

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Darker Forces – A Near Death Experience

by Judith Ingram

What does one say, one feel, one believes after going through the ordeal, the nightmare, the unbelievable experience my little girl and myself survived, when all had been done to overcome a dark force? I say I am grateful, as well as I felt very thankful my older girls did not have to go through it with us - that I was able to keep them uninvolved - and when it was all over, it was my determined hope to get life back to being normal again. It had been so long since life was normal, and for a short time it seemed uplifting ... hopeful and encouraging. Yet, once again, normal didn't last long.

I knew something had happened to me after that night when the Pastor released the curse from my body. I had felt the Holy Spirit before in my life, but not as powerful as I did then, and thereafter. I didn't realize how prevailing that experience would affect me until I was faced with a darker force far more powerful.

It made more sense to me why I was led to study the dark side so in-depth, when I was faced with an evil of greater strength. Despite the concern of others that I had gone too deep into the darker side by delving into researching Satanism and Witchcraft, I had no fear. I felt empowered to know my enemy well. Scripture teaches us to know our enemy and to put on the full armor of God to protect us from dark forces. The Word taught me such things my entire life, and thank God it did, for what came next, and came next, and came next had not only prepared me but protected me. What may have seemed frightening to others who feared the devil, God's wisdom strengthened me by digging deep into the reality of evil.

After that night when the Pastor came, the days and weeks that ran into months felt like it was the end of everything dark ... Dani's hauntings had disappeared, and soon she would be starting kindergarten. It wasn't long after when she was playing with other kids, laughing and being a normal child. You can imagine how that warmed my heart after watching her slip away in depression and oppression.

A couple of times a month my husband's employer gave the logging crew pizza parties. Many times, John had gone alone, although it was a family affair. Dani didn't seem comfortable being around so many people, she would stay sitting next to me. The kids all played while the wives all visited, and the guys all guzzled pitchers of beer talking logging. It wasn't until Dani was ready to be social that we started attending with John, and the change in her was amazing. It warmed my heart to see her playing, and laughing with the other kids.

When a new crew worker was hired at my husband's job, we made friends with Bret and Karen outside the pizza parties. They had two darling little girls close to Dani's age. Over time, at the pizza parties she had found friends and was always happy when we went to visit them, or they came to visit us. As Karen and I got closer, I shared with her our nightmare experience, keeping the 'other' ordeal private. I didn't share the whole story because I didn't want her to feel uncomfortable knowing all the details of what she had been through. I saw how knowing the

truth about her sexual abused made others feel cautious around her. My husband's folks stopped inviting her to spend sleep overs when her other grandchildren came to visit. And even when we came to visit, his mother wasn't swooping her up with hugs like she had before. People who knew the details were afraid to touch her, so I rarely ever told that story.

One day Karen called with exciting news ... her and Bret had just purchased their first home. She was quite excited about it. After they had settled in, Karen invited us over for a BBQ. From the moment we pulled up to the curbside, one look at their house and I got a creepy feeling. It reminded me of the horror movie Amityville I saw in my early twenties, for its resemblance was striking ... on a much smaller scale. Why that thought was the first thing to come to mind, was perhaps, a revelation.

As we entered their home and sat down, the girls all dashed upstairs. We sat down in the living room and visited a bit, then the guys went out back to have a beer. Karen wanted to show me around so we wandered through the downstairs and then headed for the staircase. I made comment that she had a lovely home, but as we reached the top of the stairs, I got the most eerie feeling. I brushed it off as we continued and then went back downstairs to the kitchen. As we sat at the kitchen table chatting, Karen didn't look as excited as she sounded on the phone a few weeks earlier. As she carried on about the house, and the things they planned on doing, like building a deck and replacing the old fencing out back, she said the girls just loved having a big yard to play in, and she mentioned that Bret had even built a dog house. But then she started to tell me things that were beginning to disturb them all.

Karen went on to say they had been hearing a strange banging at night coming from the living room ceiling. At first, they thought it was their girls jumping on the floor upstairs, but every time they checked, the girls were sound asleep. She said at first it was not as loud and not every night. But then it got louder and was coming every evening, telling me they had to turn the TV volume up. Karen said it only happened at night, and it was even waking up her girls. Bret thought it could be mice, yet, he found nothing to support that suspicion. Whatever it was, it was starting to creep them out.

