The Ladies in Room C4

A HeFoundMeStory: Three Stories. One Sacred Collision.

CHAPTER 1

It was midnight. Maybe around 2 a.m. The owls cried from the trees. The bushes rustled with rats. Aside from that, everything was silent. And there was Zoey, standing at the edge of a cliff. She'd been running. Not from danger, but from pain.

Earlier that evening, around 6 p.m., her brother had called the house, their mother had collapsed in her sleep and wouldn't wake up. She was gone. Zoey sat in stillness for six long hours. Grief pressed against her chest like a wall. Questions spiraled through her mind like wildfire. How would I survive now? How would I cope? She was all we had. No dad. No aunt. No uncle. Just a few bitter extended relatives who wanted nothing to do with them. By the time her mind broke down, her legs had joined in. She ran. For two hours.

Until her feet stopped at the very edge of that cliff. The same park her mom used to bring her to as a child. She hadn't realized where she was. But now, standing there - staring into the dark abyss - it all became real. She could suddenly feel her skin again. The sting of the night wind. The sharp pain in her chest. The burning heat of her tear-soaked face. She looked down at her palms and whispered, "She's gone. Mom is no more. What do I do?", She bent to the ground and sobbed. Long. Hard. Loud.

And then, a tap. A firm hand gripped her shoulder. Sirens in the distance. Lights flashing. "Are you Miss Zoey Manchester?" the officer asked. She couldn't respond. The name didn't register. Then she heard it - her brother's voice, breaking through the night.

"Zoey! Thank God we found you!

I couldn't have coped if I'd lost you too."

Then, she woke up. It had been the same recurring dream. For five years now. The night her mom died had frozen time. Like a broken record, it played again and again. The night it became her and her brother… against the world. Or rather - the night the world won the battle of greatness with Zoey. A battle she hadn't even known she was fighting.

Zoey Manchester. 22 years old. 5'6. Brunette. Flawlessly fair skin. A round, gentle figure. Eyes the color of quiet storm - brown, with a sparkle that only showed when she smiled, which was rare. Two deep dimples carved in sorrow. She hated being called beautiful. To her, there was nothing beautiful about life… so how could she be?

She dressed like a shadow - faded, muted, tucked into the background. Her presence whispered, “Don’t notice me.” Final year student at Pearls University - one of the most overlooked institutions in the country. It was a school known for “the unserious, the poor, and the unambitious.” But Zoey didn’t mind. At this point, she was simply breathing, since nothing had taken her breath away yet.

“Hey, Zoo, we’re going to Kelvin’s party tonight. Wanna come?”. That was Lisa, her chatty, bubbly, self-declared best friend. Same height. Blonde hair. Fair skin. Brown eyes. Roommate of three months.

“He totally likes you, by the way,” Lisa teased. “He’s been showing up here ever since I moved in. He’s so into you.” Zoey didn’t answer. She’d been drowning in movies and snacks for a week,

after failing her last semester's exams. Her side of the room was chaos. Soda cans. Empty chip bags. Crumbs and wrappers. The only clean item of hers that could be sighted was her bathroom slippers. "Purrr, girl! You have got to leave this room and go have a bath!" Lisa continued. "You smell like ten months of dirt. How are you going to get a man like that?"

Suddenly, the door creaked open. A 5-foot-tall young lady walked in, luggage in hand, looking completely battered—like she'd just wrestled her way up a hundred flights of stairs. She had. She had climbed to the **third floor of Ruby Dorm**, dragging her things all the way to **Room C4** - one of the finest female rooms in all of Pearls University. A corner that looked quiet from the outside… but carried stories the world hadn't heard yet.

"I'm so sorry, ladies," she said breathlessly, walking straight to her assigned corner opposite Zoey's. "I know I should've knocked, but I just wanted to collapse on my bed. The elevator jammed, so I dragged my luggage up three flights of stairs. My car broke down earlier after dropping off my siblings at boarding school. And now I need to rest so I can make it to Bible study by 7." She paused. Smiled faintly. "I'm Anastasia Ayomide. Final-year Law. People call me Pearl's Activist." Lisa gasped. "You're the girl from the news! The one who fought against that slander article saying Pearl's Uni is for failures! You disappeared after the win, what happened??" Anastasia sighed. "It's a long story," she said, unpacking. "You've got to tell us! Right, Zoo? Aren't you curious?" Lisa turned. Zoey just nodded, more to end the conversation than to engage. She had no energy left for social

dramatics. “Well… I have four hours before Bible study,” Anastasia said, checking Lisa’s pink Barbie wall clock. “I can spare two to tell you my story.” “Oh this is gonna be good!” Lisa squealed, jumping to grab Zoey's snacks and settle in. Zoey clenched her jaw. It wasn’t the story. It wasn’t even Anastasia. It was Lisa. Always talking. Always inserting herself. Always dragging Zoey into conversations she never asked to be part of. For the past three months, she had invaded every corner of Zoey’s silence, filling the room with noise, with perfume, with comments, with questions. And now she had crossed the line. Grabbing her snacks like they belonged to her. Throwing excitement around like pain didn’t live in the room too. Something in Zoey snapped. She jumped up from the bed, words forming on her tongue, ready to cut Lisa down with the truth she had been swallowing for days. That she

wasn't her friend. That she should mind her space. That not everyone wants to be saved with sugar and noise. But just as the words rushed toward her mouth, a foul smell hit her nose. She paused. It was coming from her. Disgusted, she rushed to the bathroom to shower. Even if I want to die, she thought, it won't be by smell. Lisa burst out laughing. "Ana, don't worry about Zoo. She's weird. She's been in that bed for days. I've been telling her she stinks. I guess she just believed me." Anastasia smiled gently. "How about we clean the room and unpack together while we wait?"

