

# 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. My body shuddered with feelings of uneasiness. Thirty minutes later his pent up rage exploded. I took shelter in my sister’s room from the blitz of verbal abuse. He left the party and I went home.

I sat on my bed. One hand clutched a large glass of brandy, a packet of cigarettes dangled out the other. Our explosive history was being repeated. 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. Church didn’t blend with our lifestyle of drinking, smoking and partying. I was dirty, 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, weeping on the phone. He was rushed to A & E with excruciating body pains. Tests were carried out. The results came 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 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 reflected the pain in his body.

He deteriorated quickly and ended up in a care home. The cancer spread to his throat. It was downhill from then. He died shortly afterwards and a big chapter of my life closed.

I missed my dad. Nothing could fill that emptiness. Crying became part of my 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 came to an end.

He visited every weekend to see our daughter. He phoned after leaving one Saturday to tell me about the secret child he had with his ex girlfriend. After I got over the shock, my mouth went into verbal diarrhoea. I cursed him and told him to stay away from us. He called during the week to apologize but I couldn't forgive him.

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

The grief was deep as I mourned the unexpected deaths of two people who played a big part in my life. And I also had to comfort my daughters.

The vicar heard about our misfortunes and invited us to church. I didn't resist. I never sat through a full service before. But I enjoyed it. People came to greet me afterwards. They radiated love that warmed my very soul. I found peace and became a member.

I was baptized in September 2000. An amazing feeling of love, joy, peace and warmth filled my heart that week. I found new inner strength.

My 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 changed.

I attended an Alpha course at the church and started praying every day. I asked God to take away my cravings for smoking and drinking. It worked and two weeks later I stopped.

Then in May my eldest daughter found out she was pregnant. We were so happy with the good news.

Her baby was born in December 2000. He was a beautiful baby boy. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 unbearable 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 I felt sadness, I cried out to God who 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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*My name is June Whittle. 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.*

*Please visit my blogs which I created to use as a platform to write inspiring articles to encourage and inspire you.*

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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.