

Snatched Out of Darkness

By June Whittle

My Testimony

‘Money in my pocket but I just can’t buy no love...’ Dennis Brown’s smooth voice boomed through the speaker boxes. Loud chatting and laughter blended with the music. But there was one person in the room who wasn’t laughing. His angry eyes followed me.

Seconds before midnight the DJ stopped the music. “5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Happy New Year! It’s the 1st January 2000. Let’s celebrate!”

The atmosphere was thick with smoke and the aroma of alcohol. We exchanged new year’s greetings. Someone tugged harshly at my blouse. “Aren’t you going to wish me Happy New Year? No time for me eh?”

I reached out to embrace my ex husband. He pushed past me and marched to the other side of the room. An uneasy restless feeling shivered through my body. Thirty minutes later his pent up rage exploded. I took shelter in my sister’s room from the blitz of verbal abuse. He stormed out of the party and I took a taxi home.

I sat on my bed frowning. One hand clutched a large glass of brandy, a packet of cigarettes dangled out the other. Our explosive history was repeating itself once again. The violent fights, humiliating slanging matches, tears and name callings resurrected in my memory. My dad warned me about rushing back to my ex. I didn’t listen.

I thought about the vicar who often invited us to the local church. We were too busy having fun, however. The church didn’t blend with our lifestyle of drinking, smoking and partying. I was full of sin and not clean enough to mix with holy people.

I believed God existed, and recited the Lord’s prayer when I was depressed. And I shouted out Psalm 23 at nights as a weapon against the invisible hands pressing me down into my bed. I would lay there paralyzed and couldn’t breathe. It was scary. My uncle said it was spiritual attacks.

January 2000 started gloomily. My dad called. He was weeping on the phone. Later that night he was rushed to the accident and emergency at the hospital. He was in unbearable pain. The doctors carried out tests to find out what was wrong with him. Three days later the results came back with news that made my world crumble. He had prostate cancer.

I tried to numb the pain in my head and heart with brandy and cigarettes. What was going on? My horoscope for 2000 was rubbish! It didn't predict my dad getting cancer. Or my relationship with my ex husband not working.

I went to visit dad the following week. Seeing him upset me. I couldn't believe it was my dad. He could barely walk. The distressed look in his eyes mirrored the pain in his body.

His health deteriorated quickly and he ended up in a care home. The cancer spread to his throat. It was downhill from then. He died two months later and a big chapter of my life closed.

I missed my dad. Nothing could fill that emptiness. Crying became part of my daily routine.

After his funeral I didn't have the energy or will to carry on with my ex. We hardly spoke, except to argue. The relationship fizzled out and ended.

Although we weren't together, he still came to see our daughter at the weekends. Ten minutes after he left my house one Saturday the telephone rang. My ex called to reveal a long hidden secret. He dropped a bombshell about the secret child he had with his ex girlfriend. When I got over the shock, my mouth went into verbal diarrhoea. I cursed him and told him to stay away from us.

He called me during the week to apologize. But I was so disgusted I couldn't even talk to him. Forgiving him was out of the question.

I was angry, disappointed, hurt and betrayed. How could he cheat on me? I hated him. Brandy, cigarettes and tears were my only comfort.

In May, two months after my dad died, my ex turned up at our daughter's school. How dare he? I was fuming. I didn't want anything to do with him. He was invading my territory.

11.30 that night my ex brother-in-law phoned. I was half asleep so my eldest daughter answered the phone. Suddenly she lets out an ear piercing scream. "He's dead mum. He's dead!"

Surely I was dreaming? "What did you say?"

"I can't believe it. He's dead," she repeated. My ex husband had committed suicide.

I calmly climbed into my bed and sat on the edge of it gazing into space. Suddenly, like a bomb, the news hit me. I felt like my heart was ripped out and trampled on. It dawned on me that I still loved him.

Oh God! What about our five year old daughter? Guilt washed over me. If only I didn't swear at him. If only I wasn't so nasty to him. If only I'd taken him back. If only's kept repeating itself like a spinning record. Why? How? Questions pumped themselves through my brains.

In the morning our daughter came up to me. She saw the gloomy look on my face. "Mummy, what's wrong?"

I didn't have the courage to tell her the truth. I made up a story about her dad dying in an accident. She became hysterical.

For the next few months the grief was bottomless. Day and night I mourned the unexpected deaths of two people who played a major part in my life. Plus I had to comfort my daughters.

The vicar heard about our misfortunes and invited us to church. I didn't resist. I couldn't! I had never sat through a full service before. But I

enjoyed it. People I didn't even know came over to greet me at the end. They radiated love that warmed my soul. I found peace and soon became a member.

June 2000 brought good news. My eldest daughter found out she was pregnant. It helped to ease the pain of our loss. We had something wonderful to look forward to.

I got baptized in September 2000. An amazing feeling of love, joy, peace and warmth filled my heart that week. I discovered a new inner strength that wasn't there before.

A friend gave me a booklet 'Why Jesus?' written by Nicky Gumbel. I read it and prayed the salvation prayer on the back page. I gave my life to Jesus and everything about me changed.

I attended an Alpha course at the church and started praying every day. I asked God to take away my addiction and cravings for smoking and drinking. It worked and two weeks later I was free. I didn't have any urge to smoke or drink anymore. It was an amazing feeling.

My daughter's baby was born in December 2000. He was a beautiful baby boy. On the 23rd December, two weeks after his birth, tragedy struck again. He died of SIDS (Sudden Infants Death Syndrome). Our world was turned upside down. The pain was agonizing but I knew God was with me.

A Christian counselor met with me weekly for prayers. One day during prayers I saw a vision of myself as a little girl. I was in a field and Jesus was there. He opened his arms and I ran towards Him. He gently lifted me up and cuddled me. I felt safe and secure. Healing started that day.

The journey wasn't easy but I coped. When sadness overwhelmed me, I cried out to God. He always comforted me.

“You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?” ~ (Psalms 56:8)

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” ~ (Psalm 34:18)

Coping with the deaths of three people close to me in one year was traumatic. I lost weight and my blood pressure dropped. If I didn't find God, I can't imagine what my life would have been like. I probably would have ended up an alcoholic, turned to hard drugs or even committed suicide.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” ~ (John 8:12)

Thirteen years later, the memories are still there. But I thank God because He ***snatched me out of darkness***. He gave me hope when I felt lost. He supported me when I wanted to give up. When I was down He lifted me up.

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I shared this testimony because God deserves the glory for what He did in my life. If you're at rock-bottom or feel like ending it all, please don't. God is only a prayer away. He's always on call. His arms are open wide waiting for you to run to Him. It doesn't matter what condition you're in, He'll never turn you away.

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I would like to thank Bobbie Cole who helped me to put my testimony together. Her course [**'Start Writing your Christian Testimony'**](#) was a fantastic guide. If you want to write your testimony and don't know

how or where to start, I would highly recommend using her course. The best part is that it's completely *free!*

Check out Bobbie's website <http://testimonytrain.com/> to read her testimony. It's very inspiring and shows how God can work in your life, even when you don't know Him.