Karen was starting to wonder if the house had a ghost. She asked me for the name and number of the Pastor who had helped us. She thought, if things got worse, she might have to call him. A couple of weeks later Karen called and asked me to come over, she sounded scared. When I got there, the girls dashed up to their room. Karen and I sat in the living room. She looked tired and stressed, telling me the banging was still going on, keeping them up at night. I could tell things were getting more stressful, and then she told me that their dog was digging up old bones in the backyard. She didn't know what kind of bones they were, but Bret threw them away, saying they were just animal bones, thinking someone must have buried their pet. But the dog kept digging up the ground and more bones were found. It was looking like a graveyard. Karen didn't want the girls to even go out there anymore.

While we sat talking, we heard a loud scream from upstairs, and we both leaped to our feet and ran for the stairs. It was Dani running down the steps, screaming in terror. My first thought that she was hurt was quickly dismissed when I picked her up and calmed her down. Once I knew she

wasn't hurt, I asked her what happen. Karen stood there holding her girl's hand while Dani held my arm tight, shaking in fear. She told us she saw a man hanging in the bathroom. The look of shock on Karen's face, the fear in her eyes, ignited me to check it out. The way her girls quickly wrapped their arms around her legs, squeezing tight with utter fright, told me to check it out. To hear something like that come out of your child's mouth, well, it sparked something within me.

I asked Karen to stay with the girls while I went upstairs to check it out. As I approached the stairway, I saw my purse on the kitchen table and I remembered I had a pocket Bible I kept inside. The moment I held it in my hand, it felt like what I had before when I was filled with the Holy Spirit ... something very powerful.

As I approached the stairs, I randomly opened the Bible and began reading from whatever my eyes unsealed, and the words began to pour out in a soft tone rebuking and cleansing and protecting. My voice growing louder and bolder the further up the stairs I went. My tone became deeper, stronger, more powerful as an invisible force appeared, pushing against me, trying to hold me back. That's when everything around me faded, and suddenly I had tunnel vision focused on the Word, continuing to read the powerful message that flowed from my breath. I felt the pressure weakening as it slowly retreated away. When I reached the top of the stairs, I was staring straight down the hall, right at the bathroom doorway. When I felt the force disappear, I just stood there in silence standing firm, fearless, completely confident the spirit before me was powerless.

I closed the book and started down the hall. The closer I got to the bathroom door, I could hear the voice within warning me not to enter. When I reached the doorway, I peered inside and glanced around, not stepping one foot across the threshold. I saw nothing, I felt nothing, but I suspected it was hiding. I stood outside the doorway and I closed my eyes and said a prayer – that's all I felt I could do at that moment – I didn't feel moved to go any further. When I returned to the living room, I assured everyone that it was okay, trying to lighten the situation, at least for Karen's girl's sake. The last thing I wanted was for them to be scared. After a few minutes they wanted to go back upstairs and play, but my Dani refused to go. We left shortly after that.

On the drive home I wanted to make sure Dani was all right. After what her and I had gone through, we shared a special bond in a way we could talk about such things. She was fully aware of demons and spirits, and they frightened her, but she didn't seem as scared once we left Karen's house. I asked her to tell me everything that happened. She said she had to go potty and that's when she saw the man hanging. She said it wasn't a ghost, it was a man hanging from the ceiling. She said the walls were all black, even the window. I know it frightened her and that it brought up old fears, but honestly, she seemed more concern for them than herself, and so that night, and for several nights we prayed together for their protection.

I called Karen that evening to tell her what Dani had seen in more detail, and what I experienced too. I confirmed to her that I indeed believed there was a dark spirit living there. I told her not to show any fear and to try and ignore it, advising her that she should seek help. When I had given her the name of the Pastor who helped us, I learned by then he had left the country, as he often had in his ministry. When I informed her of this, she then began to ask around and located two

ministers who had some experience in this area. About a week later she told me while her girls were at school, Bret at work, two ministers came to her home to perform what they called 'House Cleansing.' She said they walked around spreading Holy Water, praying, and even removed some items they called, "open doors" ... which I knew all about after several bags of personal items had been removed from our home. She said after they had left, she still felt the awful feeling that something was still there, but then felt relieved the dark spirit must be gone because the banging had ceased.

