sadness and despair seemed to settle over the island like a dark cloud. Where just a few hours earlier, young people had been dancing and laughing, happiness had now turned into tears of sadness and agony.

A few hours after the Tsunami's initial onslaught, the tumultuous sea calmed. On the sea shore and what was left of the beach, broken tables, chairs, debris and lifeless bodies were scattered. But the sea would remain calm, having swallowed more than enough.

Helicopters were soon visible dropping from the grey skies, as news had reached other parts of the country about the Tsunami on the island. Survivors were located and taken to safety.

Amongst the survivors was Stella, unconscious, but still breathing. Sherry found her and called elatedly to the others when she felt her pulse. Rescuers rushed

over and took her to the ambulance and off to the makeshift hospital, which was hastily erected on the island.

Timmy had not been found. He was swept away while trying to rescue Stella.

While some lives were lost, a new life had been consummated a few hours before the tragedy ensued... and in other parts of the world, life went on as usual. Indeed such was the cycle of life.

It was a sad day for the UC. Parents were informed; the school overflowed with wreaths in memory of the students who would never return, cars and television crewmen, all clamoring for the news.

The Maxwells heard the news first from the school authorities and were later informed by the Cable News Network. They called Timmy's grandfather who was already on his way to the island. He was flown immediately to the island and when he was told they had not yet recovered Timmy's body, he was inconsolable. His only grandson... Timothy Maxwell...his hope for the family's future - Probably never to be seen again.

A few hours later other parents had arrived on the island, fathers stood together, mothers cried in clusters. Some fainted, some prayed, hoping their beloved children would be found soon, others merely gazed into nothingness. All they saw was a calm and quiet sea spread across. A sea that had mirthlessly risen and wrecked havoc without apology now lay limp like it was harmless. Most of the debris had been cleared, bodies removed. It was stark, just like the faces of the many whose loved ones were still missing.



*Miracles...  
The Signature  
Of God*

## *Chapter Four*

### Miracles... The Signature Of God

**S**tella was flown from the island after being collected by her parents and cleared by the school security. She was taken to the family hospital and spent a long time in the ICU of the St. Sthititians Private Hospital, without regaining consciousness.

Tuesday 2:09p.m. Two and a half months after the Tsunami, Stella fluttered her eyelids; the monitor started blinking... her pulse increased and alarms rang out. Her mother all but jumped from her chair where she had prayed for her daughter every single day since the fateful day. Sometimes her sons would force her to go home and they would take turns watching their only sister. Most times, their father would be by her side reminding God of His promises that he would not bury his own child, but on this particular day, it was Stella's mother who was on the family's care shift.

Stella opened her eyes and made an attempt to sit up, but her mother grabbed her. Tears were streaming down her cheeks as she shouted for a nurse.

Joy and happiness welled up and soared through her soul, instantly banishing the doubts and fears she had experienced so acutely since that fateful day. She knelt down on the hospital floor and burst into tears of thanksgiving.

Two weeks afterwards, Stella was discharged.

As the driver of the Simmons' luxury vehicle pulled into their mansion at the

Sunnyside beach, there were shouts of joy from the family and friends waiting to welcome Stella home. There were newsmen wanting a few words, but the security guards led them away and the privacy of the Simmons family was observed behind the steel gates of their big mansion, encasing them.

Meanwhile, other parents had moved on with or without their children. Some were content to retrieve the bodies of their children in order to bring closure, while some went home with their children, grateful and happy; while yet others still hoped that one day, the sea at the Canary Deville Island would bring their loved ones back to them...

One day, the hopefuls believed, the sea would open up its belly and bring forth... One day, God would show mercy and prove His miraculous acts. One day, they would remember this day and smile again and declare it was all a dream.

The Maxwell's were amongst the hopefuls but after almost a week in Nigeria, their hopes began to wane. They had to leave the island, as people were being condoned off due to health risks. Experts were brought in from different countries to analyze what actually happened and report to the Federal government. The Canary Deville Island was sealed off, never to host a school tour again, never to host an event again, and never to be used again...for it has claimed so many innocent lives... Amongst them the precious soul of Timothy Maxwell.

The Maxwell's had arrived on the island two days after the event having flown for close to fourteen hours and with two stopovers in different countries. Two weeks after the ordeal, their expectations changed from expecting their son's safe arrival to retrieving his body. That afternoon in their own private house, not far from Timmy's grandfather's home and office, a house that used to bubble with enthusiasm but now a ghost of its former self, tragedy-stricken, Timmy's father and mother had nothing to hope for. News came that their only child, Timothy Samson Maxwell could not be found. For all practical purposes, the Canary Deville Island had been shut down.

The house went still. When the phone rang a second time, Timmy's mother did not even hear it. Recently, there had been so many calls from news people, questioning her and wanting her to grant them interviews. The family had grown tired of it. The phone rang again and Dr. Maxwell picked it up on the third ring. It was the University College PR officer.

“Is this the Maxwell's' house?” the PR asked.

Dr. Maxwell's voice was husky from little sleep, “Yes sir, how can I be of help to you?” he asked.

“Will it be possible for you to come over to the University campus immediately?”

