

Chapter 18



Seeing God

After I was released from the hospital, I noticed my sleeping habits had changed considerably. I could no longer sleep through the night as before. Now I was constantly waking up and gasping for air in the middle of the night. I would simply stop breathing for no reason. After a while, I was apprehensive about falling asleep, yet I welcomed death. I thought, here is the answer to my prayers: Either I have lost the will to live, or God is going to take my life while I am asleep. Either way, I don't have to take my own life any longer; it's going to be done for me. But to my surprise, this wasn't God's intention at all. Instead, He was planning an unexpected visit. One night I stopped breathing, and my spirit seemed to leave my body. I found myself walking in a swimming area that seemed to be part of some sort of YMCA. As I walked past a large swimming pool, I saw that there was no water inside; instead, there was dirt at the bottom. This seemed a bit peculiar to me. What happened here? There were no lights on in the building, yet there was a little bit of sunlight creeping through what looked to be dirt on the outsides of the windows. As people walked past me, I could see that they had empty expressions on their faces, as if they were trying to collect their thoughts. They all seemed to be in shock, wandering around aimless. Some of the people were partially clothed while others were nude. I had all my clothes on. Why was I different? Why was I in my right mind, while these people who were walking around me were in awe at whatever had just happened? As I continued walking, I could smell this horrible odor getting stronger and stronger with each step. It was the scent of urine and feces, and it was coming from a bathroom to my left. Despite this horrible stench, I walked into the bathroom. I felt like I was being drawn in for some reason. Once inside, I saw that the toilet was filled to overflowing with stool, paper and urine. My attention was drawn away by a bright light that was coming from the mirror that was above the sink. I walked over and rested my hands against the sink for support while gazing into this terrific light. It was magnificent.

This light went on as far as the eye could see and it had no ending. I took a good look at the mirror itself and it had no glass. What was separating me from this light was a different dimension. As I continued staring in wonder,

I heard footsteps on the other side of the wall, and then walking sideways and then standing in front of me. Was God. His energy was so powerful that I immediately stopped breathing. He paralyzed me.

I could feel my body from a distance being deprived of oxygen I started going into convulsions. I could feel the pain at a distance, but I wasn't in my body.

I couldn't move, think, or react. I just stood there vulnerable, face to face with my maker. He looked just as I thought He would, with a white, flowing beard and sky blue eyes.

His facial features were strong, yet soft enough to look into. There was something that I didn't expect to see; God was wearing a white-T-shirt with different colored spots, the colors of the rainbow. He was also wearing silver wire-rimmed glasses.

"I reveal Myself in mysterious ways" He said as He smiled. The words penetrated my being, filtering through my very soul.

Pamela: Christine! Christine! Christine! Breathe!

I could hear her in the distance. All of a sudden, without any effort from me, I was thrust back into my body. It felt like a vacuum pulled me back inside. I could feel my forearms crossed against my chest and my hands wrapped around my own throat. My face was contorted and my head was stretched as far back as it could be.

Pamela: Christine, breathe! Christine! Christine, breathe!

I could feel her hands squeezing my arms and shaking me vigorously. Again, without any effort on my part, a large gust of air filled my lungs. As I looked into Pamela's face after catching my breath, she had this terrified look in her eyes.

Me: Pamela, I just saw God. Can you believe it? He was standing right in front of me. He was wearing a T-shirt with big colored spots and silver wire-rimmed glasses, and then He said to me, "I reveal myself in mysterious ways." That's pretty damn mysterious, don't you think?

I started laughing uncontrollably. Pamela just looked at me like I was either joking or crazy. Then she rolled over and went back to sleep. I wanted to share this incredible experience with her, but instead I just laid there replaying what had just happened to me. I eventually went back to sleep, but this time instead of being afraid, I was laughing with God.

~O~

A girl called the house asking for Pamela. She sounded nervous. I asked her what her name was, and she said, "I'm just a friend of Pamela's" and hung up. I thought that the call was a bit peculiar, so I asked Pamela about it. She said it must have been a wrong number or something.

Me: A wrong number, how in the hell could it be a wrong number if she knew your name?

I didn't want to angled what was happening. There could never be an end to her and I in my mind. I loved her so much, but the end was drawing near. A few weeks later I walked into a conversation she was having with someone. She hung up the phone quickly, but I dialed *69. And guess who was on the other end.

Yes, the same girl Pamela denied knowing. So this time I demanded an explanation from her, and I finally got the truth.

Pamela: Yes, I've been seeing someone for three weeks.

Me: I'm going to pick up my things in four days. Please don't be here when I

come back for my stuff.

I heard her calling after me as I walked out the door. I didn't bother looking back. I knew this had to be done, for our best interest. I moved in with a friend of mine named Michael, he was my best friend. He helped me pull through he was always there to listen to me. I was a vegetable for the first three months. All I did was clean and straighten up his place. He was very patient with me, and as any good friend would, he pushed me to get back to work.