I hadn't spoken to her in a few weeks after that, and one early morning she called. Her voice spoke in a manner of terror and exhaustion as she tried to explain how things got so bad she had a mental breakdown. She wanted to let me know they had moved out of the house and were staying with Bret's folks. She told me she went to see a psychiatrist, thinking she was going crazy. As I listened to her trembling voice describing the images of horror she experienced, I was extremely disturbed. She said she woke up in the middle of the night from the banging in the ceiling. She had crawled out of bed and went into their master bathroom, and while standing at the sink washing her hands she glanced up into the mirror. At that moment she saw the face of the devil, an ugly, horrible evil sight, looking at her with piercing red eyes.

In that moment she saw streams of blood pouring down the walls like something from a horror film. Bret woke up to her screaming madly and found her curled up on the floor, shaking and not making any sense. He knew immediately something frightening had happened to her and he feared for his family. He quickly packed some things and they fled to a motel in the middle of the night. The next morning, they went to stay with his folks. Karen said she couldn't call sooner because her head was a mess.

They were too scared to go back into that house, even to get things they needed. Bret's mother was able to pick up some clothes and other such items for them, and she said she felt and saw nothing while there. What Karen had told me was deeply alarming, but I didn't feel I could do anything for them ... other than pray. All day it stirred in my mind, but I didn't share anything with anyone. Bret had told my husband they were staying at his folks because Karen had a breakdown, but not even my husband knew the horror story.

That night I had a dream, and dreams are not common for me, they are rather rare. I had a rare dream that night. A battle of the darkest kind. I learned through this experience that the power of the Holy Spirit can work in various methods. I discovered such work can be done through dreams, just as darkness can cause not only nightmares, but real-life attacks.

In my dream I was taken to their house and I was standing outside the bathroom doorway. It was pitch black throughout the entire home. My back was facing the doorway when I heard the voice within tell me to close my eyes, and to keep them closed no matter what. I closed my eyes and stood still. Slowly I felt the dark spirit swirl around me ... my thoughts concentrating on keeping my eyes closed ... fully aware of the outward energy. I felt no fear, as if standing ready for the battle at hand.

I then sensed a cold breeze, a chill gaining strength pouring out from the opened door behind me. I could feel its power trying to break through the protective shield I was encased in, and then

suddenly my mouth began to speak, and the words were spoken with the all-mighty power of the Holy Spirit. The battle thus began.

It got so intense and went on for a long time as the words poured out of me. At times I felt so physically weak that I fell to my knees, only to rise again. The powerful words never ceased ... they only became stronger. I heard horrid sounds echoing throughout the house, yet, I kept my eyes closed. What I felt can only be describe as the Spirit of Fire as the battle raged on until its climax. Then, in an instant, I finally felt the evil force vanish that surrounded me, and the darkness had turned to an illuminating light ... it was so bright I could see the glow through my closed eyelids. Then, I heard the voice say, "Open your eyes," and I opened my eyes and I saw that indeed the whole house was a radiate pure white light. The darkness was gone, and I knew the house was finally free from that haunting.

The next morning, I called Karen to tell her about my dream. I was so excited and so sure that they could return home. She said that was really weird because she woke up that morning and told Bret she had a feeling it was time to go home. She couldn't explain it, but they had made plans to go over after Bret got off work to check it out. The following day Karen called to tell me they were moving back home. She said from the moment they stepped through the front door, she knew it was gone. From then on, they never had any more issues, other than the dog finding a bone once in a while, a problem they resolved and the girls had their backyard to play in again.

Shortly thereafter, Karen was out front one day working in the flower garden, when a neighbor lady happened to be walking by. A friendly hello led to a upsetting conversation that set Karen off terribly. The lady told her it was nice to have a normal family as neighbors. She said the man who lived there before was very strange, because he never came out of the house. She said she saw deliveries being made to him, and at first, she thought he was ill, until she would occasionally see several cars parked along the curb and people entering the house late at night. Sometimes she heard strange noises coming from inside. Then one day she noticed the windows were painted black, even the front door.

The neighbor had a feeling something was going on inside but it wasn't until a work crew showed up to paint the entire inside and out that she was able to go over and take a look. She was shocked that all the walls were also painted black, but when the crew was all finished, the entire place was white-washed and put on the market.

