A woman with long, wavy brown hair is seen from behind, sitting in a meditative lotus position on a rocky path in a forest. She is wearing a light-colored sweater and blue jeans. In the distance, a simple wooden cross stands on the path, illuminated by a bright sunburst effect breaking through the trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and spiritual.

# *Grandma Wendy's* LIFE JOURNEY

PART ONE

*Prayer, Struggle, and Seeking God*

When Everything Fell Apart

*Wendy Ladybug*

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# Contents

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## Introduction

### *A Word from Grandma Wendy*

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A Word from  
*Grandma Wendy*

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“Be still,  
and know  
that I am God.”

PSALM 46:10

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Thank you for picking up my story  
and walking this journey with me.



Wherever you are in life...  
whatever has broken your heart...

**God sees you.**  
**He is with you.**  
**And hope is possible.**

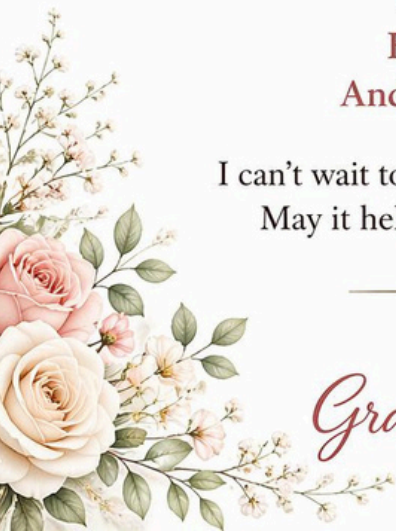


I can't wait to share this journey with you.  
May it help you heal—step by step.

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With love,

*Grandma Wendy* 



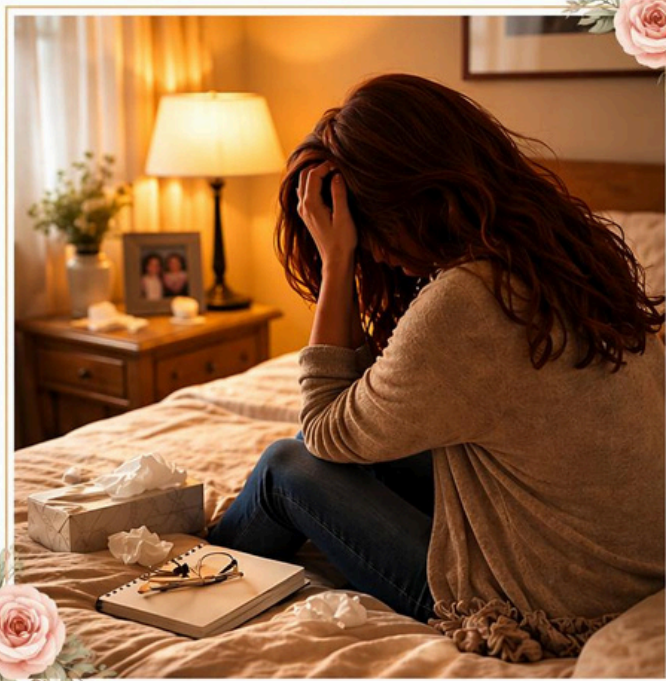
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# Chapter 1

— — — — —

*It's Okay to Not Be Okay*



**When Everything Fell Apart**

— — — — —

*“I can't ignore this anymore...”*

— — — — —



# Introduction



If you had told me years ago...  
after everything I had been through...  
that my life would change the way it did...

*I wouldn't have believed you.*




Because there was a time  
when everything felt certain...  
and then suddenly...  
it wasn't.




Life has a way of shifting beneath your feet.  
Of asking questions you weren't  
prepared to answer.



And sometimes...  
the hardest seasons...  
become the ones that change you the most.



*This is the story of what happened...  
when everything fell apart.*



# Life Before the Storm

In 2018, I felt like I was standing on top of the world. My life was full and vibrant.

At the time, I had six children, their spouses, and twenty grandchildren.

I also owned a thriving business called The Ladybug, a unique restaurant and spa combination. The Amish supplied fresh produce for our menu, and we built everything from scratch with health and flavor in mind.

We had two locations, both filled with life and love.

For six months each year, the business flourished, and for the other six months, my husband and I traveled.

We saw the world, visited family, and even worked with the homeless in ministry.

My husband and I prayed together daily.

We built businesses together.

From the outside, it looked like a perfect life.

## How Did I Get the Name “Ladybug”?

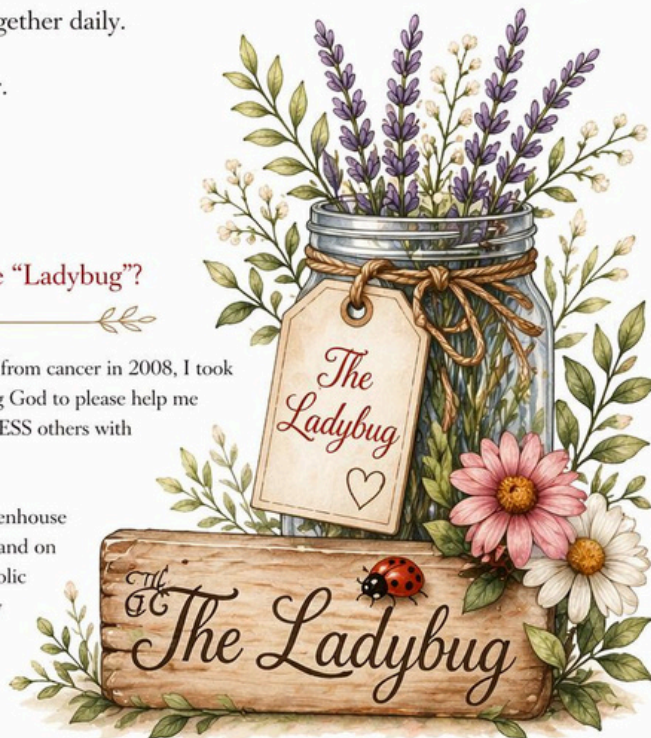
When my mom and dad passed away from cancer in 2008, I took their money and prayed over it, asking God to please help me to use it in a good way that would BLESS others with health and wellness.

In the fall of 2008, I was led to a greenhouse that had thousands of ladybugs in it and on the land. (I found out later the symbolic meaning of the ladybug and the Holy Mother Mary and other symbols of “The Ladybug”).

Wendy



Ladybug



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# The Secret That Shattered Everything

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But behind closed doors, a terrible truth was hidden. My husband of fourteen years was living a double life. In 2018, his secrets came to light—he was arrested for abusing my own grandchildren.

The shock was devastating. How could the man I trusted, the man I loved, carry such darkness? My world collapsed in an instant.

The story hit local newspapers. Headlines splashed across front pages. Our family's name was dragged into the spotlight. The Amish farmers who partnered with us were shamed. People judged without knowing the full truth.

I wanted to disappear.