Dr Maxwell's heart skipped a beat. “Hope all is well?” He paused and then added quickly. “We got a call from the island that they have sealed it off. The case is closed...” He choked and coughed.

“We know, sir,” PR said softly. “But we require your assistance. Some paper work is involved.”

“Okay,” Dr. Maxwell answered gravely. “I will be there as soon as possible.”

“I will be waiting for you at the VC's Chambers.”

“Thank you.”

Dr. Maxwell knew it would be futile to ask more questions, but the uncertainty made him anxious. He wanted to know what sort of paper work. Death certificate? Mrs. Maxwell overheard the conversation. Dr. Maxwell, being very sensitive to his wife's fragile emotions and health, pretended that he was needed at Grandpa's office and that it could take a while for him to return. Mrs. Maxwell nodded absently and went back to what she was doing, which – at the time - was simply staring out of the window.

She was not bothered anymore. Her father had been trying to cope with the loss in his own way. As a medical doctor and a politician, he had put on hold every political aspiration on his plate since he lost his wife a few years earlier and had gone back to his private medical practice, where he found some measure of solace. Since the Tsunami, however, he had merely spent time in his office, not seeing patients.

Mrs. Maxwell's hopes were secured in God. She had been hoping and praying that something good will happen, knowing God was her savior and Lord and her only anchor. She had prayed and fasted ever since. Even though her parents were

nominal Christians, they had brought her up, their only child, in the way of the Lord. They never missed Sunday services, prayed every 6a.m. and 9p.m. and even when her father was on call, he would find time to call in on their landline at exactly 9p.m and say the grace. Hers had been a close knit family and they kept the prayer routine until she went to boarding school and later left the country. She was pondering on these memories as she sat very still, almost doll-like beside the window.

In the meantime Dr. Maxwell was being driven to the University in a hurry. He was praying out loud, an uninterrupted conversation with God, until they reached the imposing gates of the University, which had been closed since the catastrophe. He was nervous but anxious to get it over with. They drove to the Rector's chambers and were directed to the VC's chambers.

Upon parking, Dr. Maxwell got out, but lost his footing for a second. He quickly regained it, handing everything over to God. He remembered how they struggled to have more children, but all they had was Timothy. A handsome little boy. Their very own Samson. God's elect to bring laughter to their home. He had begged God for more children, but after his wife had two miscarriages, they had called it quits.

As soon as he knocked on the VC's door, he knew the end had finally come; he was ready to sign off whatever final documents were required, collect a death certificate... He drew in a long, deep breath and opened the door.

The young man who was seated in a wing backed chair in the VC's office, stood up as soon as Dr Maxwell entered. It was Timmy. He literally ran into his father's arms, sobbing like a child. Dr. Maxwell lost his balance and stumbled slightly, but held on tight to his son, unbelieving. He opened his mouth but no words came forth. He closed his eyes, opened them again, felt like pinching himself, felt the rush of joy and knew he was not dreaming. Then he too burst into tears. A song of praise burst forth through his tears. He could not utter any other words until he had finished thanking God.

Timmy is alive, indeed God is great! It did not matter how, but the Canary Deville's sea brought his only child back. The Lord had heard his prayers.

After a while, when father and son's emotions had calmed some what, Dr.

Maxwell was informed of what had happened, the rescue procedure and how the Lord Almighty saved Timothy Maxwell. His father was overwhelmed. As soon as the two men left the university Dr. Maxwell called his father-in-law, and asked him to meet him at their home. As Mrs. Maxwell, still seated at the huge window overlooking the driveway, saw the two passengers alight from the car; she was overcome with shock and emotion and collapsed.

She was revived to the beautiful sound of her son's voice and she burst into tears of joy! She wanted to hear everything, she wanted to touch her son and she did so over and over again.

Timmy Maxwell sat next to his mother telling her how the waves had taken him, but he realized that he was able to swim. He got caught up again by another great wave, and then lost consciousness. When he woke up, he was sandwiched between heavy palm trees and shrubs and was later found by the fishermen in a nearby village. While he was there, he noticed one of the men that kept watching him closely. Later on, the man confided to Timmy that he had no idea how he survived the great black tide of detritus that engulfed the coastline where so many humans succumbed. However, he was utterly convinced that there was a higher power that kept him alive and he knew it could only have been God.

Two weeks after Timmy's return, the family left the country for Corner Brook for good. Timmy's grandfather bade them goodbye amidst tears of joy and UC University forwarded his transcripts for onward transfer to the department of medicine at the Kingsford's University of Corner Brook.



*Life Goes  
On....*

## Chapter Five

### Life Goes On....

**F**ive and a half months after the ordeal and three months after Stella had arrived home; she had regained her health and was getting ready to go back to school. She had tried to contact the school authority to ask about the possible whereabouts of the other students, but no one was ready to provide information. Little information was forthcoming. New students were about to register, but the school calendar had been affected by the disaster. School tours were cancelled and the welcoming committee was disbanded. Only a few school officials remained, attending to the registration and welcoming of new students.

At 8:45a.m Stella woke up with a start. Lately she had been having nightmares. She was trying to remember the incident. After having been in a coma for 2 and a half months, she could not remember what had happened. This morning, she woke up with a searing pain in her heart and in her stomach. She got up screaming and her mother rushed in. She told her mother about her pains. There was a watery substance between her legs and her mother discovered that she was bleeding!