Karen then asked what happened to the man, thinking he must have moved. The lady said it was just a horrible thing, he had hung himself in the upstairs bathroom. After that, Karen talked to other neighbors and had learned more about the history of the house. It was a common feeling that the man was a Satanist, and when Karen learned the awful truth, she was upset. She confronted the realtor who handled the transaction, but he denied he knew anything about it.

When Karen learned about the black paint, she went looking for evidence and she it around some of the window sills and floorboards in closets. She started wondering about the backyard bones, thinking it must have been some kind of ritual thing. The thought began to trouble Karen, so one weekend they decided to check the yard out and began digging the entire ground up. They found

dozens of bones of what they thought looked like small animals, cats or dogs. Bret hauled all that away and they fixed the yard up nicely.

Although all the strange and scary things had ceased, Karen said the creepy feeling always lingered. We had visited many times over the next couple of years, but we never spoke of it again. Then, out of the blue, Karen announced they were selling the house and moving to California.

I wish that was the end of dark matters, but about a year or so after this the elderly couple next store sold their house and a new family moved in. It took a little while before I got to know them, and it was because of Dani wanting to play with the new kids next door that I came to know Terry. I noticed the little girl was more friendly than the boy, both close to the same age as Dani. I soon learned that the little girl was Terry's daughter from another marriage, and the boy was her stepson. The little girl, Sally, seemed more playful than Davie, who was a little older than Dani. I figured he must be shy, but after I got to know Terry better, she began to tell me that Davie had been withdrawn the past several months, saying he stays in his room a lot. She had only been married a couple of years when her husband was transferred to our area and she was hopeful that would help him to come out of his shell. I could tell she seemed very worried about him, but she hadn't fully opened up to me yet.

One day, as we sat chatting at her kitchen table, she confided in me some frightening things about her stepson. Her husband had full custody of Davie because his mother was a member of a witch coven in Salem, Oregon. Salem was where they had moved from, only a couple of hours drive away. One day, unexpectedly, Davie's mother showed up to their home insisting to see her son. Terry knew she had been denied visitation rights and refused to let the mother in because Jeff was at work. The woman left upset, and what followed were court documents the boy's mother had filed for visitation rights.

Terry was very upset and worried sick for the boy after his mother sought visitation. She said Jeff wasn't concerned, thinking there was no way she could win. When I told her about what my daughter had gone through, and how I got to know the District Attorney very well, I offered to see if I could help. Perhaps the DA could help my neighbor in a legal way, so I called the DA and made an appointment to see her. It was good seeing Roberta again, and she was very happy that my daughter was doing so well. I never did tell her about the exorcism experience we went through, although she once told me she felt the man who did what he did was evil. Well, after a nice little visit I told her why I had come. After explaining the situation, she told me not to get involved because there was nothing her, nor I, could do for them. She said, 'Your life is going good now, keep it that way'.

When I told Terry the DA said there was nothing she could do to help, Terry was sickened that they had no way to protect the boy. To their shock, the mother won and the first time he went to stay with her for a weekend visit, Terry was worried. She said every time he came home thereafter, he would act strange. She said sometimes she felt like his mother's spirit was in the house. She couldn't describe it, she just said at times she felt someone was watching her. At the time I didn't want to get involved so I just listened. I didn't ask any questions about the woman,

and Terry didn't tell me much more. I had never seen her so I had no idea what she looked like, and I didn't feel moved to take it deeper. The DA's words kept running through my mind - I tried to keep my distance from that situation.

At the time I was researching and writing a book about Christmas. I had become more than aware how the holiday was more than stressful, not only for myself but so many around me. It was ever so clear how it brought out the greed in fullness, not to mention the financial drain. I was driven to renew what it once was, to bring back the Spirit of joy and love ... to put the reason of the season back to the Lord Jesus. I hated the way I, and nearly everyone else was relieved when it was over. For some it was an energy boost, and to others totally draining. I was totally drained.

During my research I discovered things that were very disturbing to me, which is what led me to write a book. I was obsessed for months in research, checking out stacks of books on the history of Christmas from the local library. Dani was doing well by then and this became my main focus. Terry and I didn't spend a lot of time together as I was consumed in my writing, and I was in the final stages of submitting it to the publisher. I suppose I didn't get closer to her because I didn't feel inspired to get involved with her stepson's situation. I knew little about what was going on, other than knowing how disturbed she was with her stepson's situation ... helpless to say the least.