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## Facing the Pain

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I didn't know what to do.  
My heart was broken for my grandchildren and my other family members.  
My trust was destroyed.  
My business—the thing I poured my soul into—was stained by association.

Should I stay by his side and get him the help he needs for this sickness? Should I walk away? I didn't know what the future held.  
I only knew that nothing would ever be the same.



# My Sister's Advice

In the middle of my grief, I reached out to my older sister, a critical care nurse. She listened patiently and then gave me advice that would change everything: "Wendy, get on a cruise ship. Go somewhere quiet. Pray. Think. And decide."

So that's what I did... but not how I expected.

My sister found the perfect cruise for me and booked it without me even knowing where I was going. It was the Norwegian Cruise Line's NCL Epic, departing from Barcelona.

A few days later, she told me, "Pack your bags. You leave soon." I was surprised. I had no idea where I was going.

I flew to Barcelona carrying more than luggage—I carried heartbreak, uncertainty, and a quiet hope that somehow, something in me could begin again.



# The First Step Toward Healing



On that ship, I cried. I prayed. And I wrestled with the hardest decision of my life.

Slowly... I felt peace. It was okay to let go. It was okay to choose freedom.

That decision didn't erase the pain, but it became the first step toward healing.





# What I Learned



Looking back, I realize this painful chapter shaped me into who I am today. I learned that healing doesn't come all at once—it comes in small steps, in quiet moments, and in the courage to keep moving forward. I also learned that even in the darkest storms, God can whisper hope into our hearts.



## Grandma Wendy's Reflection



If you've ever had your life turned upside down, I want you to know this:  
You are not alone. Pain doesn't define you.  
Betrayal doesn't have the final word.  
Healing is possible—one step at a time.  
Sometimes everything must fall apart before the pieces can come together into something stronger, braver, and more beautiful.



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Chapter 2

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A Granddaughter's  
Letter of Truth

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*Courage, Pain, and Healing*

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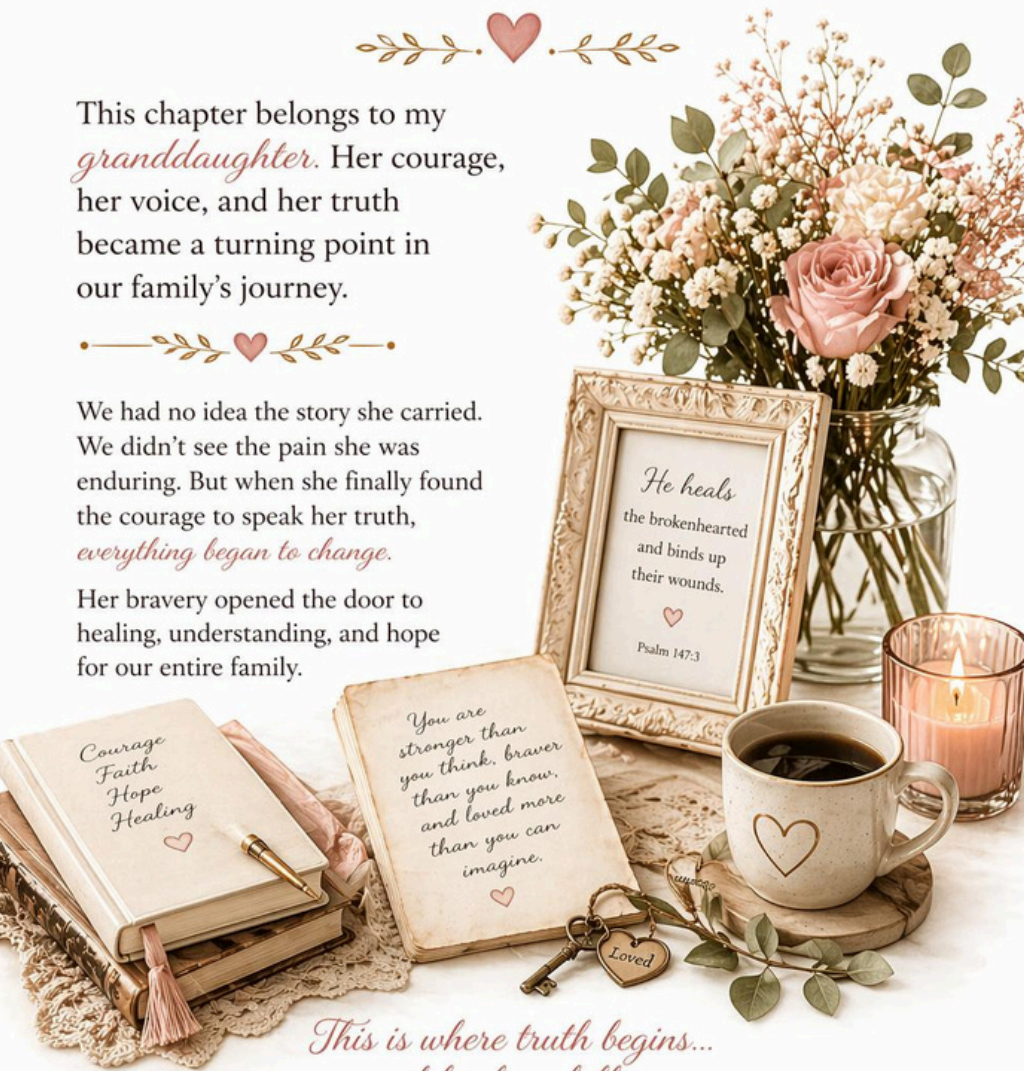
# Introduction

Some stories are not easy to tell...  
but they must be told.

This chapter belongs to my *granddaughter*. Her courage, her voice, and her truth became a turning point in our family's journey.

We had no idea the story she carried. We didn't see the pain she was enduring. But when she finally found the courage to speak her truth, *everything began to change.*

Her bravery opened the door to healing, understanding, and hope for our entire family.



*This is where truth begins...  
and healing follows.*

# A Letter That Changed Everything



My granddaughter wrote a letter that forever changed my heart. In the middle of courtrooms, prison sentences, and unimaginable heartbreak, her innocent yet powerful words reminded me that truth and love still mattered. Her letter became a turning point — a reminder that even when adults fail, the light of a child can still guide the way.

## A Letter of Truth

My granddaughter wrote directly to the three judges overseeing the parole hearing of my former husband (name not disclosed). Her words were honest, courageous, and deeply personal. She spoke of childhood trauma, manipulation, confusion, and the lasting impact of abuse. She shared how it affected her identity, her faith, and her ability to trust.

She explained that her earliest memory, at only two and a half years old, was not one of innocence, but of violation. She described years of silence, manipulation, and shame.

She spoke of diagnoses such as C-PTSD and borderline personality disorder — conditions often linked to prolonged childhood trauma. She also shared the emotional complexity of being doubted... of watching adults struggle to reconcile faith with truth... and the peace she finally felt the day justice was served.

Her words were not fueled by revenge. They came from a place of truth, courage, and a deep desire for safety, accountability, and protection for others.