45 minutes later…

Zoey stood at the bathroom door, frozen. Her side of the room was spotless. Clean sheets. A new bedspread. Her mother's picture frame was wiped and placed by her bedside cupboard. Her

reading table neatly arranged. Her phone and laptop plugged in to be charged. And a fresh, flowery fragrance kissed the air. “Wow,” she whispered. Lisa turned, wide-eyed. “Zoo, you’re smiling. You can smile?!” Zoey shrugged, walked to her bed, and whispered, “What happened to my corner?” Anastasia handed her a snack and sat down. “We cleaned it. Since you were cleaning yourself, I thought the room should match. Peace offering for barging in. And… a gift.” Zoey sat. Her eyes scanned the room again. No one had done anything this kind for her since her mother passed. “Thank you,” she said quietly. And for the first time in years, she sat up straight. Pulled the blanket over her lap. And waited, ready to listen. Lisa stared, stunned. Zoey had spoken more in five minutes than she had in three months. Anastasia smiled. And began to tell her story.

CHAPTER 2

The Ladies in Room C4: We Choose Life

"I'd have to start from the very beginning, so listen attentively," Anastasia said, giving a tired but serious look as she pulled out the chair at her reading table and sat upright. She wanted them to know this wasn't just another story. This was her becoming.

"My dad's name is Charles Daniels. He was the only child of one of the Beverly Hills tycoons, heir to Royal Pack conglomerate."

"What?!" Zoey gasped, sitting upright. "Royal Pack?!" Her tone was sharp, agitated. That was the same company that owned the private park her mom used to take her to as a child. The place was unrecognizable now.

"I'm sorry. Please, continue," Zoey said quickly, shocked by the sound of her own voice.

Lisa shrugged and motioned for Anastasia to continue. This wasn't the first time Zoey had reacted out of turn.

Anastasia blinked, surprised by the outburst, but picked up where she left off. "Yeah… Royal Pack. My dad lost his parents in a car accident when he was just twelve. While he was still in the hospital recovering, his father's brothers cleared out every property and plotted to kill him too."

Lisa raised a brow. "Oh, this is going to be interesting. The granddaughter of the owner of half this state is now our roommate. From grace to grass."

Zoey threw her a glare sharp enough to slice silence.

Anastasia pressed on. "They hired a doctor to end his life during surgery, but his driver—Mr. Enoch Ayomide, a Nigerian—snuck him out of the hospital that night. The doctor never reported that Charles had survived. The Daniels brothers moved on as though the entire family had perished and claimed the company for themselves."

"My dad recovered in a year. Mr. Ayomide spent his savings to care for him, and afterward, he and his wife moved with my dad to Lagos, Nigeria. They adopted him as their own. He lived as their only child for years while they battled infertility."

She paused, then smiled faintly. "My dad learned to love again. He made friends, adapted to Nigeria. At twenty, he returned to the States to study property development. He used the name Charles Ayomide. That's when he met my

mom—Natasha. They were young, wild and of course In love."

Anastasia sighed. "But rough love births rough consequences. My mom left me with him after I was weaned at eight months, she vanished and he was heartbroken and Filled with resentment toward his parents for dying, his uncles for stealing everything, and their profound hatred towards him, Mr. Ayomide for saving him. He didn't want life anymore."

Lisa's smile slowly faded.

"Then… he met Jesus."

Anastasia's voice softened. "One night, after finding eight-month-old me asleep on his bed in the dorm, abandoned by my mom, he went to a church called The Potter's Home and cried at the

altar and God met him there. And these are the words He said to him:

'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live...' — Deuteronomy 30:19-20

'Remember the Lord thy God, for it is He who gives thee power to get wealth...' — Deuteronomy 8:18

'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' — Matthew 28:20

That night, my dad chose life. That's why he named me Anastasia—Greek for resurrection. And he gave me his foster father's last name, Ayomide, because I was the sign that joy had returned."

She paused. Her hands trembled. "But that's just the beginning."

Lisa raised a brow. "We asked about your disappearance, Ana, not your dad's biography."

The joke fell flat. No one laughed.

Ana offered a tired smile. "I had to take you to the roots. If it makes you uncomfortable, I can stop. I do need to get ready for Bible study."

"Please continue," Zoey blurted out, surprising even herself. Lisa pouted. Zoey never listened to anything she said. But somehow… Ana had her attention.

Anastasia sat up straighter, encouraged. "My dad did become wealthy. He interned at a real estate agency, worked two other jobs, and raised me

alone. But when I was eight, he met a woman. Fell in love. Married her and had twins—Charles Jr. and Chloe.

But as his new life began, I was handed off.

In that same year, I was molested at school. Then again, and again. Different schools, different predators. I changed schools every year, Each time I spoke up my reports were ignored. ‘At least you weren’t raped,’ they said.

Dad was always away on meetings, flights, and deals. When I tried to talk, he’d fall asleep, so, I stopped speaking.

I became a shadow of myself.

When I was seventeen, my teacher invited Dad to school. She said I was too withdrawn. Smart, but

absent. Always in the library, always hiding. He was shocked but promised to investigate.

And finally, he saw me.

We took a year off. Traveled. Tried to heal. But I remained closed. Until one day, I had a severe panic attack.

In that moment of breaking, I cried, God, help me.' Then I fainted.

I woke up in a hospital bed, surrounded by my dad and his family.

And that's when I heard God clearly:

'I have preserved you for ten years. But if you don't release this baggage of hurt, I can't help you.'