She quickly rushed her to the bathroom, cleaned her, bundled her into their car and rushed her to the hospital. On arriving, she was taken to the emergency room, attended to by the physician on call, examined and scanned, then referred to the gynecologist on call. After a full examination, the gynecologist realized that Stella was at a risk of losing a baby of about five months!

Stella seemed stunned; her mother was shocked.

Throughout her stay in the hospital, she had tried very hard to remember how and what had happened. She knew she had been a virgin up to a certain point in her life, but she just could not bring herself to remember what happened and when it happened. Her parents wanted answers to so many questions, but not wanting to de-stabilize her, they kept quiet. It baffled them that their daughter could be 5 months pregnant without them noticing and they both prayed and believed that one day, she would open up to them.

Two weeks later Stella was discharged with the baby safe and healthy in her tummy. She was almost six months pregnant and told she'd be put on bed rest for the remaining three months before delivery. It meant she had to put school off! The school authorities were informed and due to her excellent academic record, they allowed her to defer her first semester resumption of her second academic year. She would join them in the second semester and lose just a semester instead of a year.

Stella was grateful for the support of her parents, she knew she had let them down, but more than that she was confused. She wracked her memory continuously. Doctors had said that due to her ordeal, memories may fail her. However, one day, she awoke from her nightmares with a name prominently in her mind: Timmy...

Timmy, Timmy, Timmy, Stella shouted from her dreams. Her mother came running, in but that was all Stella could remember.

Three months and two days later, Stella went into labour. She gripped and grasped and cried and eventually gave birth to a handsome boy. Stella and her newborn son were comfortably ensconced in the private wing of their family hospital. As her family gathered, they named him Thomas Dale - The miracle boy.

The Simmons family was extremely happy. As always, news travelled and Stella had to be cocooned. Her parents fell in love with their first grandchild, and although there was no secret about the pain of not knowing who the father was, they knew that God would surely reveal Thomas's father one day. Stella's brothers adored their nephew.

Stella knew she had fallen in love...she felt the certainty thereof deep within her soul, but she just could not remember. Her parents took Tom, as they fondly

called him now, and poured their hearts out into taking care of him, while Stella went back to school. She was enthusiastic, but yet there was a searing pain in her heart. She could not bear to leave her son for 5 days at a time, but she managed to come home almost every weekend to be with him. She succeeded in catching up on her missed classes, maintained her lead in the class and eventually graduated a few years after the ordeal with honors.

Throughout her stay on campus, she remained fixed on her studies, sometimes pushing herself hard to remember and scanning the faces of the students on campus. She never recognized anyone. She had schooled with them for four years and no one connected with her otherwise. She sometimes remembered her friend, Sherry, but she assumed that Sherry had not survived the Tsunami. Sherry, unbeknown to Stella, had been moved to a different school immediately after the tragedy.

People were starting to move on with their lives, the whole episode was just too painful with so many lives having been lost.



*What An  
Eclipse*

## Chapter Six

### What An Eclipse

**S**tella graduated, did her internship at TD Clarke's accounting firm in Ikeja and performed her duties so well that she was retained and positioned to head a smaller firm owned by the Chairman who was also a politician. Stella started her first day of full-time employment as a full-fledged accountant. Her employer was very successful and influential and was running in the country's presidential race. She was immediately tasked to handle the finances related to his portfolio. Stella worked long hours from Monday to Friday. Her weekends were filled to the brim keeping up with her now robust five-year old, who looked more handsome with the passing of each day. Stella called him her Tsunami baby.

Stella lived alone in a two-bedroom furnished-to-taste duplex, not far from her office and saw her son only on weekends. They had all agreed that Tom would remain with her parents. Some weekends Stella brought Tom to stay with her. She pampered him with so many clothes and toys that her own mother began to worry that she was spoiling him.

Whenever Stella's mom queried a new toy or a set of clothes Stella bought for Tom, Stella would only smile. She did not mind spending every single cent she earned on her baby boy and she prayed fervently that one day she would eventually remember who his father was, so that she could share that knowledge with her son. She attended an Emmanuel Assembly Church not far from her parents' house. As time passed, she found herself struggling to trust God to help her regain her memory.

On the other side of the world, Timmy had just graduated as a medical doctor top of his class. He coaxed and begged his parents to allow him to go to his grandfather and assist him with his campaign to become the president of their country, whilst at the same time doing his internship in the country... His parents fiercely objected at first, but then Grandpa's persuasiveness got the upper hand and he promised to keep a close eye on Timmy. Within two weeks Timmy was comfortably seated in his grandfather's private jet, heading to his father's country of birth to follow his dreams and perhaps also help his grandfather fulfill his.

Timmy's grandfather, a man in his early 70's, knew how to take good care of himself. He did not look his age and was earnestly vying for the position of his country's number one man. There was another reason why Timmy wanted to go back to his home country. He wanted to find a girl. He often remembered Stella in his dreams and spoke often of his wish to find her, but his parents had wanted him to complete his education first. Now, thanks to his grandfather's political ambitions, it was a good opportunity for Timmy to return.

