



Saved by Grace is the story of Marcus Martin, a normal high school senior from a Christian family living in South Carolina. It is 1959 and Marcus had aspirations for his future - all he ever wanted to be was a long distance truck driver. The last thing on his mind was the draft and a baby. Both met him at the door on his eighteenth birthday.

Have you been in what seemed like a helpless, hopeless situation? Have you blamed everyone but yourself, for problems in your life? Have you begged God for just a little bit of peace, in your world of madness, and it seems that He isn't listening? For the Martin Family, peace came with a price paid in tears...



Dr. AudreyAnn Moses is a Certified Christian Life Coach and Mental Wellness Counselor. She is involved in several community based programs focusing on personal and professional behavior. Dr. Moses has written several books and articles on personal growth and mentoring. She taught psychology for Piedmont Technical College in Greenwood, SC and Hampton University in Hampton, VA. AudreyAnn and husband, Leonard, currently live in the quaint rural community of Cokesbury in Hodges, SC. They have four adult children, ten grandchildren and one great-grandson which she feels qualifies her to write stories of Christian family love and devotion to each other and to God.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Restaurant

Shortly after I moved to Beaufort, South Carolina, I decided to go to this quaint little restaurant that I heard about for lunch. It sits on a side street corner in downtown Beaufort, as if it owned the entire block. As you walk inside, it's southern... it's charming... it's Gullah. My friend use to say that the only thing that makes food Gullah is the spices and okra, otherwise

you were eating regular soul food. The restaurant had this southern mixed with African décor that mesmerized you. And, if you let it, it very well would take you to another place and time. It quickly became one of my favorite restaurants.

For quite some time I was the only black patron in the restaurant, which was very interesting considering the type of food served. I don't remember noticing that, before. I'm not sure why I noticed it, today. There were sailors, business people, and college students, but it did puzzle me as to why I was the "only one."

Now, on the one hand, it could be because it is still early in the lunch hour, around 11:00am. I came early and had plans to perch here for several hours to write. And, on the other hand, maybe there is a story as to why there were no black people patronizing this restaurant. Maybe, there had been some scandal involving the restaurant. Like, maybe the original owners of this corner were a black family whose family member was murdered, and the restaurant was swindled out from under them by the grandparents of the present owner; or maybe, it was sold at auction due to foreclosure; or even, acquired as payment for a gambling debt and the new owner promised not to change the name. Then again, maybe the restaurant was being boycotted, in protest, for not hiring black chefs and management. Only if you weren't from this area, like me, you wouldn't know what really happened. No one seemed to be concerned or excited by me being there, so I decided maybe it was just too early or the wrong day of the week.

Then just as I was looking at the menu and happy that pork wasn't in everything, in walked two black women who did not have that "lovers-of-excitement-and-adventure" look about them, but they just were here to eat after a very boring church board meeting. Then the mailman, black, dawned in his raincoat and safari hat, which covered jheri curls, walked in. He politely walked through nodding to the customers, including me, delivered the mail and left. The music was excellent. Bowie, Bon Jovi, Roberta Flack, Phoebe Snow and the Elton John style music, is just what I needed.

Later, a business-looking couple walked in. They were prim and proper. He took her umbrella and held the chair for her. I was thinking you don't see that much anymore. They didn't speak to anyone and barely spoke to each other. Maybe they were making a very serious decision. Maybe they had just left a very important meeting to purchase property to build a chain of private owned shops. Or, maybe they are breaking up a relationship... an affair that is getting to serious and he's worried that his wife knows. He can't divorce her because she owns 51% of his business. His cellular phone rings. It's his wife asking him where he is and of course he says he's working through lunch. The reason she called is to let him know that she will be working late as well. Wonder if he knows that, while he is breaking up an affair, she has started one?

So, as it is my custom, I am sitting, enjoying my tea, and imagining the lives of the people that walk in and out. And, I am thinking, something here will make a great book.

I was so busy watching this one and that one trying to decide who they were and why, that I didn't notice the restaurant was packed. There were no seats – not even at the bar, which is understandable, because this restaurant is very popular. And, I was no longer the “only one.”

I was sitting close to the entrance of the restaurant. A conversation taking place between the host and a woman with a desire to have lunch caught my attention. The host informed her that it would be a wait for a table. I had not yet placed my order. I told the host, if she didn't mind sitting with a stranger, I would share my table with her. She was very grateful. We started chatting. I introduced myself and I told her this was one of my favorite restaurants and she said she had only been here one other time a little more than a year ago. I told her that I come here often to write, because the atmosphere is so thought provoking... to say the least. She asked me about my previous books. I told her I'm sure she had not heard of me, unless she has read self-help books on personal growth, self-improvement or problems in dysfunctional, trying to be Christian families. I told her, “I'm starting a new book, but at this point, I'm not sure what to write about. I normally write a combination of fiction and non-fiction, because I'm a psychologist and have only written within my field... scientific, empirical studies and research etc.; however, I decided I wanted to just write about something intriguing and fun. So, I've been people-watching and making up stories about them to see where my imagination takes me.”