At the time, the doctor had mentioned I had cardiomyopathy - an acute temporary weakening of the heart muscle triggered by trauma and the numerous panic attacks i had.

I didn't want to die, so I chose life.

I told my dad everything. He wept. Apologized. Said he too had been molested by his uncles. That he found healing through his pastor teaching him the Word of God.

That day, he led me to fully surrender to Christ.

I woke up the next morning… new.

Eventually, I joined Pearl's University to stay close to home and rebuild my bond with them. I joined the press, became chief editor, and led the protest against the news agency that slandered us."

Lisa chuckled. "We choose life. That's your mantra."

Ana smiled. "Yes. I healed. I began counseling others. Started a freedom fellowship. Life was beautiful… until Christmas last year. Our parents died in a car crash on their way home from the airport."

Gasps filled the room.

Lisa broke the silence. "Why does life keep beating you up like this?!"

Zoey sat frozen. Her chest heavy. Her thought loud.

She had finally met someone whose dysfunction was deeper than hers.

Zoey hadn't been sexually molested.

She hadn't been tossed between schools or strangers.

Her father left when she was five, but she barely knew him.

Her mother raised her and her brother alone until she died.

After that, her brother—just 25—stepped up.

He ran a tech startup and paid her fees.

He told her to focus on school, but Zoey had long lost her will to live.

She had been drifting, through classes, days, and dorm rooms, too hollow to fight.

And yet here was Anastasia.

No mother.

A distant father.

Molestation.

Now an orphan and a mother to her siblings.

And still standing.

Suddenly, Zoey didn't feel brave. She felt seen.

And in that moment, she realized she had been wasting her life.

Not because her pain wasn't real…

But because someone else had carried worse—and still chose life.

Ana continued. "I took time off to heal, care for my siblings, and manage the legalities of the company as its new CEO. And now I'm back. When life gives you a blow… you give back ten."

Lisa laughed, hands in the air. "Resilience should be your middle name."

"Nah," Ana said, grinning. "It's Love. Anastasia Love Ayomide. And now, I'm off—fellowship starts in 23 minutes. Bye, ladies!"

As the door slammed shut, Lisa turned to Zoey. "What a story."

Zoey didn't answer. She stood. Walked to her desk. Sat down.

And for the first time in years… she opened her journal.

Her hand trembled. Tears blurred her vision.

And she wrote:

"Hi Zoey Manchester, It's been a while..."

CHAPTER 3

It had been a long week.

Zoey had barely left the room. After hearing Anastasia's story, something shifted inside her—just slightly. Just enough to make her wonder if standing up was still possible after all these years of emotional paralysis.

She had spent every day journaling. Writing her grief, her fears, her pain.

Pouring it out.

She wrote about the night her mother died, and how that moment had shattered everything. She wrote about how she believed her story had ended that night at the cliff. About the crushing certainty that her brother—once married—would forget about her too just like their dad

abandoned them. She had been so blinded by sorrow for so long that she didn't even notice the ways he'd tried to reach her.

He'd paid her fees.

Checked in.

Tried to make her laugh.

Tried to bring back the little sister who used to light up every room.

But she couldn't be that girl.

She didn't even know where to look for her anymore.

Until Ana.

Until her story.

Somehow, it made room for a sliver of hope. Not the loud kind. Not the “get up and fight” kind. But a whisper—like maybe it wasn’t over yet.

So Zoey wrote.

She relived the ache and let the tears fall freely.

Each word she poured out peeled something loose from inside her.

And strangely, she found relief. Not healing—just relief. And for now, that was enough.

Ana had been busy all week with registration, fellowship, and the legal business of her family’s company. Lisa, meanwhile, bounced from one party to the next, as usual—living “the life,” as she called it.

She slept with a clean conscience that night. For the first time in years, her body felt light.

Until the sound.

It wasn't loud. Not at first. Just a soft, uneven exhale.

Like someone trying to cry without permission.

Zoey stirred. Blinked once.

And then again.

The sobbing grew louder, sounding fractured and desperate. It was the sound of someone unraveling in slow motion.

She sat up.

The moonlight sliced through the curtain, casting long silver bars across the room. Her eyes followed the glow.

And then she saw her.

Lisa.

Curled up in bed, still dressed in her glittery party outfit. Arms wrapped around her knees. Hair wild. Body shaking.

Lisa. Crying.

Zoey's breath caught.

In the three months they'd shared this space, Lisa had laughed, flirted, ranted, sang off-key at 2 a.m.—but never this.

It was as if she were watching a statue crack open.

Zoey slid out of bed slowly, afraid to startle the moment. She crossed the floor barefoot. Each step deliberate. Careful.

She stopped at Lisa's bedside.

"Lisa," she whispered.

No response.

She reached out, fingers brushing her arm.

"Lisa… what's wrong?"

Lisa didn't look up. Her face was buried in the pillow. But her body betrayed her—shoulders shaking harder now. The sobs turned into gasps.

Earlier that night…

Lisa had arrived at the dorm past 1 a.m. after bribing the hostel security guard with a kiss to let her in. He'd thrown one of his usual tantrums about her late return, threatening to call her grandmother.

If she had known this prison would be her new home, she would've hidden her tracks better.

Just a few months ago, she was living in a stylish apartment off-campus, funded by her wealthy grandmother. Then came The Email—a note from the school informing her guardian about her extended absences, failing grades, and general "academic negligence."

Her grandmother was livid.

She pulled strings to keep Lisa from getting expelled. But the apartment was gone. Now Lisa lived in Ruby Dorm, room C4 under strict supervision. A second chance, her grandmother called it.

But Lisa called it exile.