Michael: Chris, you need to get your life together. Life goes on, and you need to go to work. Do something! You're not dead. You're going to get over this, but not by staying in this apartment. You need a new car; your car is falling apart. And you need money to survive.

He grabbed my work bag and pushed me out the door.

Michael: See you at eight o'clock. You'll be fine. You need to do this, Chris, and not just for the money!

And so I did. I went back to work. They hired me back on the spot. I picked up where I left off. I cried from time to time while at work and even on stage. I felt as if I were going through a divorce, even though we had only been together for two years, still I had her ring on my finger, and it meant everything to me. I gave all of me to her, and I would have stayed with her for the rest of my life had circumstances permitted. I went as far as getting documents to change my name legally to her last name. I wanted to share that with her. I wanted to be one with her, to be hers. I wasn't ashamed to let it be known all over the world that I loved her and only her. But now all of that was gone. Where did it go? I still loved her, so why wasn't love enough? What was I supposed to do with all of this love? Although she was not with me, in my mind and heart I still belonged to her. I smelled her on me even though she wasn't there, and my nights would be filled with anxiety because my body craved sleeping with hers. Nothing felt normal, and I constantly felt I wasn't where I wanted to be, because she wasn't there. I forced myself to see other women to get her out of my mind, and at my first attempt, I just laid there and cried. I couldn't go through with it. I was still faithful though we were no longer together.

I couldn't help it. I was Pamela's girl. I needed help to forget her. Because it was almost Christmas, I decided to go to my Mother's house for the holidays with Michael. What was I thinking. Mother said she would be happy if we came up there for a couple weeks. However, those couple of weeks only reconfirmed why I left in the first place. I had such high hopes! I was going to relax and forget about my worries in Miami, and now that Ray was gone we could finally be a family. ... So I thought. Mother and I got into it as soon as we pulled into the driveway. I was struck emotionally by horrible memories the moment I saw the house. I started sobbing like a child.

Michael took my brothers into the house so my mother and I could be alone.

Mother: The monster is gone.

Me: I remember everything.

Mother: He's gone, Christine.

Me: You could have stopped him from hurting us. We could have gone to family counseling or something. You could have left him.

Mother: There was nothing I could do. There was no counseling before. Besides, he was supporting us. How was I supposed to support two children by myself? We needed him.

Me: Other women have supported children by themselves. Why couldn't

you? You knew what he was doing to us, and you did nothing to stop him from breaking up the family.

Mother: It was your choice to leave the family at 13.

Me: What was I supposed to do, just stay and take it? I wouldn't have left if you weren't such a coward.

She turned and started beating on my chest, chanting.

Mother: You don't know what pain is, little missy. You don't know what pain is. You don't know what I've endured.

Me: I was your daughter. You should have helped me.

Mother: You don't know what I was going through. You left me when I needed you the most.

Me: I needed you I was the child. I used to dream of different ways of killing Ray. Can you imagine? I was only a kid. I was never happy. How could I be? I was always either being screamed at, hit or told to go outside. Why didn't you give me up for adoption if you didn't want me?

Mother: I loved you.

I just shook my head. I stepped out of the van and went inside. Michael took one look at my face, and he knew something happened.

Michael: Okay, what's wrong, Christine?

I whispered in Michael's ear.

Me: I can't talk in front of them. Let's go on the balcony.

Once outside, I told Michael everything that happened, we smoked a cigarette, and went back into the house. Mother was acting as though nothing had happened. Soon it was Christmas morning. Ho, ho, ho, it was the first Christmas I'd spent with my family in 12 years, and it was the worst Christmas ever. My mother kept insulting and criticizing me. The only one who saved my sanity was Michael. It was such a mistake going to Colorado. Ray had left the house, yet his energy lingered there. Every other conversation was in reference to him. I didn't want to open presents, eat cake or smile, but I did I went through the motions. Mother asked me what I wanted for Christmas. I thought for a while, and then I told her that I wanted something she cherished, a music box I remembered playing with it as a child. She gave it to me and told me to take good care of it. The days lingered as the tension built within us. I found some pills in her kitchen cabinets, high so my smallest brother couldn't reach them. I found tranquilizers, Xanax

and Buspar in Mother's medicine cabinet. Surprise, surprise, surprise. I thought, "This shit is inherited." My last days there were spent lying down, I had such a bad headache from the high altitude. Mother lived 9,600 feet above sea level, and I was no longer used to it. Michael and I spent our last night in Denver alone, and thank God for that, because I needed the time for the emotional transition, between being with my family and going back to Miami. Once we got back to Miami I started seeing my therapist Gloria again.

Our conversations were really affecting me. We kept talking about my past, and with each session we dug deeper and deeper. The thoughts I had were bleeding into my sex life, I was asking girls after sex to hurt me, by shoving their whole hand inside of me. Or to beat me with a belt on my back. It excited some girls until the blood began to flow.