As soon as the jet landed at the airport, Timmy was whisked away to his grandfather's mansion, where he was joyously welcomed home. His grandfather, a man of great spirit, had already summoned his closest friends and as the welcome home party got into gear everyone had a lovely time.

Three days later, although still a bit tired after the long journey and the celebrations that followed, Timmy could not delay his visit to the UC University Campus any longer. He wanted to make enquiries about a certain student...Stella Simmon. He went to the Accounting Department and was told by the faculty secretary that she had indeed graduated. He tried to locate her address but no one had enough information at hand. He was frustrated. He returned home and, as so many times before, punched in her name in the Google search station. He was even more eager now that he knew that she was alive.

He had been a bit apprehensive since he arrived. It felt as though all the love he once felt for Stella came rushing back once he stepped on the soil of this country and he was more determined to find his first true love. He toyed with the idea of asking his grandfather to use his connections to search for her, but hesitated... perhaps the time was not yet right and he would try and do what he could before relying on his grandfather for help.

On Wednesday morning, he woke early and decided to pay his grandfather a visit at the campaign office and start finding his way into the system and camaraderie of politics. He stepped into the office complex, which comprised of many offices. Lots of people were walking briskly about. He was about to open the door to his grandfather's office when his eyes caught sight of a young lady in a blue shirt, seated in an adjoining office. He was intrigued. Curiosity killed the cat and, as the door was slightly ajar, he peeked through the slight opening, affording him the opportunity to look and not be seen. The young woman was speaking crisply, giving instructions to a group of people, pointing to sheets on her laptop at the same time. Her profile was so beautiful and well coordinated, that Timmy was totally captivated, and yet he'd only seen her profile. He tried to remain unnoticed, but needed to step closer to take a better look.

He gasped with a sense of surprise. He knew he had seen that face before, somewhere. All of a sudden, blood rushed to his brain. He felt and almost lost his balance. He realized he had just seen a GHOST from his past. She was the one he had been looking for!

He retreated and entered his grandfather's office. He closed the door immediately. He stumbled to the side of the mahogany desk and leaned against it, swallowing hard. Within these walls was the same woman he'd searched everywhere for. The same woman who stole his heart several years ago! There was no denying it... This was STELLA SIMMON!

He was sweating and was aware of his labored breathing.

For a few seconds, he wondered whether his mind was playing tricks. Maybe it was just his imagination conjuring up the image because he had been looking for her so intensively over the past few weeks. But there was no way to know other than knocking on her office door. As soon as he was sure the meeting had finished and there were footsteps leading away from the adjacent office, he took a deep breath and stepped boldly out into the corridor.

He tapped on the door and walked in. She raised her head only slightly as though she didn't want to be disturbed.

Timmy cleared his throat. "Hello."

She began to unplug her laptop and roll up the cables. "Hi." She still hadn't looked at him. As she carefully lifted her laptop into its bag, she glanced up and asked, "How may I help you?" Then she stood up and stared at him.

Timmy was so sure she was the one. The fine features, the way her eyes blinked and her brows furrowed. Yet, she seemed not to acknowledge or recognize him. Had he changed that much?

She wore a crisp white shirt over black trousers that fitted her slim figure so well. She took his breath away. It dawned on him that she still held the key to the door of his heart, even after all these years.

Stella stood still, wondering who the gentleman was. He seemed oddly familiar. Perhaps he was lost? Perhaps a new employee. A handsome one too, she thought ruefully. "What can I do for you, sir?"

Timmy was confused at her formal attitude. Was it perhaps not Stella after all?

Timmy asked for a few minutes of her time, but Stella told him she had to attend a meeting. With Stella still perplexed about who he was, she agreed hesitantly to meet him for lunch. Stella left her office, looking a bit puzzled, trying very hard to remember who the gentleman was. She was sure she had seen him before, but where? In her job, she met a lot of people, but she could not place this man, yet a vague recollection kept scratching at the surface of her memory. She had agreed to the impromptu lunch out of curiosity...

She was disturbed by a niggling feeling throughout her meeting and battled to concentrate. At lunch time, she went straight to the cafeteria. She greeted her colleagues before going to sit at the table where Timmy was seated...

There were sighs and lifted eyebrows from many of the young ladies seated in the cafeteria as they gossiped and commented on the fact that the Chairman's grandson was having lunch with Stella.

Stella sat down, concentrating hard on the features of the man sitting across the table from her. She listened intently as Timmy introduced himself and tried to make her understand who he was and how he knew her. As a slow realization dawned on Stella, silent tears started rolling down her face. Her tears were

mirrored in Timmy's eyes. She wondered why she was crying, but could not stop the tears from flowing. As her memories came flooding back after all the years, she was overwhelmed with emotion. It pained her anew when she realized to what extent the tsunami had impacted on her life. She told Timmy what she could remember of what happened directly after the tsunami, but did not mention any personal details of her life after she was discharged from the hospital and returned to her parent's home... She wanted to be sure this was indeed the Timmy that she had fallen in love with so many years ago. She realized that she was whispering a silent prayer that the Lord would fully restore her memories.