*When truth is spoken with courage,  
healing becomes possible, and hope is restored.*

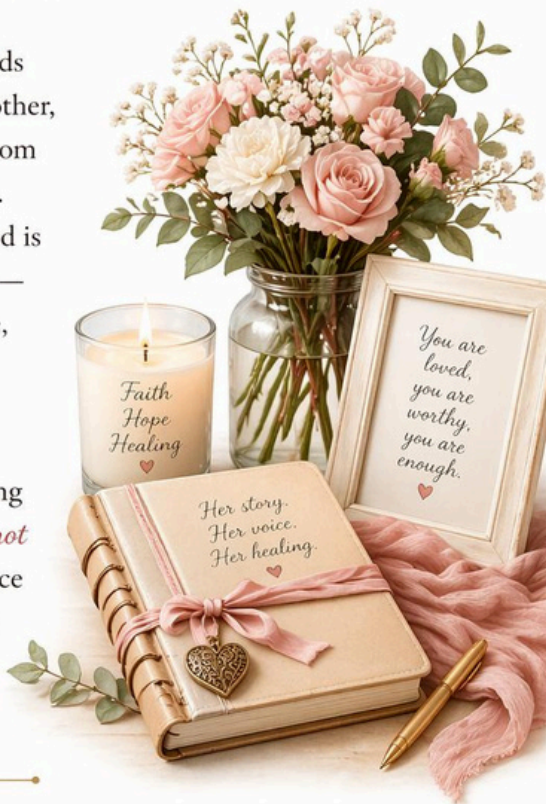


# Grandma Wendy's Reflection

Reading my granddaughter's words takes my breath away. As a grandmother, I wish I could have protected her from every ounce of pain she endured. As a woman of faith, I trust that God is writing a greater story for her life — one filled with strength, resilience, healing, and purpose.

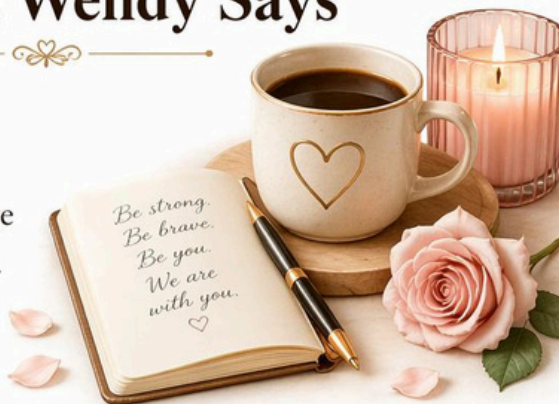


If you have lived through something similar, please know this: *You are not alone*. Healing is possible. Your voice matters. And your story deserves to be heard.



## Grandma Wendy Says

“ Truth may be painful... but it is also powerful. And when we find the courage to speak it, healing can begin.



# Chapter 3

## Barcelona, Chocolate Martinis & A New Beginning

Sometimes, healing begins in the most unexpected places. A trip I never saw coming opened my eyes to beauty, peace, and the possibility of joy again. In Barcelona, I found wonder. On a cruise, I found breathing room. And with a chocolate martini in hand, I found the courage to begin again.

*New places.  
New perspectives.  
A new beginning.  
All things are  
possible when you  
choose hope.*



Every ending is simply the beginning of something beautiful.

# Introduction

On a cruise through Barcelona  
aboard Norwegian Cruise Line's NCL Epic,  
I faced heartbreak, ordered a few chocolate martinis,  
and met someone who would change my life forever.


Love didn't arrive loudly...  
it arrived gently, with kindness.



*Sometimes, the most unexpected chapters  
lead to the most beautiful beginnings.*


## Sailing Into the Unknown



After my world fell apart, I boarded the NCL Epic, departing from Barcelona. My sister and her husband joined me so I wouldn't be alone. While others were excited about ports and parties, my heart carried grief and unanswered questions. I was holding a decision inside: stay married to a man in prison... or walk away and begin again.


## A Quiet Moment With God

My sister encouraged me to leave the letters behind and find a quiet place to pray. Alone on the top deck of the NCL Epic, with the sea and sky stretching endlessly around me, I cried out to God. Deep within my spirit, I felt the answer: it's okay to let go. It's okay to choose freedom. When I returned, I removed my wedding ring. It was my first step forward.


## The Toast That Changed Everything

A few days later, we celebrated my decision. At the martini bar on the NCL Epic, I tried something new — a chocolate martini. Sitting nearby was a couple from Australia who introduced us to someone from New Zealand. In that moment, I had no idea that introduction would change my life forever.

“ *Sometimes the most unexpected moments lead us exactly where we are meant to be.* ”





# Meeting BoozeBug



He was kind, funny, and easy to talk to.  
What started as a simple conversation turned  
into laughter, connection, and something deeper.

That night, we were just two strangers  
sharing stories — but it was the beginning  
of something much more.



# What Barcelona Taught Me



Barcelona was full of life — music, food,  
and ocean breezes.

But the real magic wasn't the city...  
it was the reminder that life can begin again,  
even after everything falls apart.



# Grandma Wendy's Reflection



Life will break you, but it will also surprise you.  
The same place that held my tears became  
the place where I found joy again.  
Don't be afraid of new beginnings —  
sometimes they arrive quietly,  
like a chocolate martini on a night you didn't expect.



—•♡•—

# Grandma Wendy Says

—•♡•—

*Love doesn't always come with fireworks.  
Sometimes it arrives softly... and changes everything.*

—•♡•—

The best moments in life aren't always the loudest.  
They're the ones that sneak up on you...  
when you least expect it.  
It might be a conversation that feels easy.  
A laugh that feels like home.  
A connection that feels like peace.

♡

When your heart has been through the storm,  
it learns to recognize calm as a gift.  
When your spirit has been broken,  
it learns to cherish softness.  
And when love shows up in a gentle way,  
it has the power to heal what once felt impossible.