Her story wasn't one she liked to revisit.

She was the accidental child of two reckless teenagers.

Lisa's mother, Elizabeth Hartwell, had grown up in a mansion but never knew warmth.

Her parents—Lisa's grandparents—were too busy chasing power to raise a child.

By the time they noticed her spiraling, it was too late.

Elizabeth dropped out of college.

Got arrested once.

Fell in love with a broke, bitter boy who hated everything she came from—including her.

Together, they made a plan.

They staged a dramatic family reunion, claimed she wanted to reconnect.

Her parents, desperate to save face, believed her.

She moved back in. They gave her access to all they had.

And for three months, she and her boyfriend quietly siphoned money out of the family business.

By the time they vanished, nearly half the company's net worth was gone.

The investors fled. The board collapsed.

Lisa's grandfather—already struggling with high blood pressure—suffered a stroke.

They were ruined.

It took five years of clawing and campaigning to bring the company back from the ashes.

And just when things were finally steady again…

Lisa appeared.

They found her tucked in the backseat of her grandmother's old Benz, in the garage.

Wrapped in a blanket. The windows cracked just enough so she wouldn't suffocate.

She was a ghost from the past. A living receipt from the robbery.

Her grandmother didn't even flinch.

She ordered a DNA test once she confirmed the bloodline, she took her in.

“She left you here like some broken appliance,” her grandmother once muttered.

“Dumb. Absolutely dumb.”

Lisa was raised by nannies and silence.

Her grandmother spent every waking moment by her husband’s hospital bed.

Ten years.

Lisa barely saw her, until her grandfather passed after getting the terrible news of his only child - Lisa’s mother, who was found dead, high on drugs in the Netherlands.

The only consistent presence was the nanny’s son— the first person to give her attention. Unfortunately she was ten and he was seventeen,

when one night, in a dim guest room, Lisa lost her virginity.

When the truth came out, it wasn't handled with therapy.

It was handled with a one-way ticket, shipping her to a boarding school in France.

Exile, She called it.

There, she didn't get better. She got sharper.

Prettier. Wilder.

She learned to use her body like currency.

Made her brokenness look expensive.

By the second year, the rumors weren't rumors anymore.

She was called the Porsche prostitute—sleek, dangerous, and high-end.

She didn't correct anyone.

Why bother?

Only Kelvin - the poor nerd in her class, saw something different.

He never touched her. Never asked questions. Never tried to ask her out.

He just… stayed by her side, telling her she was more than what people assumed. That she didn't have to perform for love.

She almost believed him.

But then she learned: if you can't earn love, you buy status.

And getting into Pearls University-the only university that chose to accept her despite her poor grades based on her grandmother's influence-status came with the right guys, the right drinks, the right parties.

Kelvin was on scholarship. A good guy with good dreams. But dreams weren't enough.

Not for someone like her.

Tonight, everything came crashing down.

It started at the club. Her usual crew was swapping "pregnancy scare" stories between shots and selfies. That's when it hit her.

She couldn't remember the last time she'd had a period.

Definitely not since moving into C4.

That was three months ago.

The realization knocked the air out of her. She left early, barely speaking.

Her mind spiraled.

She was pregnant.

She was sure of it.

And she had no idea who the father was.

The panic made her reckless.

She argued with the club bouncer.

Got harassed by a guy outside.

Snapped at the taxi driver.

Then bribed the hostel guard to avoid getting reported again.

But it was all too much.

Too many masks.

Too many lies.

Too many years of pretending she wasn't still that garage baby—unwanted and left behind.

And now she was here.

Curled into herself.

Crying into a pillow at 2 a.m.

Possibly Pregnant, Alone and Terrified.

She had tried not to wake the others.

But as the sobs broke through her, so did Zoey's quiet presence beside her.

"Lisa," Zoey said again, this time firmer. "What's wrong?"

Lisa looked up.

And for the first time since they met, she didn't have a clever comeback.

No smirk. No sarcasm. No cover.

Just red eyes. Smudged mascara. And a heart that had finally cracked.

CHAPTER 4: The Edge Again

“Leave me alone!”

Lisa’s voice tore through the room like a siren, loud enough to jolt Anastasia awake. She had just returned from a long, tense trip to her siblings’ boarding school. The school had called her earlier, reporting that someone had come by, asking strange questions—trying to get information about her and her family.

“What’s going on, Lisa?” Ana asked, sitting up sharply, eyes wide with alarm.

Lisa didn’t answer. She just stood up, wobbling slightly in her skimpy party dress, mascara smudged from dried tears. There was no comeback this time, no sarcasm, no playful shrug.

Just exhaustion. And a bruised kind of rage.

She stormed out.

Ana and Zoey exchanged a silent and stunned look.

Lisa didn't stop until she reached the reading room. She sat in the farthest corner she could find and stared at nothing for a long time. She wasn't about to break down in front of two girls she barely knew. Vulnerability wasn't a luxury she could afford.

At sunrise, she left campus.

She knew better than to visit the school clinic. That place had eyes. And her grandmother? That

woman could get a whisper turned into a broadcast.

So she took a cab to a quiet part of town. Stopped by a small boutique to grab a plain change of clothes. Jeans. Hoodie. Something she could disappear in. Then she headed to the hospital.

The wait was brutal.

After a round of tests and awkward questions, she was finally called in by a female doctor. The woman was gentle—but direct.

“You’re not pregnant,” she said.

Lisa blinked. It took a full second for the relief to register.

“However…” the doctor continued, “I’d recommend running a few more tests. Your

symptoms could suggest something else—possibly an infection or an STD. Nothing is confirmed yet, but we should rule out a few things."