Timmy had been waiting in the cafeteria since leaving Stella's office, counting the hours to lunch time. He refused to believe that fate could play his life's game. As they sat talking, reliving memories that had been shared, but all lost to Stella, the cafeteria emptied around them. Around 7pm, they reluctantly got up and left. They agreed to sleep on their conversation and meet again the next day. Timmy, however, could not fall asleep that night. Stella's sleep was also disturbed by nightmares about the tsunami and so they both tossed and turned in their separate beds.

Two weeks after their meeting, after having seeing each other every day, Timmy and Stella had become inseparable. Timmy was even allocated an office close to Stella's. Timmy had decided, however, not to share this amazing discovery with anyone just yet, not even with his beloved grandfather.

Through the office grapevine, however, Timmy's grandfather heard of the office romance. Not knowing about their shared background, he was not in favour of the idea of a relationship between Timmy and a co-employee.

A few weeks later on a Monday morning, Timmy's grandfather was seated on the office veranda with the morning's papers when his eye fell on a gossip column concerning his grandson's relationship with a woman who had a child out of wedlock. The reporter was questioning the values and integrity of their family. Realising that Timmy had been keeping a child a secret, infuriated and saddened him deeply.

Timmy's phone rang twice. He had just finished an early morning jog and was about to do a few laps in the swimming pool. The phone rang just as he was about

to head outside to the pool area.

“Hello, Grandpa.” Timmy said as he answered, recognizing his grandfather's caller id.

“Timothy, I want you in my office right now!” his grandfather growled.

Timmy was used to his grandfather's swinging moods and simply answered, “Yes, Grandpa. I'll get dressed and be there as soon as I can.”

Yet Timmy was uncomfortable. He decided to forgo the swimming, had a quick shower and drove straight to his grandfather's office.

As soon as Timmy entered his office, he could feel his temper and he wondered what could be wrong. He had only seen his grandfather really angry once before when a reporter wanted to dupe him to collect money with regards to his dead wife. He was angry then and it took the intervention of a personal friend and words from his own mother to pacify him.

Timmy greeted his grandfather, who did not even acknowledge his greeting, but burst out with a string of criticism towards Timmy for not acknowledging to him or his family that he had a child out of wedlock. Timmy was shocked and taken aback. He could not make any sense of his grandfather's allegations, until he showed him the column in the newspaper. Timmy's mind churned, uncomprehending, but his heart wanted to defend Stella. He left his grandfather's office, muttering that he would get to the root of the rumor.

Knowing Stella, he knew that she would be truthful and that there would be an explanation. Perhaps the child was adopted by her. He checked her office and saw that she was in a meeting with her secretary. He motioned to her and she nodded. She would see him as soon as she was done with the meeting.

A few minutes later, when she checked in at his office and saw Timmy looking downcast, she was immediately concerned and asked what was wrong.

Timmy did not want to beat around the bush. He looked straight into her eyes and asked, “Why did you not tell me about your son?” To Stella it sounded like an accusation.

She was momentarily taken aback and merely dropped her head, trying to gather her thoughts. When she looked up to face Timmy again, there were tears in her eyes. She remained quite calm and told Timmy that it was her personal life and she had no obligation to give him any explanation.

Hurt and confused, she accused him of not trusting her, and stormed out of his office, went into her office, grabbed her bag and walked out of the building.

Stella drove straight home, grabbed a few items of clothes, chose a few pairs of shoes and bolted out of the apartment in anger. She drove straight to her parents' home. Whilst driving, she started remembering a lot of things, she could not control the overwhelming tears that were pouring down her face and she knew without a doubt, that her son- her Tsunami baby - her very own Thomas, was indeed consummated on that night at the beach while she was with Timmy.

She knew now that she had never slept with any other man in her life until that night. Forgotten memories came rushing at her so suddenly that it almost blinded her, making her cry even more. Worried that she should not drive while so emotional, she decided to stop at a garage to catch her breath and have a drink in the hope of calming her nerves. As she parked her black Nissan Altima at the nearest bay, she noticed a burgundy Volvo and saw a beautiful woman dressed smartly in a green shirt and black pants. Despite her burdened emotions, something about the way the lady swayed her head and the way she brushed a few strands of hair from her forehead, reminded her of someone. Another memory seemed to be flickering just out of reach.

As the woman looked up and towards her, Stella quickly looked away. She did not want to embarrass herself by staring at a complete stranger. Then she heard her name being called and Stella stopped in her tracks. She turned around, realizing that it was the woman she had just been admiring that had called her name. She stared at the woman and suddenly she gasped, she wanted to scream, she could not believe her eyes, she was in actual fact staring at her long lost friend...  
SHERRY TIMAD.

The next moment they were hugging each other, both crying. They were so shocked and relieved at seeing one another after all these years. In their excitement they both forgot what brought them to the garage and they sat down together to catch up on their lost years of friendship.

Sherry told Stella how she was saved from the tsunami, simply because she decided to have an early night and so she was in her bed when the ordeal took place. As the water levels rose, she had clung to her bed post, praying. When the worst of the storm had passed and the sea had receded, debris and people were scattered all over. She had wandered out of the lodge and was confronted with the most horrific sights... Mangled bodies, some of which she had recognized as her co-students, had washed up on the beach amidst debris. Some of the injured were still breathing, including Stella, lying on the beach, unconscious. She remembered checking for her pulse and called the ambulance and emergency personnel and how she was taken immediately to the makeshift clinic at the site and how that was the last time she saw her. She told Stella that ever since that day she had prayed for her, even though she was not a real believer, but, she confessed, the tragedy made her embrace God from that day. She had accepted Christ into her life...