I couldn't believe it when Terry told me they were selling the house, and soon a For Sale sign showed up in their front yard. She told me that the feeling of someone watching her got creepy and she thought the house had a ghost, though her real thought was, it was the boy's mother. She thought moving would resolve the eerie and uncomfortable feeling. I wasn't sad to see them leave. I was a bit relieved, to be honest. When they bought their new home in the next town over, I went to visit. Dani was very happy to see Sally and they ran upstairs to her bedroom. Davie never did come downstairs. Terry and I sat in the kitchen having coffee and a nice chat. She seemed more relaxed than she was before, saying things felt clean there, and so far, no issues with the boy. I was so happy to hear the news.

It had been about a month since I had talked to her, then one morning she called sounding very upset, her voice shaky. She asked if I would come over, almost begging me. The kids were all in school so I got ready and went there, finding her a nervous wreck. She said they felt sick after Davie came home from his last visit. It was the first time he opened up and told them what happens on those visits. He described going to a place in the forest where he sat in a circle with other kids. In the middle of the circle the mom's wore black robes and danced, singing songs, then one kid would be chosen to enter the circle, where they would be lifted up as a gift to the Great Spirit. He said it was kind of fun, because afterward they all got to play, but it was spooky sometimes. It sounded to me like an offering and the more Terry spoke, the more I felt I should try and help. It felt so close to what we had experienced, the boy being too scared to tell because his mother warned him not to - just like my little girl having been told the same thing. Terry said he was so frightened after he had been chosen, that when he returned home after that weekend, he hid in his room, afraid to come out.

Terry admitted that moving didn't solve the feeling she had about his mother's spirit being in their house. At first, she didn't sense the spirit, but then it started coming again. Terry said she had mostly felt it in the kitchen, but in Davie's room she felt it strongest. She was sure there was something in his room, something his mother gave him, as she was always sending stuff home with him, toys and clothes and such. She looked into my eyes pleading me to just check it out and see if I felt anything in the house, especially Davie's bedroom. I was hesitant to do so, but I couldn't deny her desperate request.

Against my own knowing, and the advice to not to get involved, I went ahead with it, and it was one the most devastating decisions I had ever made.

While Terry stayed in the kitchen I walked around the entire downstairs, feeling nothing, then headed up the stairs. When I got to the top of the stairs I started down the hall to his bedroom. When I approached the doorway, I saw the large jumping horse that once sat in their living room next store. When I went to enter the room, I felt the same force I had felt in other situations ... a pressure trying to push me back. Even at that point I didn't feel the Holy Spirit's presence, but I continued to ignore the feeling of pressure and pushed through it. I walked past the jumping horse and slowly wandered around the room, looking at all his things, touching and picking up items, trying to see if I felt anything. By the time I got around the room and was standing next to the horse, staring intensely at it, I began to feel a penetrating force pushing and pulling against me ... like a strong, angry and controlling energy radiating from the horse. I sensed a crushing breath snorting in and out heavily and deeply.

I stood there a moment, praying out loud with a soft voice, asking for the blessing to anoint me with protection of the Holy Spirit, but I heard nothing, I felt nothing. I thought for a moment, then decided I would lay hand on it and pray over it. I had no intention whatsoever than to just pray, but the instant I laid my hand on its head, I was literally frozen ... paralyzed. A mighty grip held my hand to where I was unable to pull it away. My heart began to pound and I knew immediately I had to start rebuking and demanding in the name of Jesus Christ that it release me. My heart began to race as I felt fear coming upon me, seeing the glare of its dark penetrating and frightful eyes. In that moment, I felt the Holy Spirit pour into my being. The words pouring out were no longer words, they became weapons. For several minutes that battle raged on, pulling and pushing, anger thrusting. And then, the forceful grip let loose, and my hand was free.

I was in a bit of a daze, but I felt whatever was possessing that horse was still there, it had just retreated into hiding. I had never experienced anything like the force possessing that horse. What happened was so powerful it did scare me, though I could not show fear. As I left the room, I felt so thankful for the rescue from the Holy Spirit, but I felt so foolish as to think I could do something like that by myself. But the true lesson hadn't yet been fully realized.

I went down stairs and told Terry what happened. She was shocked, telling me that the boy's mother had got that for him the Christmas before they moved. I told her she needed to remove it from her home, get it out as quick as she can. I told her I didn't feel anything else in the house except that jumping horse, letting her know that was the doorway for his mother.