—•♡•—

*Keep your heart open.  
Trust the timing.  
Believe in new beginnings.  
You never know when  
your life will change  
in the most beautiful  
ways.*

♡



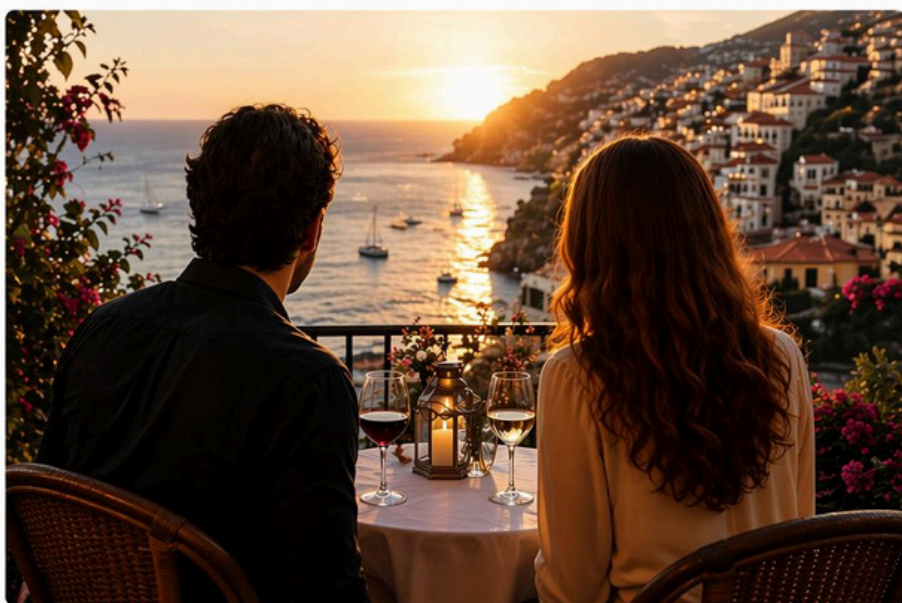
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Chapter 4

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Madeira Magic –  
Our First Date in  
Portugal

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‘Sometimes the best chapters of our lives  
begin with a *step we never saw coming...*  
and lead us exactly where we’re *meant to be.*


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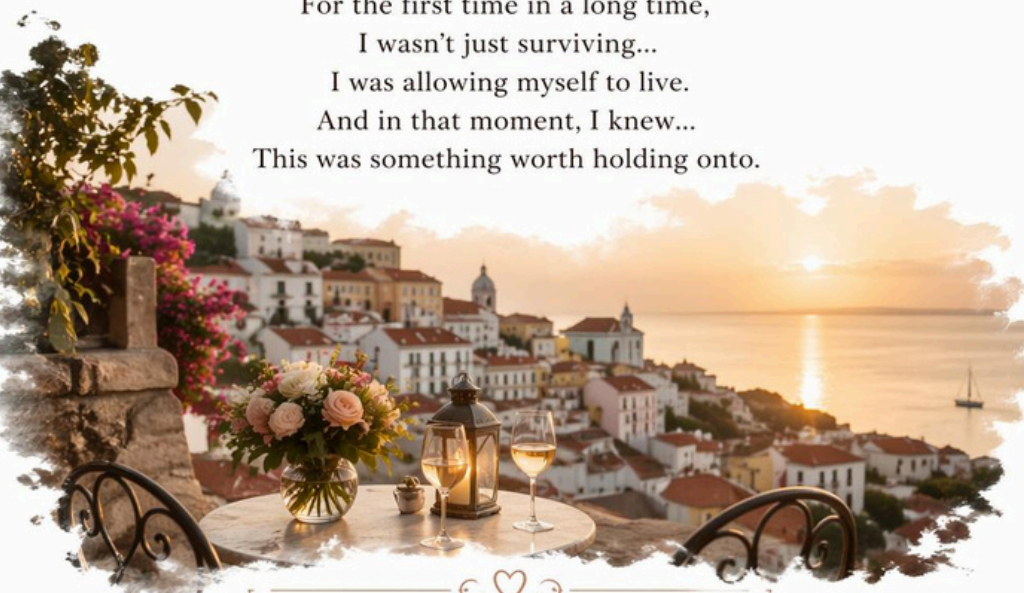
# Introduction




Our first real date happened in Portugal —  
a place neither of us called home,  
yet it felt like destiny quietly unfolding.  
Surrounded by ocean views, cobblestone streets,  
and peaceful moments,  
I began to realize something profound...  
My life was beginning again.



It wasn't just about the beautiful places  
or the exciting adventures.  
It was about the way I felt when I was with him —  
safe, understood, and truly seen.  
For the first time in a long time,  
I wasn't just surviving...  
I was allowing myself to live.  
And in that moment, I knew...  
This was something worth holding onto.



*Sometimes the most beautiful  
chapters of our lives begin  
in places we never expected...  
with people we never saw coming.*





## A New Beginning Far From Home



After meeting Tony on the NCL Epic, something shifted inside me. Our first official date wasn't in America or New Zealand, but on Madeira Island, Portugal. It felt surreal — exciting, nerve-filled, and full of possibility. There we were, two people from opposite sides of the world, meeting somewhere in between... at exactly the right time.



## A Spa With Ocean Views



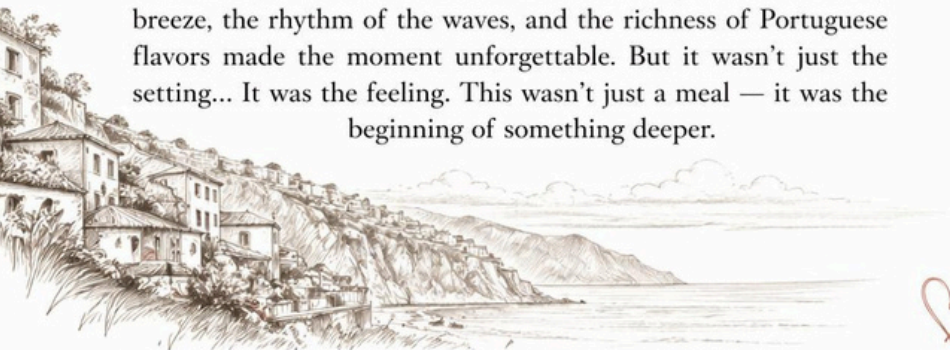
Tony took me to a beautiful spa perched along the ocean. We rode a glass elevator down the cliffside, watching the Atlantic stretch endlessly before us. It felt like we were descending into a completely different world — one of calm, beauty, and stillness. Inside, we moved between steam rooms, warm pools, and open-air terraces. For the first time in a long time... everything slowed down. And in that quiet space, connection gently took its place.



## Lunch Above the Atlantic



After the spa, we sat down for lunch overlooking the sea. The salty breeze, the rhythm of the waves, and the richness of Portuguese flavors made the moment unforgettable. But it wasn't just the setting... It was the feeling. This wasn't just a meal — it was the beginning of something deeper.





## The Spark Between Us



As we talked, laughed, and shared pieces of our lives, I felt something I hadn't felt in a very long time... Ease. There was no pressure. No pretending. No expectations. Just two people, fully present. From different parts of the world... yet completely aligned in that moment. It felt simple. Natural. Real.



## Portugal's Magic



Portugal itself felt like a dream — colorful tiles, winding streets, and a culture that invites you to slow down and truly savor life. Madeira, in particular, held a quiet kind of magic. A place where nature, beauty, and stillness come together... and somehow make everything feel meaningful.



### Grandma Wendy's Reflection

Sometimes new beginnings don't come with loud announcements. They arrive quietly... in unexpected places. That first date in Portugal reminded me that life wasn't over. It was just beginning again.



# Grandma Wendy Says



New beginnings can happen anywhere —  
even on a quiet island far from home.

Stay open... Your next chapter  
may be waiting for you.