Lisa nodded, trying to hold it together.

Once she was dismissed, she hurried toward the restroom—her heart pounding from relief and dread. She locked herself in a stall, leaned against the door, and cried.

Real tears this time, she didn't know which was worse the probability of having an STD or of being pregnant.

When she finally pulled herself together, she stepped out, ready to head to the lab for the additional tests.

But just as she turned the corner, she paused.

She heard Voices.

From the next room over—the adjacent convenience—two medical staff were talking, unaware of her presence.

“I don’t know why they’re digging it up now,” a woman said. Lisa recognized the voice. It was the same doctor who had just seen her.

“It’s been nearly forty years,” she added, frustrated. “And now they’re making me sift through all these dusty files just to find the Charles Daniels case.”

Lisa froze.

Charles Daniels?

The name struck her like lightning.

“That was the one,” the doctor continued, “the surgeon confessed it years ago. He admitted he was paid to let people die on the table, but he said one boy survived. Charles. The Daniels family thought he was dead. And now the truth’s come out, and someone’s looking for him.”

Lisa couldn’t breathe.

Charles Daniels. That’s Ana’s father.

She didn’t wait to hear the rest. She ran.

Out the door. Past the lobby. Into the street.

She didn’t know where she was going—just that she needed to get away before the doctor recognized her.

She wasn’t pregnant. That was enough for today.

Whatever the rest was? It could wait.

All she could think about now was Ana, why she thought about her, baffled her.

When she got back to the dorm, it was nearly noon.

She walked in just as Ana and Zoey were about to head out, bags in hand, faces tense with worry.

“Where have you been?!” Zoey said, almost a gasp.

“We were about to report you missing,” Ana added. “You left in the middle of the night. We’ve been up all morning.”

Lisa didn’t bother sitting. She spoke in one breath.

“I went to the hospital. I thought I was pregnant but I found out, I wasn’t. But I overheard a doctor talking about someone trying to revive the case of Charles Daniels. She said some powerful people are looking into it. It’s serious. They mentioned a doctor who confessed he let people die… but Charles Daniels survived. They’re trying to track him.”

Ana’s face drained of color.

“My siblings’ school called yesterday,” she whispered, eyes wide. “They said someone tried to get access to our records. I thought it was spam or a mistake. I—I didn’t think—”

She trailed off. Her body went rigid.

Then she turned. Grabbed her bag. And with trembling hands, started packing more.

“I’m going to pray,” she said, her voice low, steady. “I need to leave now.”

Zoey stepped forward. Something rose in her—a sense of duty. Urgency.

“I’m coming with you.”

Ana looked back, surprised. “Then pack your things. Quickly.”

Zoey nodded. Threw a few clothes into a bag. Slipped on her shoes. And on instinct, tucked in her journal and pen.

She didn’t know what she was walking into.

But somehow, she knew she had to go.

Lisa stood still in the middle of the room, her limbs heavy, her vision hazy.

She hadn’t slept. The hospital tests had drained her. And even though she was relieved not to be pregnant, the doctor’s warning echoed in her mind.

An infection. Maybe an STD.

She thought of the parties. The nameless hookups. The friends who disappeared when the drinks stopped. She thought of calling her grandmother, but she couldn't. Because what was she going to say?

“Hi, I might have an STD and possibly inherited a generational curse. Can I come home?”

But then again, where was home?

The apartment was gone.

Her allowance was cut to peanuts.

Her people were gone.

She collapsed onto her bed. Tears spilled down her cheeks before she could stop them.

She thought about ending it all.

CHAPTER 5: The Altar and the Call

Ana's fingers gripped the wheel.

Her knuckles were white. Her eyes, glassy. Her jaw, clenched.

She didn't say a word, she just drove.

The sky was barely waking, its soft orange glow cutting through the windshield in streaks. Her car hummed steadily down the long country road, a lone vessel between fields of mist and quiet trees.

Zoey sat beside her, hands folded tightly in her lap. She hadn't asked where they were going.

She just… followed.

Maybe because she didn't know what else to do.

Maybe because something in Ana's silence made her feel safe.

But the air between them was heavy. Like it might snap.

Ana's lips moved, but no sound came out. At first, Zoey thought she was muttering to herself.

But no—she was praying.

Softly. Silently. Like someone pleading through clenched teeth.

"God… what do I do?"
"Why now? Why us?"
"What are they after?"

The drive lasted an hour, but time felt suspended. Like the road would never end.

Then Ana slowed, turned into a paved path, and pulled up before a massive white structure.

It rose from the ground like it had been planted—tall, wide, elegant. The signage above read:

The Potter's Home.

Zoey stepped out and shielded her eyes.

The building looked like light itself.

Ana didn't wait.

She walked straight in. Through the open doors. Past the sanctuary aisle. Straight to the altar.

Her pace never faltered. Her footsteps echoed across the tiled floor.

She dropped to her knees.

Then to her face.

Her hands raised. Her voice broke.

She began to pray.

Not politely.

Not softly.

But with urgency. With anguish. With fight.

Zoey froze near the entrance, unsure what to do.

So she sat, at the fourth pew, off to the side.

And she watched.

Ana was weeping. Not the fragile, self-pity kind of tears—but the raw, spiritual kind. Tears from the center of the soul.

She began speaking in a language Zoey didn't recognize.

Words that sounded ancient and endless.

It wasn't a show. It was a war.

Zoey watched as Ana cried out to God like He was her lifeline, like she was holding the last rope between heaven and the ground.

And for the first time in five years, something cracked inside Zoey.

What if it's all real?

What if He's listening?

Her breathing changed.