After I left, as I was driving home, about ten minutes down the road, I suddenly felt that presence appear in the back seat. I say the back seat because it was as if it were breathing down my back, the same hard breathing I felt in the horse. I could feel the anger of its blazing energy sending a chilling sensation. It only lasted a minute or two and disappeared. I knew it was letting me know that I had stepped into something that someone didn't want me involved in. I was greatly disturbed by that.

When I got home, I immediately called Terry to tell her what happened, magnifying the importance of her getting that horse out of the house, off the property, gone, asap. She said she had to wait until Jeff got home, and it would be taken care of immediately.

That night I had a dream, an unbelievable, devastating and seriously critical dream that nearly killed me. Around eleven o'clock I checked on the girls and then crawled into bed, where my husband was sound asleep. Shortly thereafter I was soon in a deep slumber ... so deep I didn't wake up when my husband left for work at 3:00am. When I awoke early that next morning, the dream was seared into my memory, and I had a very bad feeling it had to do with Davie. I was very disturbed by it, and I had to know for sure.

A little later that morning, I called Terry to tell her about my dream. Yet, before I could share the details, I had three questions I needed answered. I had to know if what I suspected was real.

The first question I asked was: "What color is Davie's mothers' hair?" Since I knew nothing personal of this woman, having never seen a photo of her, I thought that was the most important question to determine if it was the same woman in my dream. When Terry said her hair was black, I was about to take a sigh of relief, she went on to reveal, "But she dyes it. She's actually a natural redhead." My immediate silent response was, "Oh My God," not yet wanting to tell her that the woman in my dream had red hair.

My second question was: "What color of eyes does she have?" Terry said her eyes were a dark brown, almost black. Again, the woman in my dream had near black eyes, very penetrating.

My last question was: "How does she dress? I mean, what's her style like?" Terry said she dressed like a hippie, second hand clothes, no make-up, kind of a plain Jane. Why?" she asked.

I nearly gasped that she described the woman perfectly. Then, I proceeded to tell her about my dream. It started out with me holding Dani's hand while entering her school auditorium. There was some kind of an event about to start, a play, a musical, something like that. I saw moms and dads with their children coming in and the seats were filing up. I quickly found two chairs and we sat down. A few minutes later Dani told me she had to go to the bathroom, and since the school play hadn't started yet, I took off our coats and set them on the chairs, so no would take them.

When we returned, I saw the back of a woman's head with auburn-red hair sitting in my chair. When we got closer, I saw a little boy sitting next to her, his head hanging down, staring at the floor. As we approached the row of chairs where we had been sitting, I politely said to the woman, "I'm sorry, but those are our chairs." The woman didn't look up at me as she quickly stood up, pulling the little boy to his feet, gripping tightly to his hand - his head still hanging

down whereas I couldn't see his face. As she turned toward me, I saw her dark brown eyes, almost black, with the same look of evil I saw in eyes of Davie's jumping horse. Then suddenly I felt the same force I felt when I laid my hand on it, and that dark energy quickly encircled me. In that moment I realized in an instant that I was about to be attacked.

Immediately, I opened my mouth to rebuke her, but before I could speak a single word, or take a breath, I was frozen ... paralyzed. I could not speak. I could not move. I saw her arm reach out, stretching about four feet to where I stood, and suddenly she grabbed ahold of my right side, squeezing so tight it felt like my insides crushing. And in a deep, horrid blasting tone she cursed out, "You Bitch." I was helpless as I stood there, her dark piercing eyes glaring into mine, feeling her anger twisting and tormenting me. Her wicked voice with threatening words resounded in my mind, warning me to stay out, to stay away. She was so powerful that when she let go, and the dream ended, I woke up feeling something awfully unsettling ... something I had never felt before. Terry was shocked, but not as shocked as what came next.

When I asked Terry if she got rid of that jumping horse, she said her husband put it in the garage, until he can take it to the garbage disposal that next weekend. I told her again that she needs to get it out of there quickly, completely off the property. I didn't hear from her for awhile after that, and I didn't try contacting her either.