Sherry told Stella that her parents decided to pull her out of the school immediately, like so many students and enrolled her at another school closer to their home.

Stella could not prevent the tears from falling. She also told Sherry how she had searched for her. For a few hours they talked animatedly about their past and present and both vowed to renew their friendship bond. Both were able to graduate and were now full-fledged accountants working for reputable companies. They still had so much in common.

Sherry told Stella she would be getting married at the end of the year and would love her to be there. Tearfully, they both hugged each other and promised to stay in touch.

Stella drove off to reflect on their meeting. She was amazed that when everything looked so bleak, she had all of a sudden had an encounter with someone from her past that even confirmed every single thought in her head. She wondered aloud about how God works....

She smiled and drove on. Above the roar of her car engine she heard her cell phone ringing....she knew it would be Timmy, but she made up her mind not to talk to him until she had finally sorted out the whole puzzle. Stella now knew without a doubt that Thomas was indeed Timmy's son.

Upon arriving at her parents' house, looking exasperated and tired, her parents were both shocked. As it was only Monday they had not expected her and she had not informed them of her decision to come home. Her mother, seeing her blotched face, knew something was wrong.

She helped Stella with her bags and went with her to her room. Realizing that Stella wanted her privacy she obliged, leaving her alone to sort through her thoughts.

A few hours of sleep brought no relief to Stella. Her cell phone had been switched off. When she switched it on again, she saw that Timmy had called her several times. She switched it off again, not bothering to return his calls.

Her parents were concerned but respected her privacy. By dinner time, she was up. Tom had returned from school and wanted his mother's attention.

As soon as his mother woke, he was on top of her, sharing his latest artworks from school, his new friends and his upcoming debate.

After dinner Stella's mum came and sat with her, prodding her and wanting to know what was wrong. Her father simply kept his distance knowing that with time, his daughter would open up. But her mother had less patience. When Stella merely mentioned that it had to do with a man, her mother left it at that. She was relieved to hear that Stella was finally beginning to open up to the possibility of a relationship. She had prayed for her daughter, especially being the only female amongst her children; that she would find a man that would not only accept her for who she was, but also accept her son.

She advised Stella that she should not run away from her problems, reminded her to pray and commit everything into God's hands and face whatever situation at hand with faith and trust in God.

They kissed each other good night and Tom crawled into his mother's arms and fell asleep in her bed after only a few minutes.

Through the night Stella kept tossing about, wondering how to tell Timmy about his son. A part of her was angry that Timmy had seemingly deserted her, she was angry that she had to bear the pain alone, but she was forever grateful for the

love showered upon her by her understanding parents and ever supportive brothers and for the precious bundle of joy that was at the moment lying fast asleep in her arms. She remembered how they had all stood by her when she realized she was pregnant; she remembered painfully how disappointing she had felt at the disgrace she had brought upon her family by getting herself pregnant and not even knowing who the father was.

Meanwhile, earlier on Timmy had driven to Stella's apartment and realized that she was not there. All the doors were locked. He, called her several times on her cell phone, but it only rang. He prayed silently that she was okay. He drove home and decided to rethink the day's events.

Timmy eventually fell asleep, on the soft, plush couch in his apartment. The sudden harsh ringtone of his landline woke him up at 10minutes past 5 in the morning. At first he was confused and baffled that he had slept for that long, still in his office shirt and pants, he reached for the phone and answered...

"Hello"...croaked Timmy in a scratchy, early morning voice...

Mrs. Maxwell sounded agitated, Timmy...Timmy...good morning...

Timmy sat up and was worried...replying to his mother, Timmy said cheerily.. How are you Mom? What's up?

Mrs. Maxwell's replied that she was fine, but that she was bothered about the news she heard from her father with regards to Stella. She was more concerned that she came with a baby....she went on and on about the rigors of having someone else's baby in one's life....Timmy knew his mother well and knew not to argue with her when she was emotional. He listened patiently and then promised her that he would uncover the truth and that he would not make any harsh decisions. He promised his mother that he would not embarrass the family much less his grandfather.

As Timmy hung up, he remembered the tension of the previous day. He got up and grabbed his cell phone and tried Stella's mobile number again, but it was still switched off. He made his way into his room to freshen up for the day, hoping that it would be a whole lot better than the previous one.

Around 8am, Timmy had arrived, rather sluggishly, at work, hoping that Stella would decide to come in early.

He walked into his office and decided to start preparing for his internship at the family's private clinic. He would also continue to call Stella until she picked up her phone.

Around 10am, Stella woke with a bad headache and a fever. With Tom already at school, she decided to sleep in and did not even bother to switch on her cell-phone.

By around noon, Timmy could not contain his frustration anymore and decided to track Stella down. He spoke to a few of her colleagues at work, but few of them knew her home address or that of her parents. Although everyone loved her spirit, she had been a very reserved and private girl.