*The world is full of beautiful places...  
but sometimes, the most beautiful discoveries  
are the people you meet along the way.*



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Chapter 5

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Saying Goodbye in  
Miami – A Painful  
Farewell

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“

Sometimes the hardest goodbyes are the ones that shape us the most... because love doesn't end— it simply learns how to wait.

”

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# Introduction

## Every Chapter Has a Purpose

Some chapters are filled with laughter and light.  
Others test our hearts in ways we never saw coming.  
But each one is written for a reason,  
leading us exactly where we're meant to be.



This story is about trusting the journey,  
embracing the unknown,  
and believing that what's meant for you  
will always find its way back.

*Keep your heart open. Good things  
often arrive when we least expect them.  
And sometimes, they arrive twice.*

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# The Cruise Comes to an End

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The NCL Epic had carried us across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and with every passing day, my bond with Tony—my BoozeBug—grew stronger. We had shared laughter, quiet conversations, sunsets that felt endless, and a connection that neither of us expected... yet both of us felt deeply.

It wasn't just a cruise romance.  
It felt real. It felt rare.  
It felt heaven-sent.

But as the ship docked in Miami, reality returned.  
And reality meant we had to step off... and face  
different paths.

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## A Heartfelt Goodbye

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Tony invited me to join him on his next stop in New Orleans before he returned home to New Zealand. Every part of me wanted to say yes. But I knew I had to choose family.

Standing there, knowing we were about to go separate ways, time felt like it slowed down. Neither of us wanted that moment to end. With tears in our eyes, we held each other... not wanting to let go. We kissed goodbye, both of us feeling the weight of what we were leaving behind. He walked one way. I walked another. And yet... neither of us truly left each other. We promised to stay connected—and he called me almost every day afterward, holding onto what we had built, even across the miles.





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# Where My Heart Was Torn

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From Miami, I stepped back into the arms of my family—the people who mean everything to me.

They were hurting.

We were all hurting.

And being there with them mattered more than anything.

I wanted them to feel my love, my presence, my support...

because they are my heart. They always have been.

But inside, I was torn.



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## Two Places at Once

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Part of me knew exactly where I needed to be—in the middle of my family, standing strong with them through one of the hardest seasons of our lives.

But another part of me... quietly longed for something else.

For peace.

For comfort,

For the feeling I had found with Tony.

With him, everything felt calm... natural... safe in a way

I hadn't felt in a long time.

And that made the decision even harder.



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## The Weight of Love

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I wasn't choosing between right and wrong.

I was choosing between two things I loved.

My family—who needed me.

And a connection—that had come into my life when I needed it most.

There was no easy answer.

Only a heart trying to hold it all at once.


So I stayed strong...

I showed up...

And I carried the weight quietly—

trusting that somehow, in time,

the path forward would become clear.





# Holding On to Faith



Through it all, one scripture kept me grounded: “Be still, and know that I am God.” Whenever the stress threatened to overwhelm me, I held on to those words. Step by step... I kept moving forward. Supporting my family. Facing my divorce. Trusting that somehow, God was guiding me through it all.

And in the quiet moments... when Tony’s calls came through... my heart would soften. His voice reminded me of something I desperately needed to believe: Love was still real. And it hadn’t left me.





## Grandma Wendy’s Reflection




Life doesn’t always give us clean, easy chapters. Sometimes love and loss... family and duty... all collide at once. That goodbye in Miami wasn’t just painful—it was meaningful. Because it showed me that what we had was real. It wasn’t convenient. It wasn’t easy. But it was real. And sometimes, the hardest goodbyes are the ones that prove just how much love exists. That moment didn’t end our story... It strengthened it.




# Grandma Wendy Says




Life will test your heart in ways  
you never expect. But it's not  
to break you— it's to build you.




It's okay to love deeply and still  
have hard decisions to make.




It's okay to choose your family and  
still hold a connection close to your heart.




It's okay to cry, to feel torn, and to  
not have all the answers right now.



What matters most is that you keep showing up,  
keep your faith, and keep choosing love—  
even when it's not easy.




Every ending is not a loss.  
Sometimes, it's a stepping stone  
to something bigger and better.



Keep believing. Keep trusting.  
Keep your heart open.

*Your story is still unfolding,  
and the best is yet to come.*



# Chapter 6

## Torn Between Two Worlds – The Decision to Return



*Sometimes the hardest decisions  
come from the heart,  
but they lead us to the life  
we were meant to live.*

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# Introduction


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I found myself standing between two completely different lives—two worlds that pulled me in opposite directions, yet both held pieces of my heart. One was the life I had built with hard work, sacrifice, and years of dedication. It was rooted in responsibility, family, and everything I had poured my heart into in Iowa.




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The other was a love I never expected—one that came into my life quietly, gently, and without warning. It found me when I needed it most. It lived oceans away, in New Zealand, and it made me feel something I thought I might never feel again. With him, I found peace, comfort, and a connection that reached deep into my soul.

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This wasn't just a decision about where to be—it was a decision about who I wanted to become, what kind of life I was meant to live, and whether it was ever possible to honor both worlds without losing a piece of myself.

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In the pages that follow, I'll take you through the moments, the prayers, the tears, and the courage it took to choose a path I could live with—one that would change everything, but also lead me back to me.

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# Returning to Iowa

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After that emotional goodbye in Miami, I made my way back to Iowa — back to my family, my responsibilities, and the life I had built over so many years.

But something had shifted.

Everything looked the same... yet nothing felt the same. The certainty I once carried was gone, replaced with quiet questions and a heart that no longer fit neatly into the life I had known.

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## The Pull of Responsibility

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My daughter Becky and our family had poured their hearts into the Ladybug. It was more than a business — it was part of our story, our identity, and something they believed we could rebuild together.

They wanted to move forward... to restore what had once brought us so much joy.

And I wanted that too.

But every corner held memories. Some beautiful... some painful. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't ignore the weight of it — the past, the loss, and everything that had changed.

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## The Call of Love

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At the same time, Tony was on the other side of the world... waiting. What we had found on that cruise wasn't something I could easily walk away from. It wasn't just connection — it was real.

After everything I had been through, that kind of love felt like a gift I never expected to receive again.

But choosing that path meant something big.


It meant letting go.

It meant stepping into the unknown.

It meant trusting a future I couldn't yet see.

And somehow... deep down... I knew I couldn't ignore it.

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## Living Between Two Worlds

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I felt torn. Part of me wanted to stay — to be present for my family, to fix what was broken, to hold everything together. And another part of me knew... Something new was calling me forward. It wasn't an easy pull. It was emotional. Confusing. Overwhelming. Some days I felt strong. Other days I questioned everything.

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## Testing the Path

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Instead of forcing a decision, I chose something different. I chose to take a step. I arranged for help with the business... trusted that things could continue without me for a time... And I made a plan to go to New Zealand. Not to escape. Not to run. But to find out the truth. Was this love real? Was this where I was meant to be?