She looked at me with this sorrowful glare and I felt as if I needed to apologize. I asked her, “Had I said something wrong?” She said, “How would you like to write a true story about a dysfunctional almost-Christian family from the south?” Now, I'm just looking at her. I asked her, “What do you mean, a true story?” She said, “My life, for the last few years, could only be believed if you read it in a paperback on a long flight.” “You don't know anything about me,” I said to her. “I might be a National Inquirer reporter, for all you know.” She smiled and said, “I doubt that, you have good eyes, and I don't think you will discredit me or this story.” “Besides, once you hear it, you will be happy to write it.” I smiled, and said, “I'm all ears and could I record while you talk.” She said, “No problem.”

And, so she talked. I listened and made notes.

CHAPTER TWO

Meeting #1:

"Guess Who I Saw Today?"

As our food arrived, Lizanne began her story...

"My name is Lizanne Martin and I almost lost the best second husband a woman could ever ask for. The last time I was here was a little over a year ago and that day my world started to crumble around me, and you know what, it was my fault."

Lizanne laughed, as she said, "Well, I guess like any great story, I'll start in the middle."

Lizanne began to talk. "Do you know the song 'Guess Who I Saw Today' by Nancy Wilson?" I said I knew who Nancy Wilson was. *She recommended I listen to the song as soon as I got a chance.*

About a year ago, I was sitting at a table on the other side of the bar, enjoying an early evening cocktail with my sister-in-law, when I noticed a couple come into the restaurant and sit over there. *Lizanne gestured to a corner near the bar where, instead of tables, there were lounge chairs and small round tables where customers could meet, chat, have a drink and hors d'oeuvres. As she continued, I could see distress in her expression.*

At first, I wasn't sure what I was seeing and then the Nancy Wilson song started playing over the intercom. This restaurant has always played good jazz, but they could have picked any song but that one to play that day. My sister-in-law Maria turned around to see what I was looking at and the look on her face confirmed what I saw. It was my husband, her brother, and another woman we did not know. She started to jump up and run over there immediately; I stopped her."

"Maria was so distraught that she started speaking in Spanish and lucky for me I speak Spanish. I'm not going to tell you what she was saying."

"I told her not to move, because I know her. She would have gone over there and started screaming at him in Spanglish and hitting him or something, because that's what older sisters do – they are twins; however, she came first, so she lets him know that she is the oldest whenever it suits her."

"I wanted to think it was an innocent meeting. A new contractor... although, I would have known about that since I'm the company's contract manager, maybe an old friend, *anything* that doesn't resemble mistress. He had not mentioned anything about an upcoming lunch meeting. To be honest, I had not asked. And, to be even more honest, until that day, I didn't really care what he did. You see, I had neglected him for quite some time. After my first

husband James died, I developed the ability to shut people out of my life when they started getting too close.”

“So, I made Maria sit still to ensure he did not see us. It was a good thing we were about to leave when they walked in and that we were sitting in an area where he could not see us. I made her promise not to say anything to anyone, especially her husband, his best friend, until I figured out how to handle the situation. Maria was furious, but she agreed.” *She kind of sat there for a moment, as if she was sorting out her emotions... as if she could feel everything now that she had felt that day -- the confusion of should she care, be angry or just pretend she didn't see him.*

“I tell you what, when I got home, I had no clue what I would do or say. My emotions were all over the place, because even though I was neglecting him, it didn't dawn on me that he would find someone else to show him affection. And ironically, when I turned on the radio, you will never guess what was playing... “Clean-Up Woman!!!” I just laid on the floor and cried for a minute. I did get myself together before he came in, because Maria called to find out if I was okay and what was I going to do; and I didn't want him to see me prostrate whimpering. I told her I decided not to say anything to him and although it was killing her, I made Maria promise again not to say anything to anyone. I needed to think.”

“Well, as life would have it, the next day was work and the day after was work, and then it was the weekend and the next week and so on. I finally convinced Maria that the affair was nothing and I wasn't going to worry about it. I fell back into my “job more important” mode and although I didn't forget it, I didn't feel the need to ask him about it. I had other things to worry about, like how to keep our business afloat and be angry with him, because his brother put the business in jeopardy which is why I was in “neutral” with him... not in love and not out of love... just neutral, which is the worst place for a marriage. I even decided that if he is having an affair, good for him, because I wasn't interested... another bad place for a marriage to be.”

“Honestly, if he was having an affair, it was my fault. Long before Antonio and I married I decided the only man that truly deserved my love was dead. I had taught myself to be selfish and closed minded when it came to other men. I learned to contain my emotions so that when the next one, if there ever would be a next one, died, it wouldn't really matter. I know it was a terrible place for me to be in; I'm sure I needed therapy, probably still do, but that's where I was when Antonio came along. He and I knew each other many years ago (about 25ish years ago). We ran into each other again about five years ago. I should have just said no the first time he asked me out for dinner, but I was lonely after involuntarily being without my James. I said yes; I was weak that day. I don't have an excuse for saying yes to dancing, dining, inviting him to dinner and him inviting me to movies and courting and like I said, it was completely selfish. Maybe he may have been feeling selfish himself, at the time. I did warn Antonio and he said he could handle it. He was grieving a marriage broken and so in actuality, we were both on the rebound. Terrible state of affairs to start a relationship on, but nevertheless, that's where we started – pretty much already doomed.”

She shook her head, as if to shake out the pain that these memories were gathering there. I asked her about herself, her childhood ... she smiled and then frowned. She suggested we meet the next day. I agreed.