Timmy managed to avoid his grandfather throughout the morning and had made the necessary phone calls to start his internship in a month's time. Now he decided to pack up and leave for home, but decided to check Stella's house one more time.

Timmy's second stop-over at Stella's apartment was unsuccessful. By evening, Timmy had not yet received any word from Stella and had no means of reaching her. He was regretting his accusatory attitude towards her. Not being able to speak to her to apologise, Timmy knelt down and prayed to God to make a way for him out of the mess and help him to find Stella again.

Stella stayed at her parents' house for almost a week without receiving calls. The only call she made was to her immediate boss at work, asking for a few days of rest due to family problems. She promised to make up for her missed time at work and begged him not to reveal her whereabouts to anyone, including the Chairman's son.

Exactly a week after Stella walked out of her office, she made plans to return and talk to Timmy about their son. She made up her mind that if Timmy refused to believe her, she could do nothing but walk out of his life for good. Although she was still sad about Timmy's initial response, her concerns were more with her son and the effect that the new-found truth would have on him. Yet, she now felt

an inner peace after hours and days of praying.

As she gets ready to leave her parents home, she knelt down besides her bed one last time and prayed a sinner's prayer. She had gone over everything that happened to her. The Lord had granted unto her, her prayer request by restoring her memory. She felt so ashamed at letting Him down in some areas of her life, so she prayed continuously and did not get up until she found peace...

She then went to her parents and asked them to forgive her for her irresponsible actions when she was younger and the shame she had brought on the family. They hugged her, told her that she had been forgiven a long time ago and prayed for her. Stella promised them that she would sort things out amicably. They kissed her and saw her off. Her parents were relieved to see her looking so more peaceful than she had when she had arrived a week earlier.

She drove straight to her office, but as she rounded the last corner, she saw Timmy's car leaving the parking lot. Momentarily distracted, she did not notice the oncoming vehicle. There was a screeching of brakes and then her car collided head-on with the other car.

Although Stella was surrounded by broken glass and could hear raised voices all around and noticed blood on her hands, all she felt was peace amidst the chaos. She fell into semi consciousness and saw herself reliving every single thing that happened, she saw Timmy, saw her son and saw herself been reunited and then everything became dark.

Someone was calling her name and she tried to answer, but could not. She wanted to raise her hand, but someone with a soft, polite voice asked her to lie still. She was told she would be placed on a stretcher and taken to the hospital right away. She gathered from the concerned expressions on the faces of the paramedics that she was fortunate to be alive... for the second time in her short life.

She realized someone else was calling her name, gently. She looked around and saw Timmy. Tears suddenly and involuntarily streamed down her cheeks.

Timmy touched her forehead, "Stella," he begged, "please, don't leave me again. Please forgive me. No matter what, I still love you..."

Stella was admitted to the hospital and Timmy visited her every day. He practically worked out of her hospital room. Whilst sitting next to her, watching how peacefully she slept, he thought of everything that happened and how the Lord had been so merciful to bring Stella back into his life. As he sat, he bowed his head and prayed, using the words of Psalm 51. He begged God for a cleansing of his heart, just like David did, he confessed all his actions, he remembered the forbidden apple he had eaten with Stella years back and he promised God to always abide by His will henceforth. He shed tears of shame and felt at peace at last when he knew without a doubt that he had been forgiven.

After a couple of days Stella had made a full recovery. She was discharged and decided to invite Timmy to her parent's home so that she could formally introduce them.

As Timmy and Stella stepped from the car at Stella's parent's house, Thomas ran out, toy in hand, calling out to her excitedly, "Mummy, Mummy!" He stopped abruptly when he noticed Timmy.

Timmy stared at the little boy. He felt a strange, joyful tingling in his soul. Stella looked from the one to the other and then announced, "Timmy, meet Thomas, your son."

Timmy glared at her in shock. Had he known; had he suspected; had he calculated the dates... and then struggled with the truth? The sound that was wrenched from his throat was almost a cry.

Stella smiled at the strange expression on Timmy's face – utter surprise and astonishment mixed with relief and joy. "I will tell you all later..." was all she said

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Thirteen months later, the plane bringing the Maxwells from Corner Brook, landed safely. They were met by Timmy, Stella and Thomas. There was so much joy at the first meeting between the Maxwells and their grandson. After having been told the good news telephonically, they had agreed to visit and assist in helping with the wedding arrangements.

That was the day, at around 6:15p.m, that Celine Doherty - now Mrs. Simmon -

and Marty Williams - now Mrs. Maxwell - met again after so many years. There were tears of joy as recognition dawned on them. Once the initial surprise, they sat down together and shared a lifetime of stories. They both found peace, realizing that the Lord had kept their promises for them.

Two weeks later, Timmy and Stella were married in a Cathedral Church with all the family members present and Thomas as the proud ring bearer.

*To God be the glory.*

## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Welcome back to reality. I am sure you were delighted that Stella and Timmy eventually got married and Grandpa got to know about his grandson – Thomas Dale.

Real life stories do not always have happy endings, but I pray that your story will have one. I realize that you may be going through a season in your life. Do you presently feel that you have let God down or that you have made mistakes or that God is really angry with you?

We have all been there. We have all let someone- or even God down in our lives and that is why we are called human beings. We are simply not perfect, but we are forgiven.