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## A Flight Into the Unknown

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As I boarded the plane, my heart was full of everything at once: Fear. Hope. Doubt. Excitement. I didn't know what the outcome would be. I didn't know what was waiting for me on the other side of the world. But I knew one thing... I couldn't ignore it. I had to try.

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## Grandma Wendy's Reflection

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Sometimes life brings you to a crossroads where there is no clear answer. No perfect path. No guaranteed outcome. Just a choice. And in those moments, the only way forward... is to trust your heart, lean on your faith, and take that first step into the unknown.

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## Holding On to Faith

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You don't always need the whole plan...  
Just the courage to take the next step.







# Grandma Wendy Says



Life doesn't always give us clear answers.  
Sometimes it gives us a choice with no guarantees.  
*And that's when faith becomes our compass.*



You don't have to have the whole plan figured out.  
You don't have to have it all together.  
You just have to be willing to take the next step—  
even if it's scary.



Trust your heart. Listen to your soul.  
Lean on your faith. And never be afraid  
to choose a life that feels true to you.  
*You are allowed to want more.*

Remember this...  
The right path isn't always the easiest one.  
But it's the one that leads to peace,  
purpose, and the love you were meant to find.



Be brave. Be kind to yourself.  
*And never stop believing in new beginnings.*



# Chapter 7

## New Zealand Beginnings – Beaches, Laughter, and Healing



*“Every new beginning holds the promise  
of joy, healing, and the life  
you were meant to live.”*



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# Introduction

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Arriving in New Zealand felt like stepping into an entirely new world. What began as a simple visit quickly became something much deeper — a journey of healing, connection, and unexpected joy.

Somewhere along the way... I realized I wasn't just visiting.

*I was changing.*



I came searching for clarity, for peace, for a sign that I was on the right path. What I found instead was so much more than I ever imagined.

I found breathtaking beauty that spoke to my soul. I found a love that felt divinely timed. And I found strength within myself that I didn't know I had.

This chapter is the beginning of that story — of new shores, open hearts, and a life I never saw coming... but was always meant for me.

*Let the journey begin. ♡*



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## A Leap of Faith

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After making the decision in Chapter 6 to follow my heart, I boarded a plane and crossed the Pacific. I didn't know what would happen next. Part of me was still tied to my life in America — my family, my responsibilities, everything familiar. But another part of me... Was ready. Ready to see what God had in store. Ready to feel again. Ready to live again.

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## Meeting Tony's Mother

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One of the first moments that touched my heart deeply was meeting Tony's mother. There's something special about how a mother welcomes someone into her world. And she welcomed me with warmth, kindness, and open arms. In that moment, I felt something shift. This wasn't just a visit anymore. This was becoming something meaningful.

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## Discovering the Northland

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Tony took me to the breathtaking beaches of Doubtless Bay and Tokerau Beach. The ocean stretched endlessly before me... calm, vast, and peaceful. And standing there, I felt something I hadn't felt in a very long time... Peace. Not forced. Not temporary. Real peace.

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## Facing Fear and Finding Healing

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As beautiful as the ocean was, it also carried something else for me... Fear. As a child, I nearly drowned, and I never truly learned how to swim. Being near deep water always brought a quiet anxiety. But something about New Zealand felt different. Standing on those beaches, breathing in the fresh ocean air, listening to the waves... I didn't feel overwhelmed. I felt... safe. Little by little, that fear began to loosen its grip. And in its place... Healing began.

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## Laughter, Friends, and New Experiences

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Tony's friends welcomed me like I had always belonged. There were gatherings filled with laughter, shared meals, and moments that made my heart feel light again. Simple things became meaningful: trying new foods Sharing stories Laughing without heaviness For the first time in a long time... I wasn't just surviving. I was enjoying life again.

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## Music and New Joy

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Back in Auckland, something unexpected happened... I enjoyed watching Tony's band and dancing. Being there, feeling the music, losing myself on the dance floor — it brought me so much joy. It reminded me of something powerful: Life doesn't end after pain It transforms And sometimes... it surprises you in the most beautiful ways.

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# What New Zealand Taught Me



New Zealand is more than a destination. It's a feeling. A place where time slows down... where people are genuine... where nature speaks in a quiet, healing way.

It gave me space to breathe. To think. To feel. To rediscover joy. And in that space, I began to find myself again.

I learned that healing isn't always loud. Sometimes it's found in still moments, in kind people, in beautiful places. It reminded me that it's okay to start over. It's okay to let go. It's okay to choose happiness again.

New Zealand didn't just show me new places — it showed me a new way to live.



## Grandma Wendy's Reflection




Sometimes healing doesn't come from answers. It comes from moments. A walk on the beach... A genuine laugh... A new connection... The courage to face something that once scared you. Those are the moments that begin to restore what was once broken.







# Grandma Wendy Says




Life will take you places you never expected.  
Some will be hard. Some will be beautiful.  
*Every one of them will shape you.*




Healing doesn't mean the pain never existed.  
It means you're no longer letting it  
control your future.




Be open to new people, new experiences,  
and new beginnings. You never know  
where joy is waiting for you.



Courage isn't about having all the answers.  
It's about trusting your heart  
and taking the next step anyway.



*You are stronger than you think.*  
You are braver than you feel.  
And your story is far from over.



Keep believing. Keep going.  
*The best is still ahead.*



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# Chapter 8

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## Returning to America – Letters, Stars, and Uncertainty



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Some goodbyes are really new beginnings in disguise.  
I'm returning home, but I'm not the same person  
who left. I carry lessons, memories, and a heart  
that has learned to heal.  
The future feels uncertain...  
but I'm choosing to trust it anyway.

*I may not have all the answers,  
but I have faith, hope, and a whole lot of courage. ♡*

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
# Introduction


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Leaving New Zealand wasn't just a trip home...  
It felt like leaving a piece of my heart behind.  
I carried love with me — real, unexpected,  
life-changing love — but I was returning to  
responsibilities, uncertainty, and a life that  
was still waiting to be rebuilt.



*One chapter  
closes...  
Another  
begins.* 

I didn't have all the answers, but I had something stronger:  
faith, growth, and the courage to keep going.  
This is the start of a new chapter —  
one filled with lessons, surprises, and the  
reminder that healing doesn't mean the end of your story.  
It means you get to write it all over again. 



*I may be returning home,  
but I'm not going back to who I was.  
I'm coming back stronger,  
wiser, and more me than ever before.* 



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## A Letter of Love

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Before I left, I wrote Tony a heartfelt letter. There were so many things I wanted him to know... so many feelings I didn't want to leave unspoken. I thanked him for opening his world to me — his family, his friends, and the beauty of New Zealand. But more than that... I thanked him for helping me feel alive again. Under a sky filled with unfamiliar stars, we stood together, holding onto a quiet promise. Not knowing what the future would bring... but knowing what we felt was real.

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## The Goodbye That Wasn't Easy

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Saying goodbye this time felt different. This wasn't the same as Miami. Now we knew what we had. Now we understood what we were leaving. Every moment felt heavier... slower... more meaningful. And as I walked away, I wasn't just leaving a place... I was leaving someone who had become part of my healing.