The dream haunted me for a few days, with the same feeling of unsettledness. On the third night thereafter, I woke up at midnight with such pain it felt like a bomb had exploded inside me. I woke up screaming with excruciating pain. It first began with unbearable contractions, waves of agony. John seemed more scared than I, and I was terrified. Never had I seen such fear in his eyes, insisting he take me to the hospital, but I was in too much pain to move. All I could do was curl up in a ball, try to bear it, moaning and crying as the pain began to ease. It lasted about fifteen minutes before the pain became tolerable so I told him I didn't want to go to the hospital, not yet. An hour later, the intense waves would come and go, getting less painful with each contraction. John had fallen back to sleep when my screaming ceased, and I didn't want to wake him, so I managed to get downstairs where I finally fell back to sleep on the sofa. I didn't even hear him leave for work that early 3am morning.

I never told John about my dream, nor what happened at Terry's house. He had it made clear a long time ago he didn't want involved such things. I hadn't told anyone, really, and I certainly didn't want Dani involved. I did call my oldest daughter, Lea, who by then was married and lived close by. She came to check on me many times.

That next morning, I managed to get back upstairs and into bed where I laid bearing the waves of pain that would come and go, come and go. Some were so intense it felt like birthing pangs at its highest peak, and other times like bad stomach cramps. My middle daughter, Karey, helped take care of Dani, getting her morning breakfast and ready for school on days I couldn't get out of bed. Other days, I was able to get round with little pain. Things went on like that for nearly two weeks, wearing on me day in and day out.

My oldest daughter, Lea, had already been married with my first granddaughter. She came to help, taking me grocery shopping, cleaning the house, and preparing meals. I felt I was getting

weaker and weaker, hoping I would get better, while Lea kept begging me to go see the doctor, so I finally called for an appointment. A few days later she took me in.

My doctor ran tests and couldn't find anything visibly wrong with me. He sent me to a gastrointestinal specialist. It took almost a week to get in, and the wave of pain were still coming and going into its third week. The specialist checked me over and couldn't determine anything either. He made an appointment at the hospital for me to have barium enema. Two days later Lea took me for the test. It was the next day when his assistant called to give me the results.

What I was told was that while he was studying my test results, finding nothing to explain my situation, having been totally baffled, a hospital surgeon happened to walk by, and for some reason he stopped to look at my test results. He noticed something and pointed it out. That's when the specialist ordered a second barium enema. He setup the appointment for me in the next couple of days, but I never did make it to that second appointment ... and it's a good thing I didn't. The one I had got, had escalated my situation into a life-or-death emergency.

The next morning, I called my daughter to come, "Hurry," I told her. She dropped my granddaughter at a friend's and rushed right over. She ran up the stairs and found me curled up in ball, crying and weak, very disoriented. She barely got me down the stairs and into her car. My two younger daughters had gone off to school by then as we fled the house. My oldest daughter wanted to take me to the emergency room, but I told her to take me to the specialist. When we arrived, she ran inside in a panic, letting them know my situation. A nurse came running out with a wheel chair and brought me inside. She took me straight to an exam room and helped me onto the exam table.

When the specialist came rushing in and saw me, his immediate reaction sent him into emergency mode. He rushed out of the room while I laid there scared and feeling near death. I could hear him on the phone in the other room, call after call after call trying to find an available surgeon. When he returned to the room, he told my daughter to get me to the hospital and checked in, saying he had located a surgeon for an emergency procedure. He said there was no time to waste.

My daughter and the nurse got me back into the car and Lea rushed me to the emergency room where they were waiting for me. A nurse wheeled me into an office room to sign paperwork, insurance, and all that. I wasn't in any condition to do anything, I couldn't think straight, or talk, or walk ... nothing. My daughter was trying to give the lady the information to the best of her knowledge, and then got really upset it was taking so long. She began to scream, "Can't you see my mom is dying. This is stupid!" she barked, insisting someone come get me now!

I was so out of it that it didn't seem to matter to me if I died right there, I already felt as if I would die, that I had been slowly dying for weeks. I had not the energy or care at that point.

The office lady called someone and a nurse came and got me and wheeled me upstairs. Lea was told to go to the waiting room. The nurse got me settled into bed, then several nurses began running around hooking me up to machines, trying to comfort me, telling me the surgeon would be there soon. I was drifting in and out when a man appeared at my bedside. He gently took my

hand and gazed into my eyes and said, "I'm Doctor Soder, and we're going to take you up to the operating room in a few minutes. We don't know what is going on but we're going to find out. Do you understand?" he asked. I nodded. He said, 'It's going to be okay.' Little did I know then that he was the surgeon who stopped to look at my test results ... and the only surgeon who was available for an emergency operation.