Just like Stella & Timmy asked for forgiveness of their sins from the Lord Almighty, you can also do so. The Lord is merciful and I know from my faith in Him that He will surely forgive you and open a new page for you to start from. He will blot away your sins (Acts 3:19). He also promised us this in Hebrews 10:17. He said “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more”.

Have you been abandoned by people? Left to fend for yourself or to cover your shame? The Lord can remove your reproach and bless you abundantly, just like He did for Thomas Dale - a sudden grandson to an influential man, He will take you from the miry clay and place your feet amongst the princes of this world. He will raise men and women up to compete to be of help to you. You will become blessed and influential.

What if you have personally vowed not to forgive that “person” in your life? Stella had many reasons to do just that, but she chose not to. It is your decision to make. Please, decide like her. Evaluate the situation one more time, hand it over to God again and let God give you the wisdom to go about resolving the issue and most especially, forgiving that person.

Finally, once you have sorted out the issues in your life, then I welcome you into a great relationship with God. One in which you will start to enjoy His numerous blessings. Timmy was saved simply because God was with him; the saving hand in the midst of a Tsunami was God. He can do much more for you if you let Him. When the Tsunamis of this world come in various shapes and sizes, God will lift you up and surprise you. He will astonish you!

Thanks so much and see you on top.

God's Blessings

Ibukunolu

## GRATITUDE....

From the bottom of my heart I say a big thank you to the following people that made it possible for this book to be published.

Lizelle van der Walt...Thanks for the excellent job that you do, your proofreading speaks volumes... Thank you so much.

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My entire family, sisters & brothers...thanks for the prayers, support and love, my two mothers....Mummy Jeje & Mummy Ogunsina ... talking with you two on the phone is indeed a testimony that God answers prayers. I know that more is yet to come and you shall both testify in Jesus name.

Calvary Book Club Ladies....I can only say thank you....you have prayed for me, encouraged me and I thank you so much for all those wonderful times of sheer joy and jokes...I look forward to having more with you all.

My South African friends.... you still love me and you spur me on...may God continue to lift you up. Thanks for your words of encouragement even via facebook.

My Children.....so many nights of “white rice & stew...” just because Mummy is thinking of a new plot...I am happy that we are populating the kingdom of God together. I love you my angels

My Husband.....Wow...you are indeed my soulmate...thanks for always supporting me and cheering me on...I love you more today than I did yesterday.

God....Thank you for being God the Almighty...The Rose of Sharon...My Creator....Thanks for the talents and for the ability to use them for Your glory....I am still in awe of You.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ibukunolu Ogunsina, a new voice in Christian fiction, is a prolific writer. She holds a Masters Degree in Information Technology from the University of Pretoria, South Africa and a B.Sc (Honours) in Computer Science / Economics from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Ibukunolu is an ordained Minister of God and she also holds a Certificate in Theology from the Redeemed Christian Church of God, South Africa.

She currently resides in Newfoundland, Canada with her husband, Dr. Olusola Ayodeji Ogunsina, a Family Physician and they are both blessed with children.



## BOOK SUMMARY – JOY'S BLESSINGS

Two best friends made a promise to each other in their teens. Two lovers met briefly and were forced apart for years by a Tsunami!

Only God could have woven their lives together across thousands of miles and over many years.

Only God could have answered tearful prayers, kept a tiny heartbeat alive against all odds, given a second chance and made a way where there was none.

As you read Ibukunolu's third book, be ready to dive into moments of love. You will be reluctant to return to the real world and in the midst of it all, be ready to experience the mighty saving hands of the Lord Almighty in various circumstances.

## GET CONNECTED TO US

We strongly believe you have been blessed through this book. We are praying for you and have an assurance in God that as you read this book, He will cause a turnaround for good in your relationship and marriage. We will love to hear from you, you can either call us or drop a mail in our inbox; we will like to pray along with you.

If you are also looking for a deeper and personal relationship with God and you want to start enjoying eternal peace in all spheres of your life, you can simply pray the below prayer of salvation and contact us, we will be waiting to read from you. The angels in heaven rejoice for each and every single soul saved for God and we pray they will rejoice over you too.

### Prayer of Salvation

“Father, I am a sinner and fallen short of Your grace. I have come to You for the forgiveness of all my sins. I am truly sorry, I believe that Jesus Christ – Your son died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. I have come to You now, asking You to take control of my life. Please, send Your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

### Contact Details

Website: [www.joyfulmarriage.org](http://www.joyfulmarriage.org)

Twitter: @JoyfulMarriage

E-mail: [counselling@joyfulmarriage.org](mailto:counselling@joyfulmarriage.org)

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P.O. Box 521

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## It could only have been God....

Two best friends made a promise to each other in their teens.  
Two lovers met briefly and were forced apart for years by a  
Tsunami!

Only God could have woven their lives together across  
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Ibukunolu Ogunsina, a new voice in Christian fiction, is a prolific writer. She holds a Masters Degree in Information Technology from the University of Pretoria, South Africa and a B.Sc (Honours) in Computer Science / Economics from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

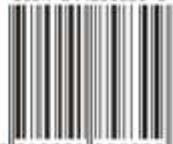
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