

## **The Reunion**

**Written by Ibukunolu Ogunsina**  
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### **Chapter One**

Our private jet landed on a California air strip and taxied over to a private terminal. With a few minutes to spare, we disembarked quickly and walked to the waiting limousine. The driver sped off and as I looked through the window as we approached the Hotel Pennsylvania, I could see that the signs were boldly written in red, the neon lights were colourful and bright, even at 7 pm in the evening.

My husband gave me a brief peck on the cheek and smiled into my face. I could smell his favourite cologne...the Armani Code. I simply smiled back and mouthed the words I have gotten so used to saying every day since I set my eyes on him, fifteen years ago...the words that mean so much to him, because they are spoken from my heart, "I love you my crown." He chuckled and squeezed my fingers.

As we approached the hotel lobby our driver slowed the vehicle, parked behind a grey Mercedes Benz, quickly got out and opened the doors for us. I said a quick thank you in his direction and looked up to the skies one more time to offer my thanksgiving prayers to God for making this opportunity possible.

As my husband and I stepped into the foyer, all eyes were on us, literally. I am married to the most handsome man on earth, but that was not what drew their gaze towards us. It was because my husband had recently been appointed as the Minister of Health and I happened to be married to this gorgeous and God fearing man.

Despite being very busy, he had promised to be by my side always and at all events and that meant so much to me and would mean so much more to me at the 20th reunion of my Alma mater, where most of my ex - classmates were attending. I had dreamt of this day simply to bring final closure to an issue that I had been battling with for a very long time.

I received the invitation about two months ago and I immediately noticed the RSVP name. I knew that name, but chose to remember it only in my mind and never allowed it in my life....his name...my first boyfriend...the man who raped me...

I showed the invitation to my husband and reminded him of what I had told him before we got engaged. At first I doubted my reasoning for wanting to go....my husband only laughed politely and recounted word for word what happened to me. I could not believe he remembered. Tears welled up in my eyes. He held me tight and told me to go to the reunion and finally forgive him. He then promised that whatever his schedule, he would make time and go with me. He picked up my hands, held them firmly and lovingly between his and prayed for me to have strength.

That night I tossed around on my bed, searching for sleep but found none but then all of a sudden, fell deeply into a trance and the event of that day came rushing by....Tade was my first boyfriend, the only guy I had fallen in love with the minute my eyes fell upon him at our matriculation ceremony into the university, he completely swept me off my feet. We were practically seen together and tagged "the lovers" by our course mates, my parents met him once during one of their scheduled visits and they both fell in love with him. He was nice, jolly and very friendly, we were so young and naive and one day in our third year of relationship and with a year left before graduation. Tade invited me over to his boy's quarters off campus on the pretext of giving me a surprise birthday gift.

Suspecting nothing but a bit unsettled at the fact that he looked a bit tipsy but I simply assumed he was just unnecessarily jovial....but then after a few minutes at his place, he slammed the door shut and forced himself onto me, I struggled with him, fought so hard but he eventually overpowered me...since that day and up till today I have always wondered what took over him, although he had pressed me severally earlier on at the beginning of our relationship but I never succumbed and I told him I wanted to keep myself pure till my wedding night, even though I was not a strong Christian then but with a Pentecostal background, it was well drummed into my brains by my parents to remain pure until my wedding night..

When the whole ordeal ended, Tade avoided my stare, he refused to look at the tears streaming down my face, he cupped his face in shame, and as I got up from his bed, making my way out of his BQ and out of his life for good without ever saying a word, I looked at him and shook my head.

A few days later, he tried so many times to apologise, he sent emissaries to me but throughout our last year at the university, we never spoke a word to each other, words got round the campus and I became a laughing stock on campus, to make matters worse, not only did I lose my virginity, the rape also resulted into an unwanted pregnancy.

Full of deep seated anger and hatred in me but out of sheer love and fear for God, I made up my mind to keep the baby, going through an abortion was just not my idea, and the thoughts of hurting the innocent baby were too much for me to bear. I made up my mind to remain a single parent forever but the Lord read my mind. He saw past my pains, He was so in tuned with every single strand of bitterness in my heart, He felt my sincere need for a new start and through a natural cause and no fault of mine, the pregnancy self terminated itself after 12 weeks, once the foetus was evacuated from my womb. I summoned up the little courage I had left in me by simply focussing hard on my final year courses and eventually graduated with honours.