A pressure built behind her chest.

Tears came.

First one. Then another.

She gripped the wooden edge of the pew. Swallowed.

Then whispered.

“God…”

Her voice was barely audible.

“I know Mom and Big Bro always told me about You. But I never knew You. Not for myself.”

She sniffled, trying to keep her voice steady.

“I was mad. Mad at how Mom gave You her life and still suffered. And died.”

Her tears came faster now.

“I ran from You. From everything.

But now… You brought me here.

To them. To Ana. Even to Lisa.

And somehow… I feel like I’m seeing You.

Even just a little.”

She sobbed.

“Help Ana. Help Lisa.

And help me.”

“I want to know You.

For myself.”

“I want to find You.”

She collapsed into her hands and wept.

And then she heard laughter.

A loud, uninhibited, victory-laced laughter.

She looked up, confused.

Ana stood now, hands raised, face glowing, laughing like someone who had seen the end of the story and knew it would be okay.

“Ana…?” Zoey whispered.

Ana turned to her, beaming.

“Zoey!” she shouted, walking toward her. “The Lord is on this case!”

Her voice echoed through the sanctuary like a trumpet.

Zoey stood to her feet. She was trembling. Still crying.

Ana approached and touched her shoulders.

“Are you okay?” she asked gently.

Zoey nodded, barely.

Then she broke.

“No. I’m not. But… I want to be.”

Ana waited.

“I want to know Jesus, Ana. I want to pray like you do. Believe like you do. I want to run to Him when I’m afraid.”

Her voice cracked.

“Please. Show me Jesus.”

Ana smiled, tears rising in her own eyes.

She took Zoey’s hands and said, “Repeat after me.”

““Lord Jesus,

I come to You today, broken and lost.

I’ve tried to do life on my own, but I can’t anymore.

I’ve run from You. I’ve blamed You.

But right now, I want to come home.

I believe You died for me.

That You rose again to give me life.

Please forgive me.

Wash me clean.

Take away the pain, the shame, the fear.

I give You my heart.

I give You my life.

Be my Savior.

Be my Lord.

Teach me to walk with You.

Help me to know You.

Help me to become who You created me to be.

Today, I choose You.

In Jesus' name, Amen."

And Zoey did.

She prayed.

And something moved, within her, inside her chest. Through her veins. Through her lungs.

She gasped.

Laughed.

And then her tongue stumbled into syllables she didn't know.

Words spilled from her lips. Fire. Rivers. Light.

She couldn't stop.

She didn't want to.

She laughed through her cries, and fell into Ana's arms.

The weight was gone.

Five years of sadness broke off like old chains.

She had no words—just freedom.

They stayed there for hours.

Worshipping. Singing. Smiling through tears.

And when the sun began to set, they stepped outside together. Laughing like old friends.

Zoey's face was glowing. Her voice lighter.

"I used to think Jesus was just a myth," she said.

"I never understood Mom's obsession with Him."

Ana chuckled.

"Well, you understand now," she said, slipping her arm around Zoey's shoulder.

“But you need to build your roots, and you start by attending Foundation Bible School. First class starts next Friday.”

Zoey laughed. “That’s a week away, I’m in.”

Ana’s phone rang.

Unknown number.

She frowned.

“Hello?”

Her eyes widened.

Her mouth dropped.

She staggered.

Zoey grabbed her arm. “Ana?”

Ana's voice was a whisper now.

"...Lisa?"

The phone slipped from her hand.

Zoey's heart froze.

"What happened?!"

Ana turned to her. Pale. Shaking.

"She needs us..."

[To be continued]

CHAPTER 6: The One-Way Ride

“Wait—what do you mean Lisa needs us?” Zoey’s voice cracked as Ana hung up the phone, her hands shaking.

Ana didn’t answer right away. Her jaw clenched, eyes locked on the windshield. Then she spoke—calm, but not really.

“She was in an accident,” Ana said, reaching for her car keys. “The bus she got on flipped. Kelvin just called. She’s in the hospital.”

Zoey froze. “What?! Why would she even—where was she going?!”

“I don’t know.” Ana yanked the door open. “But we need to go. I have a feeling…”

Zoey's heart raced as she jumped into the passenger seat. "Oh my God. What if she dies? What if—"

"She won't," Ana said sharply. Then softer: "The Lord is on this case."

She exhaled, steadying herself.

"Let's stop by campus first. Pick up her things. Try to reach her family. Then we head to the hospital. To pray for her."

As they drove, Kelvin stayed in contact.

He explained what little he knew—how Lisa had always seemed unstable but never truly let him in. He gave them a list of what to bring and helped them reach Lisa's grandmother through the security staff.

By the time they arrived at the hospital, Kelvin and Lisa's grandmother were already by her bedside, watching anxiously as the doctor examined her.

"It's remarkable," the doctor said. "Major collisions like that… and not a single internal injury. Just a mild concussion and dehydration. She's incredibly lucky."

At that moment, Zoey and Ana stepped in.

Lisa's eyes fluttered open.

She blinked, confused by the number of people gathered around her. Then panic surged through her.

Did Grandma find out about the STD?

She jolted upright in defense—only to clutch her head in pain.

The memory crashed into her.

The bus. The crash. The fear. Calling Kelvin…

She had barely survived.

But she had survived.

Then, unexpectedly, her grandmother wailed.

Lisa turned toward her in disbelief.

The most composed, pristine woman she knew—now undone.

“Lisa,” her grandmother sobbed, “I’m so sorry. I shut you out like I shut your mother out. I’ve lost so much. I’ve been cold, cruel, proud. I pushed you away when I should have held you close. I don’t want to lose you too.”