After a few light affairs, I came across a woman named Alicia. Though she was much older than me and the sex I shared was masochistic still she pursued me. I started becoming very depressed a year into our relationship. At this point I lived with her and she was supporting me. I could no longer

work, or get out of bed for that matter. I was crying all of the time. She suggested I go back to school and learn a trade. After much pondering I decided to become a medical assistant.

~O~

I enrolled in National School of Technology to study medical assisting. I enjoyed learning so much, I loved being challenged mentally, to see how I was doing compared to the other students. But as time went on I became increasingly anxious, I kept expecting to fail even though I was holding an A average. For some reason the feeling of wanting to make my mother proud of me kept surfacing, even though she didn't care anything of my life, still I wanted her acceptance for some sick reason. Knowing this, rage began to build up inside of me. I vented this rage on the antique music box Mother had given me for Christmas, I sat in my bed room closet crying, smashing that music box to pieces.

I took a test in class and scored 100%. All I could hear in the back of my mind was my mother's voice saying, "You're slow. You've always been a slow learner" Followed by, "Dumdum!" I became so enraged; how dare she call me slow or dum dum? Here's a paper to prove I'm smart! All I could think about was destroying that music box. It was the only thing I had from her, and now it was my victim. I cried, and my hands ached from pulling it apart.

I always wanted an apology from her. Not that an apology would solve anything, but just to validate my feeling. But she lives in a world of denial, the fact remains she is just as guilty as my stepfather and had a hand in all that has happened. Nothing I have endured as an adult carries the emotional weight of the abuse, neglect, loneliness and fear of my childhood. I had no one to talk to about being afraid, because the very people to whom I was supposed to be going for support were the ones hurting me. It was that Christmas that I finally told my mother what I had done with the music box. She asked, and so I told her.

Mother: Merry Christmas! How have your studies been?

Me: Fine. Medical school's a little tough, but I like it.

Mother: Whatever happened to the music box that I gave you?

I was silent.

Mother: You still have it, don't you?

I still stayed silent, not knowing what to say.

Mother: Christine, answer me!

Me: I broke it.

Mother: Send it back to me.

Me: It's gone.

Mother: What do you mean, it's gone? Where did it go?

My heart was beating right out of my chest.

Me: I broke it then threw it away.

Mother: You what? I've had that music box since I was 18 years old. It's the first thing I bought when I went to California. How could you do that? I've got to go.

Me: I'm sorry; forgive me.

Mother: You asked me to give you something that meant a lot to me, and then you go and destroy it.

Me: Okay. If you can't forgive me, then I guess there's nothing else to say. Goodbye.

I knew after that conversation I wasn't going to hear from her for a long time, I hurt her badly, so because of her wrath I knew I wouldn't be able to speak to my brother Steven. When my mother was angry, she said horrible things about the person, and this time the person was me. I knew she would tell Steven how terrible I was. I knew I'd miss him more than he would ever know.

~O~

I did graduate, but Alicia made it so hard for me. I studied all week for my finals, but the night before the test Alicia decided to tell me she was seeing another girl and that she wanted me to move out.

Me: Why couldn't you wait to tell me this? You know my test is in the morning. I can't move out tonight!

Alicia: I can't talk now. I'm here at a restaurant with her.

Me: I don't want to know. Why are you doing this? Why can't you just wait?

Alicia: I want you to move out.

Alicia didn't come till late, but it was of no interest to me. All I cared about was my test. Though my emotions were in turmoil, I kept the peace. That morning as I was walking out to take the test, she reminded me that she no longer loved me and that she wanted me to move out that day. I didn't respond. I had no time I was running late. I had to get to school. The test had already begun by the time I entered the room. I stared at the first question, but I couldn't read it, so I skipped it, on to the next. I couldn't concentrate. I started crying, and I couldn't stop. The teacher looked at me with concern, and I heard a classmate whisper behind me, "Christine, block it out of your mind girl."

I put my pencil down and closed my eyes. I tried to get control of my emotions. I answered about 10 questions, but then the tears came again. This time I couldn't control myself, so I walked out of the test in order not to distract my classmates. I walked outside and waited for the test to be finished. I then asked my teacher if I had accumulated enough credit that semester to have passed anyway. She took the time to tally up my scores, and I indeed passed with a C average. I then ran home and started packing.

Alicia: Did you pass?

Me: Yes.

Alicia: You don't have to move out yet.

Me: I don't want to talk.

She then pulled out her checkbook and wrote me a check for \$400.

Alicia: It's not much, but it'll help you get a room.

She handed it to me.

Me: I don't need charity. I don't want to talk to you anymore! I'll be back tomorrow to get the rest.

I took whatever I could fit in my car and left, knowing I had nowhere to go. I called my friend Jane and asked her what I should do.