## Chapter Two

That event changed me, I hated men altogether, I simply refused to give men a chance in my life by turning so many admirers down. If I had a chance Tade would have been poisoned by me, I swore never to forgive him as long as I had breath in me, and funny enough the last time I saw him briefly was at our graduation and as usual I walked past him without batting an eye. He had obviously moved on because he had a girl holding onto him at the event.

The venom and hatred was still solidly rooted in me until my husband walked into my life. We met on the plane and were seated next to each other for the 12-hour flight. He tried so much to chat me up, but I was simply not interested and wow...the guy was persistent and when he got on my nerves, all he succeeded in getting from me was my mobile number and email address.

And they say, the rest is history. I know that God brought my husband into my life for a reason; He brought him to give me a second chance to trust again, to set me free and to help heal my past.

My husband met me at a point where anger towards men was my middle name but he succeeded in introducing me back to my Creator, and simply watching him worship his God unashamedly, made me fell totally in love with him. He serves God like no other person and respects everyone, trying to make old and young people comfortable around him and always finding a way out to ease their troubles.

It was no surprise when a call came through from the President's office to nominate him as the Minister of Health. People noticed his love for his job and his sincere desire to help humanity and by so doing, God supernaturally raised men and women up to compete to promote him...

Now the day is here and the time has finally arrived for my faith to be tested...

How will I react? What will I say?

As we stepped into the foyer, protocols were observed and my husband and I were treated like royalty - that which we are in fact in Christ, not because of his position.

About two hours into the programme, it was time for socializing and dinner. My husband's attention was drawn away by the Master of ceremony (MC) and as I was about to approach the buffet table on my own, I heard a clearing of throat behind me. I glanced back, only to be faced with him....Tade Thomdoy.

He had changed...who wouldn't after 21 years? His hair had greyed slightly, he had grown a beard and put on some weight, but I recognised him immediately and could see that he was quite unsettled.

I managed a smile, said a word of prayer inwardly and ask the Holy Spirit for assistance and guidance. I glanced towards my husband, but saw he was still engrossed with the MC.

Tade extended his hand to shake mine, but I declined.

Instead, I stepped towards him and hugged him...Tade was shocked and so was I!

After a few minutes, with tears threatening to spill over, he said that he wanted me to forgive him. I smiled and answered that I had, so many years ago, but that today I had finally realised it.

As soon as the words were out, I felt my husband next to me and realised that he had found me. He held me by the hips; apologized for leaving me on my own and turned towards Tade.....he extended his hands towards him and said,"I know you..." Tade was flabbergasted...at a loss for words.

My husband told Tade that the MC whom he had been talking to confirmed his name upon asking for him and that was why he was so sure it was him.

Trepidation and fear was written all over Tade's face, but then my husband, the Minister, the man that taught me to look beyond and let go, the man who showed me that if God can forgive us as human beings, who are we not to do so, the man that has a million reasons to be full of pride but chooses to worship God on the floor of his room, simply grabbed Tade's hands, pressed a business card in his palm and said, "All is well. It is good to finally meet you. Please feel free to contact my office at anytime should you need anything."

It was obvious from his expression that Tade could not believe it. He mouthed a few words of thanks, holding onto the business card like a lifeline, still obviously shaken and turned to leave.

As I watched him leave, I looked into my husband's loving eyes and could see why God had decided to bless him and all I could say for the umpteenth time that day was, "I love you, my crown."

As the hours drew on, I saw classmates I had not seen in years, people that knew Tade and me when we were at school and had heard the rumours, but they realized I had moved on. They realized that God had indeed promoted me. The devil had intended Tade's hurtful actions to ruin my life, but instead, not only was my destiny changed, The Lord also changed my name.

Would I have forgiven him if I had not married my husband? I am not sure, but I know that marrying my husband had made it possible for me to let go of the past hurts. He helped me to hand it over to God and not be a prisoner of my past. My husband has been richly blessed, simply because he has the fear of God in him and because he chooses to forgive easily. I can truly see the love of Christ in him.

As the party drew to an end, suddenly missing and thinking of my children away at their boarding schools, I heaved a sigh of relief and I knew without a doubt that an unfortunate chapter in my life had also ended and I could say with joy in my heart, "Thank you, Jesus."

### **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.

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