Everyone froze. The woman in designer heels, shaking with grief, clinging to her granddaughter's hospital bed.

Zoey, Ana, and Kelvin quietly stepped out, giving them space.

Lisa sat frozen. Her heart surged, but her body hesitated. Her whole life, she'd longed to be seen—and now, here it was.

But she couldn't breathe.

Then, slow and stiff, she ripped the IV from her hand.

"Lisa!" Her grandmother shouted.

Lisa got up, wobbly, and walked straight out the door. She needed to think.

Kelvin caught up with her in the hallway. “Lisa—wait.”

She didn’t.

He grabbed her arm.

“Don’t touch me,” she snapped.

“What’s your deal, Kelvin?! Why are you always in my life? Why won’t you just leave me alone?!”

Kelvin didn’t flinch. He had heard worse from her.

“I can’t,” he said calmly. “You protected me in France, remember? A poor kid on scholarship, surrounded by rich jerks. You stood up for me when no one did.”

“I pitied you,” she snapped. “That’s all.”

“Maybe. But even then, I knew there was good in you.”

She stopped walking.

Her hands trembled.

“I didn’t ask for any of this, Get out of my life, Kelvin!” she screamed.

She didn’t mean to say that. But it was already out.

Then she turned and walked again—farther this time. Into a small garden near the hospital wall.

Until her legs gave up and she crumbled into the grass and wept.

“My life is over. This is it. An STD. A ruined past. I’ve been nothing but a Porsche prostitute. Even if I survive this… what’s left?

Then she heard soft footsteps.

“Lisa,” came a voice.

She turned.

Zoey.

Lisa tried to turn away, but Zoey sat beside her.

Silent.

Then, with a shaky breath, she began:

Then she said, “I know I’ve hardly said anything to you since we became roommates… and I’m sorry for that.”

Lisa stayed quiet, but tears continued to fall.

“I was drowning in my own pain,” Zoey continued. “Stuffing my face with snacks. Avoiding everything. That was my way of coping.”

She glanced at Lisa. “You had yours—partying, escaping.”

“We’re different. But… also not.”

Lisa looked at her, broken.

“And now?”

Zoey smiled faintly. “Now… I found Jesus. I gave Him my heart yesterday evening. And I realized something: we don’t have to carry all this ourselves.”

Lisa stared. “Jesus can help… me? A girl dumped by her parents, raised in luxury but empty inside, a Porsche prostitute?”

She scoffed. “Come on, Zoey. You don’t know what I’ve been through.”

“No,” Zoey nodded. “But I know Ana’s story. She was abandoned, molested, orphaned and yet… look at her.”

Lisa looked down, her walls starting to tremble.

“She found healing,” Zoey whispered. “And you can too.”

Lisa’s mouth trembled.

“You think… He could fix someone like me?”

Zoey looked at her.

“Yes, He can, the question is, do you want Him to?”

Lisa barely managed the whisper.

“Yes, i do.”

Lisa dropped her eyes. Folded her fingers together. Then opened her mouth:

"Jesus…
I don't even know if You hear girls like me.
I've messed up everything.
My life's a joke.
I've been trashy. I've been wild.
I've been hurt. I've hurt others.
I've done things I'll never be proud of.
I'm tired.

If You're real… help me.
Please.
I want something different.
I want peace.
I want to be new.
Whatever that means.

I'm done running.

So… I give You what's left of me.
Please take it."

Zoey pulled her in for a long, hard hug.

She held her until she felt the tension leave Lisa's body.

Until the shaking stopped.

Until the tears softened.

Lisa whispered, "Who knew… this would be our first real conversation?"

Zoey smiled. "Three months and all we needed was a breakdown."

Lisa laughed—a real laugh. "What's next?"

Zoey winked. “Foundation Bible School. Ana says it’s step one.”

“Ugh. Church? That’s foreign to me.”

Zoey chuckled. “Well, self-declared bestie, you’re not going alone.”

Just then, Ana came running across the garden.

“There you are!” she cried. “I’ve been worried sick!”

She hugged them both at once.

“Lisa gave her life to Jesus,” Zoey announced, glowing.

Ana stepped back, stunned. “No way! You better tell me everything.”

She turned to Lisa, her smile softening. “How do you feel?”

Lisa looked up, her face… changed.

“I feel peace,” she said. “Real peace.”

Back in the hospital room, Lisa walked over to Kelvin. He sat on the couch, hands on his head, shoulders hunched.

“Hey,” she said softly.

He looked up.

“I’m sorry,” she continued. “For yelling. For everything.”

He stood slowly, wrapped her in a hug without a word. Then pulled away, as if embarrassed.

But Lisa had seen it.

He liked her.

And maybe… just maybe, that was okay.

She returned to the bed, where her grandmother sat in silence.

“Grandmom,” she said, “I forgive you. And… I’m sorry too.”

Her grandmother pulled her into a tight embrace. Lisa tensed—she wasn’t used to this kind of touch. But she didn’t pull away.

“We’ll get used to it,” she said with a small smile. “Eventually.”

Then she turned to Zoey and Ana. “Thank you. For standing with Lisa. Truly.”

She paused, her eyes narrowing as she looked at Ana.

“Anastasia Ayomide?” she asked. “Are you related to the Daniel brothers?”

Ana froze.

“…Sort of,” she said. “It’s… complicated.”

[To Be Continued]

CHAPTER 7: The Revelation

Ana froze.

The air in the hospital room went still. Zoey looked between her and the well-dressed woman-Lisa's grandmother- like she was watching two bombs about to go off.

Lisa whispered, "Wait—what's going on?"