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## Torn Between Two Worlds

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As much as I wanted to stay, I knew I had to return to America. My family needed me. The Ladybug business was struggling. And there were responsibilities I couldn't ignore. But my heart... My heart was split. Part of me was in New Zealand. Part of me was heading back to the life I was still trying to piece together. And living in between those two worlds wasn't easy.

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# Seeing Home Differently

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When I arrived back in the United States, everything looked familiar... But it didn't feel the same. There was comfort in being home — in seeing family, in stepping back into what I knew. But there was also a heaviness. A quiet awareness that challenges were waiting for me. The contrast was undeniable. I had just come from peace... And now I was walking back into pressure.

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## Uncertainty and Pressure

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The business, my family, my future... Everything felt uncertain. There were decisions to make. Responsibilities to carry. Emotions I hadn't fully worked through. And underneath it all... A question I couldn't ignore: How do I hold onto love... while handling everything else?

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## Holding Onto Faith

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Through it all, I leaned on the same truth that had carried me before: "Be still, and know that I am God." Even when I didn't understand the path... Even when I felt pulled in opposite directions... I chose to trust. Step by step, I kept moving forward — believing that somehow, everything would come together the way it was meant to.



# Grandma Wendy's Reflection



Life doesn't always give us clear answers.  
Sometimes we are asked to walk forward  
with faith... even when our hearts feel  
divided. Between where we've been...  
And where we're being called to go  
And in those moments, growth begins.



It's okay to hold on to the love, the memories,  
and the lessons. They are part of your story.  
But don't let them keep you from your next  
chapter. You are not meant to stay stuck  
in yesterday when tomorrow is calling.



*Take what you've learned.  
Carry it in your heart.  
Then walk forward with courage,  
knowing you are never walking alone.*




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# Grandma Wendy Says

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*You Are Stronger Than You Know* 

Change is never easy. Leaving one chapter behind and stepping into another can bring fear, doubt, and uncertainty.

But remember this — growth lives on the other side of your comfort zone.

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You don't have to have it all figured out.

You just have to take the next right step.


God is with you in the in-between, in the questions, and in the quiet moments when you feel unsure.

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Your past has shaped you,  
but it doesn't define you.

Your future is still unwritten —

*and it's filled with hope* 

Keep your heart open. Keep your faith stronger.  
And never stop believing that the best is still ahead.

*I believe in you!* 



# Chapter 9

## The Ladybug and the Spirits – Paranormal Nights in Iowa

*Sometimes the things we can't explain  
are reminders that we're never  
walking this path alone.* ♥



Not every answer comes in daylight.

Some come through whispers, signs, and unexpected moments that touch your heart and soul.

Stay open. Stay aware. And always trust the nudge you feel deep down — that's often where the truth lives.



Your past has shaped you,  
but it doesn't define you.  
Your future is still unwritten —

*and it's filled with hope* ♥

Keep your heart open. Keep your faith stronger.  
And never stop believing that the best is still ahead.

*I believe in you!* ♥

# Introduction

Just when I thought life couldn't get any more overwhelming...  
Something unexpected began to happen at the Ladybug.  
It started subtly. A sound here... A shadow there...  
Things I couldn't quite explain.  
But over time, it became impossible to ignore.



This place was more than just a restaurant or a garden. It was a gathering place — a space filled with laughter, prayer, hard work, and love. But it was also a place where something unexplainable lived among us.



Iowa is known for farmland, for quiet nights, for simple living... but the Ladybug? It had a different kind of energy. One that some couldn't feel... and others could never deny.



What you're about to read isn't just a story.  
It's a journey into the unknown...  
Into moments that shook me, humbled me,  
and ultimately, strengthened my faith.



When the world can't explain it,  
faith is what carries you through it.  
Keep your heart open. Stay rooted in love.

*And trust that everything happens for a reason. ♡*



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## Life Back in Iowa

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Returning to Iowa meant stepping back into reality.  
The Ladybug needed attention. My family needed me.  
And my life... was still in the process of being rebuilt.

On the outside, everything looked familiar.  
The same roads. The same routines. The same responsibilities waiting for me.

But inside... something had changed.  
I was carrying emotional weight... questions I didn't yet have answers for...  
and a quiet awareness that my life no longer fit the way it once had.

And then... slowly... something else began to unfold.  
Something I couldn't see...  
but could definitely feel.

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## Strange Happenings

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The Ladybug sat directly across from a cemetery.  
At first, I didn't think much of it.  
Just another detail... another part of the surroundings.


But over time, strange things began to happen.  
Small at first.

Doors would open... and then slowly close on their own.  
Customers mentioned hearing whispers... when no one was nearby.  
My grandchildren talked about seeing shadows...  
moving too quickly to explain.

Moments that could be dismissed. Explained away.  
But the more it happened...  
the harder it became to ignore.

There was something there.  
Unseen...  
but undeniable.

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## A Night I'll Never Forget

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At the time, I was living upstairs.  
Late at night—when everything should have been still—I would hear it.  
**Loud crashes.**  
Not small noises... but something stronger.  
Something that sounded like things being thrown... moved... disturbed.

I would lie there, frozen.  
Listening. Waiting.  
Too afraid to go downstairs and face whatever might be there.

Morning after morning, I would finally go down...  
Only to find things out of place.  
Items knocked over... with no explanation.

It was unsettling.  
And deep down...  
I knew...  
This wasn't my imagination.

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## Fear and Faith

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There were moments when fear tried to take over.  
Moments when my mind raced... and my heart felt uneasy.  
But instead of giving in to fear...  
I turned to faith.  
I prayed often—asking for protection, for peace, for understanding.  
And I reminded myself of something I had learned through  
everything I had been through:  
I was not alone.  
Even in the unknown...  
Even in the unseen...  
God was with me.

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## Seeking Peace

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Eventually, I knew I needed help.  
Not out of panic... but out of a deep desire for peace.  
Through prayer and spiritual guidance, something began to shift.  
The atmosphere felt different.  
Lighter. Calmer.  
And then one night...  
There was one final sound.  
    A loud slam.  
    Strong. Sudden.  
    Echoing through the building.  
  
And after that...  
Silence.  
Complete silence.

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## A Season That Passed

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Just like that... it stopped.  
No more noises.  
No more movement.  
No more shadows.  
  
Looking back, I believe it was a season.  
A moment in time where fear, uncertainty, and faith  
all came together.  
A moment that tested me...  
but also strengthened me.  
  
And in the end...  
Fear didn't stay.  
The unknown didn't win.  
*Faith remained.*

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# Grandma Wendy's Reflection

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Some battles aren't visible...  
But they are still very real.

Whether it's fear, grief, or something  
we can't fully understand...

Those moments test us.  
And in those moments...

Faith becomes our anchor.