A few minutes later they brought in a gurney and got me onto that, and, in an almost full run, they start down the hall to the elevator. There must have been about four or five people running alongside of me. I was barely conscious, yet, when we got to the operating room it was ice cold, and my whole body shivered. The surgeon appeared again, my mind in a haze, and he began stroking my arm gently, telling me I was going to go to sleep now, and then I was out.

After an hour and half later, I was taken to the recovery room. By then my husband had been called off the mountain from where he was logging and had just arrived. My daughter had left already to get my granddaughter and wait for news. I was told I didn't wake up for a long time before they could take me back to my room.

I have no memory of being there, except through an out-of-body experience. It felt like I was floating from above, looking down, seeing my body curled tightly in a fetus position, my skin a deathly blue, shaking and shivering uncontrollably, and I could hear myself mumbling over and over and over again, "I'm cold. I'm cold. I'm cold," and it never stopped. I could see my husband sitting beside me, his face pale with the look of fear. I felt no emotion. It was like an observation. It only lasted a few minutes, and when I woke up, I was lying in bed in the same room I had left.

I hurt like I'd never hurt before. When I pulled the sheet back and lifted the gown, I nearly went into shock. From my belly button straight down to my pubic, I had jumbo size staples holding my entire stomach together. I could hardly believe what had happened to me ... it happened so fast. Shortly after that my husband came in. He told me I scared the hell out of him. He said I looked like death. He had never seen anyone so blue, he thought I was going to die. Then he said I was curled up in a tight ball, shivering uncontrollably, mumbling over and over that I was cold. He said he tried to get the nurses to put blankets on me, but they said I had to go through the recovery process, assuring him it was normal. He couldn't touch me, hold my hand or nothing because of the Plexiglas surrounding the recovery bed. When he told me what happened, I told him about my out-of-body experience. I knew then it wasn't a dream.

I was in the hospital for 5 days, pressing that morphine button as soon as it would give me another dose. The surgeon came to my room and explained what had happened. He said my appendix had ruptured, and although it was very rare it can happen when the appendix gets a very small hole, just enough to seep toxins out slowly, causing a slow death. He said that's why none of the tests showed anything. He described what he had performed was called an exploratory procedure where he just had to open me up and see what was going on. He told me once I was opened, he could see the massive abscess growing inside. He had to remove my internal organs, clean me out, and put everything back together. He explained that a normal appendicitis is less than a thirty-minute operation, and if they could have caught it earlier it wouldn't have been so

serious. He looked me straight in the eyes and said very seriously, "I have to tell you, it's a miracle you are alive." He said, had I not got there when I did, I most likely would have died.

That experience taught me a huge lesson. I learned that I should never take matters into my own hands without the calling, and I never went down that path again. At that point, I had turned away from it, all of it, and stayed away from it - at least for a very long time – until I was faced with future situations. I didn't talk about it, didn't tell many about it for many years.

I was devastated. The fear was overwhelming knowing I could be attacked by a dream. Yet, it was a good educational experience, I suppose, and one I know I needed to show me how powerful the dark world is.

I remember when I was still in the hospital, I heard the voice tell me that now I know, I am not to challenge these things but to remain strong against them ... to be ready when the Holy Spirit calls me forth. I remain strong against dark forces ... and I am more aware now than ever.

Later, after I was healed, I did inform Terry of what happened. She was sick about it, and after that ordeal I really never saw her again. I don't know what happened with her and her stepson, and frankly, I stayed clear of the whole dark mess she was going through

Since Lea was married and no longer living at the house, John set up her previous bedroom so I didn't have to get up the stairs. I remember laying in bed editing my manuscript day after day that had arrived shortly after returning home. It took weeks to go through the massive redlines and polish it for print. I wish I had been in a better mental state, as I don't feel I did the best I could ... I only did the best I was able. For weeks thereafter, I finally healed, and was back on my feet again.

I finished what I had started nearly a year earlier, bringing my book, 'About Christmas. About Truth. It's Time to Tell!' to hardcopy. It was a long and challenging journey faced with family and friends' conflicting beliefs, as well as hateful attacks from strangers – confirming all the more that the spirit of this holiday has deep and binding roots ... as does the darker forces that are in the world, and they are real ... really real.