The woman took a few elegant steps forward. Her perfume smelled like old money and private jets.

She extended her hand toward Ana with a practiced, gleaming smile.

> "Wow. It's really you. Anastasia Ayomide.
> I'm on the board of Royal Conglomerate.
> And, sweetheart… we've been looking for you."

Ana didn't take the hand.

She didn't blink.

"Charles Daniels was your father, wasn't he?"

Ana's voice came out low. "He was."

The woman clasped her chest like it was some dramatic soap opera reveal.

"My God. What a full circle moment. You—you saved my granddaughter's life—" she gestured toward Lisa, "—and now it turns out you're the daughter of the man our board owes a lifetime apology to."

Lisa blinked. "Wait. Charles Daniels? Like… the Charles Daniels, Lisa's dad?"

Her grandmom nodded.

"Years ago, there was a scandal. Some of the board members—old, greedy cowards—they tried to kill your father.

And they almost succeeded.

But eventually the whole thing unraveled. One of them died from diabetic shock after the board expelled him. The other? Killed. By the same doctor he hired."

Ana's hands were fists now.

"Since then, we've been searching. We found out he had died with his wife. But then news got to us about the protest. The one from Pearl's University.

About how a girl was on fire, talking justice like it was in her bloodstream."

She took a breath, emotion catching.

"We traced it back to you."

Ana turned slowly to the window. Her reflection looked like a stranger — tired, quiet, cracked open.

The woman stepped forward again.

> “If we hadn’t found you, we were planning a new election.
> But now… you’re here. His daughter. The company is yours, Ana. His legacy… it’s still alive.”

Ana turned back, her voice shaking for the first time.

> “Do you even know what he wanted?
> What we lost?
> I buried both my parents. I am raising my siblings. I starved. I prayed till I couldn’t speak. And now you want to hand me keys to a kingdom that nearly buried us?”

Silence.

Even the monitors seemed to hold their breath.

Zoey reached for Ana's hand. Ana didn't pull away.

The board woman looked rattled for the first time. "You're right. We failed. I failed.

But if God brought you here… maybe He still wants to finish what was started."

Lisa, quiet for once, muttered, "Maybe try giving people healing before handing them titles."

Lisa's grandmother looked between them — the fire in their eyes, the history in their pain.

Then Ana let out a slow, uneven laugh. "I prayed last night. Just asked God to show me He was still

with me. That He hadn't forgotten. And now this?"

Tears slid down her cheeks. "He heard me. He really heard me."

Lisa leaned forward, giving Ana a soft nudge. "So what now?"

Ana smiled faintly, trembling. "I don't know. But I don't need to. I trust Him. I'm not taking anything He didn't give. But if this… if this is Him restoring what was lost…"

She looked at Lisa's grandmother - Mrs Hartwell.

> "Then I'll receive it. With open hands. But on His terms."

nodded. "It's yours. When you're ready, and to get the pain off your young shoulders, id step in as your lawyer, it would be my final case before i

retire, id ensure we employ the best CEO to manage your companies while you focus on growing up and discovering you, so you won't be too pressured, you won't have to worry about anything a report would be sent to you daily if you like about the affairs of things, till you are ready to step in."

A pause.

Then Zoey stepped forward. Voice small, but sure.

"I have something to say too."

Ana and Lisa turned.

Zoey took a shaky breath. "I'm dropping out of school."

Lisa's eyes widened. "What?"

Zoey stood a little taller. “I’ve been pretending for too long. Doing something that drains me just to feel normal. But I’m not normal. And I don’t want to be. I’ve always wanted to study architecture, to design, to build and create.”

Her voice cracked slightly.

> “Even if I feel late. Even if I feel behind.
> I know now—if God’s on my case, I’m not too far gone.
> So I’m chasing that dream. For real this time. With Him.”

The room went quiet again.

Then Lisa gave her a slow clap. “I mean… come on. Mic drop.”

Zoey laughed through tears.

Lisa glanced at her grandmother.

"I've always loved fashion, by the way. But I'll finish my business degree first. Not because I have to… but because I want to understand it.

So when it's time to step in after you someday—I'll be ready.

But after that… I want to design, I could add it to the family's conglomerate, you know, expand our reach into the fashion industry."

Mrs. Hartwell looked between the three of them, she smiled, holding back tears.

"You girls are something else."

She stepped back toward the chair but paused.

"You know what? I think I'll let you girls finish this night together."

Ana looked up. "You're not leaving, are you?"

Mrs. Hartwell smiled. “I’ll be in the penthouse just on the rooftop. But this moment? It’s yours.”

She walked slowly to the door. Before she left, she turned around.

> “Cheers… to becoming everything God planned for you to be.”

She slipped out quietly.

The girls stared at each other.

Zoey whispered, “Cheers to becoming.”

Lisa raised an invisible glass. “Room C4 toast?”

Ana grinned, holding up two fingers like a fake flute. “Always.”

In unison:

> “To becoming all God has planned for us to be.”

And just like that—

Three girls.

One room.

One God.

And a future wide open.

THE END

(for now)

About the author

Oluwatosin Adebiyi is a writer, storyteller, and voice of restoration, passionate about helping people rediscover their identity in God. Through deeply moving, faith-centered stories, she addresses themes of pain, brokenness, and healing, guiding readers out of depression, oppression, and silent battles into truth, freedom, and light.

A Quantity Surveying student at Obafemi Awolowo University, Oluwatosin also shares her journey in leadership and personal growth, inspiring young people to live with purpose, excellence, and conviction.

Her writing is more than storytelling, it is a call to encounter God, choose life, and become all He has created you to be.

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