When life feels uncertain, hold on to what you know  
is true. God sees what we can't see. He hears what  
we can't say. And He walks with us through every  
season—especially the ones that feel the darkest.

You don't have to have all the answers.  
You just have to keep trusting the One who does.

My hope is that when you face your own battles,  
you'll remember this:

*You are not alone.*

*You are loved.*

*And you are never without hope.*



# Grandma Wendy Says



*Sweet friend,* ♡

Life will bring you seasons you never saw coming.

Some will be beautiful. Some will be painful.

And some will be filled with things you just can't explain.

*But listen closely to what Grandma Wendy wants you  
to always remember...*

♡ **You are never alone.**

Even when you feel it,  
God is right there with you.  
You may not see Him,  
but He sees you.

♡ **Trust your faith.**

Faith doesn't mean  
fear won't come.  
It means you choose to believe  
God is bigger.

♡ **Don't ignore the nudge.**

If something in your spirit  
feels off... pray about it.  
God will always guide you  
if you ask.

♡ **Pray first. Always.**

Prayer changes things.  
It brings peace.  
It brings protection.  
It brings the presence of God.

♡ **Keep your peace.**

The enemy wants fear.  
But God gives us peace  
that no one can shake.  
Guard it with all your heart.

♡ **Remember this...**

Every storm has an end.  
Every season has a purpose.  
And every battle  
has a victory waiting.

♡ *You are stronger than you think.* ♡

You are braver than you feel.

And you are more loved than you will ever know.

*Keep walking in faith... and never stop believing.*



I'm rooting for you, always.

*With love, Grandma Wendy* ♡



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# Chapter 10

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## Closing the Season, Opening My Heart – Preparing for New Zealand



*Every ending is a chance for a new beginning.  
When one chapter closes,  
God is already writing the next one.  
Open your heart. Trust His plan.  
The best is yet to come. ♥*

*I'm so grateful you're here.  
Let's keep walking this journey together. ♥*



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# Introduction

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After seasons of chaos, uncertainty, and  
emotional weight... life finally began to settle.  
Not perfectly. Not completely.  
But just enough for me to breathe again.  
And in that quiet space...  
A new decision began to take shape.


*I was going back to New Zealand.*



*Sometimes,  
the place  
your heart  
calls you  
back to...  
is the place  
where God  
wants to  
restore you.*




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This wasn't just a trip.  
It wasn't just a move.  
It was a step of faith.  
A return to purpose.

A doorway to everything God  
had been preparing me for.

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## A Season of Decisions

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Back in Iowa, I worked to hold everything together. The Ladybug business... Rental properties... The ongoing divorce process... Each day required strength I didn't always feel I had. But slowly, small breakthroughs began to appear. One of those moments came when I sold land in Utah — restoring funds that meant a great deal to me. It wasn't just financial relief... It felt like a sign. A reminder that even in difficult seasons, things can begin to shift.

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## Letting Go of Control

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The Ladybug, once a place of joy, had become overwhelming. Managers came and went. Problems never seemed to settle. And no clear path forward appeared. For so long, I had tried to hold everything together. Fix everything. Control everything. But eventually... I realized I couldn't. So I made one of the hardest decisions yet. I closed the Ladybug for the season. And for the first time in a long time... I let go.

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## Finding Stability

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As I stepped back, something unexpected happened. Life began to calm. My family settled into their own routines. Responsibilities became more manageable. It wasn't perfect... But it was peaceful. And after everything I had been through... Peace felt like a gift.

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# The Pull Back to New Zealand

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Through it all, one thing never changed. Tony. Not a single day went by without us talking. His voice became a steady presence in my life — a reminder of something real... something genuine... onto.... And slowly... That feeling grew stronger. My heart wasn't just remembering New Zealand. It was being pulled back to it.

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## Trusting the Journey

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I still didn't have all the answers. There was still debt. Still uncertainty. Still pieces of life that weren't fully resolved. But one truth remained constant: "Be still, and know that I am God." I held onto those words. Not because everything was clear... But because I trusted that I was being guided. Step by step.

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## A New Chapter Begins

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As I prepared to leave again... I realized something important: This wasn't the same woman who had first boarded that plane. I had walked through heartbreak. Faced fear. Found love. Discovered healing. And now... I was choosing my next step with open eyes and a stronger heart. I didn't know exactly what was waiting for me in New Zealand... But I knew this time... I wasn't running. I was moving forward.

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# Grandma Wendy's *Reflection*

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Sometimes, closing one chapter is  
*the only way to truly open another.*

Letting go doesn't mean losing...  
It means creating space  
for something new to enter your life.



I've learned that growth often comes wrapped in  
change... and change is not always easy.  
It takes courage to walk away from what's familiar.  
It takes even more courage to trust  
that what's ahead is greater.



Through every storm, every tear, every test...  
one thing remained true:


*God was with me.*

He carried me when I was tired.  
He comforted me when I was broken.  
He guided me when I couldn't see the way.






**This is not the end of my story.**  
*It's simply the beginning of a new season  
filled with purpose, peace, and possibility.*



I'm excited for what's ahead.  
*With love always, Grandma Wendy* 


# Grandma Wendy Says

## Remember This...

-  You can't heal in the same place that hurt you.
-  Letting go is not giving up. It's choosing peace.
-  Every ending is God's way of preparing you for something better.

## It's Okay to Start Over.




You are not starting from scratch...  
you are starting from experience.

*You are wiser. You are stronger.  
And you are more prepared  
than you think.* 

You don't have to have  
everything figured out.

*Just take the next right step  
and trust God with the rest.*

## Be Gentle With Yourself

-  You've carried a lot.
-  You've endured more than most.
-  You've kept showing up even when it was hard.


*That is something  
to be proud of.* 

**God is not  
done with you.**

*He's just getting  
started on His  
best work yet.*



New beginnings  
are often disguised  
as hard goodbyes.

*Keep your heart open.  
Keep your faith strong.  
Amazing things  
are ahead.* 

YOU ARE NEVER ALONE. YOU ARE ALWAYS LOVED.

*I'm so proud of you!*

Believe  
Bloom  
Begin Again

FAITH OVER FEAR

HOPE ANCHORS THE SOUL

TRUST THE JOURNEY

# Continue the Journey...♡



Thank you for walking this journey with me. For every page you've read, every story you've felt, and every moment you've trusted that something better is ahead.



Be still, and know  
that I am God.

PSALM 46:10

*This is not the end...*

It's the beginning of something even greater.



There is more to come. More healing. More adventure.  
More purpose. More of God's amazing plan unfolding.



**Part 2 is waiting for you!**

Join me as I continue the journey in New Zealand—  
deeper love, new challenges, incredible lessons,  
and beautiful surprises you won't want to miss.



♡  
**GET YOUR COPY OF PART 2 TODAY!**  
.....♡.....  
Visit  
**WendyLadybugTravels.com**  
to continue the story ♡

*Always remember... You are never alone.  
You are always loved. And your story matters. ♡*

With love always,  
Grandma Wendy ♡