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God Gave Me You: A True Story of Love, Loss, and a Heaven-Sent Miracle

By Tricia Seaman, Diane Nichols



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When a single mother with terminal cancer asks an oncology nurse to look after her son, neither can imagine what God has in store. This is the heartwarming story of how two very different women with two very different paths were brought together for one very special purpose.

Oncology nurse Tricia Seaman and her family were hoping to adopt a son. They were months into the grueling process when she met Trish Somers, a terminally ill cancer patient. Trish was a single mother and her eight-year-old son Wesley was her entire world. As the young mother poured out her fears and emotions, it became clear that this was unlike any other nurse-patient relationship Tricia had in her career. When they learned that the cancer had spread and Trish only had a short time to live, she looked at Tricia, a complete stranger three weeks ago, and asked if she could raise Wesley when she passed away.

God Gave Me You tells the true story of how these two incredible mothers met, the immediate bond they formed, and the ups and downs of joining families as Trish's earthly life ebbed away. This heartwarming tale inspires readers to find the courage to trust in faith and never give up. The miracle of these two families coming together demonstrates that family isn't always blood; often, it's made up of the people God gives you if you have a willing heart. *God Gave Me You* is a story you can turn to again and again when you're looking for hope, inspiration, and a reason to believe in miracles.



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Editorial Review

Review

"*God Gave Me You* is a must-read for anyone who has ever questioned God's plan in their lives. This book is a beautiful reminder of how God continues to guide us—even during moments of extreme pain and loss. The story of these two women and a precious little boy serves as an example of how some of the most precious moments in our lives actually rise from the ashes of our hardest trials." (Crystal McVea, Author of the New York Times Bestseller *Waking Up in Heaven*)

"A powerful, masterfully written love story full of heartbreak and joy against all odds. This gripping true story of compassion, faith, and grace under fire will leave you forever changed." (Taya Kyle, New York Times bestselling author of *American Wife*)

"Seaman never dreamed that entering a hospital room while an oncology nurse in Harrisburg, Penn., would set in motion a series of events that led her to adopt a dying patient's son. Seaman, a wife and mother of five children of her own, had her heart set on adopting an infant to bring into the family when she met ailing Trish Somers. Over a short period of time, as Somers's cancer began to spread, the two became close, but Seaman was left stunned when Somers asked her to take care of her young son, Wesley, after she passed away. Trying to downplay this shocking request, Seaman let the question sink in; she went home, told her husband, and prayed for an answer. The subsequent months saw the entire Seaman family upending their lives to care for Somers in their own home, help Wesley adjust to his mom's terminal diagnosis, and slowly knit these two lonely individuals into their bustling family unit. With the help of Nichols, the narrative moves swiftly, and Seaman's internal search for strength in faith comes across on every page. The authors shares this remarkable story in chronological order, and readers will find themselves both amazed and challenged by the Seaman family's unconditional love for Somers and her son as they truly live out the biblical edict to love one's neighbor as oneself." (*Publishers Weekly Review*)

"This miraculous true story will certainly capture readers' hearts and immensely inspire and encourage. Point this one out to customers looking for a rich story of God's goodness." (*CBA Retailers and Resources, May Issue*)

About the Author

Tricia Seaman is a wife, mother and a hospital nurse with twenty years of experience. She and her husband and five children live in rural central Pennsylvania where she was born and raised. She currently works for PinnacleHealth System in Harrisburg for the inpatient oncology unit. She is the author of *God Gave Me You*.

Diane Nichols is a professional journalist, author and ghostwriter with more than 23 years of experience. Her work has appeared in newspapers and magazines all over the world. She is the author of her own memoir *Prison of My Own* (Cook Communications - 2005) and has co-authored Tricia Seaman's memoir *God Gave Me You* (Howard Books/A division of Simon & Schuster - 2016.) She is also a long-time contributing writer for *First For Women Magazine* and *Simple Grace Magazine* specializing in true life inspirational stories including celebrity pieces. Currently, she is also hoping to cross over into women's fiction and write novels focusing on family saga with sprinkles of faith and hope. She resides in Florida where her beautiful daughters are the absolute light of her life although she is a northerner at heart and prefers the beauty of the seasons over sweltering heat and palm trees! You may visit her website at dianenichols.com and follow her social media links.

CHAPTER 1

Room 173

The blinds were drawn to keep out the unwelcome afternoon sun as my patient lay sleeping. Her hair was dark, disheveled, and straight, spilling like ink across the starched white pillowcase. Her head slumped a bit off to the side while her glasses slid slightly off her nose. Her features were delicate. Lips thin. Her chin small and pointed. Both of her rail-thin arms were extended by her sides, IVs inserted in each bend. The previous attending nurse filled me in on this patient's condition before I took over her shift. She had just gotten out of surgery where doctors performed a laparoscopy to take biopsies from her stomach wall due to her having persistent pain. Her post-op vitals were set up and her condition was stable. Gently, I touched her cheek, willing her eyes to open. Being in the nursing profession for twenty years, being one of the first cheery voices a patient hears as the cobwebs clear when coming out of anesthesia, was a rewarding part of my career. I checked her water pitcher and smoothed her blankets, then skimmed over her patient report. She'd come around soon. All I could do was wait.

"Tricia Somers," I said softly, reading her name off her chart. It struck me because my name is Tricia Seaman—our first names are the same, spelled the same, and we share the same initials, T.S. "Well, if that's not a coincidence."

I read further down her report and spotted something right away. She was a single parent with an eight-year-old little boy and lived here in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. My heart went out to her, being a mother myself to a ten-year-old son and three teenage girls. I was blessed to have Dan, the greatest husband and father to my children I could have ever asked for. This woman was parenting on her own. The report also noted she had no family in the area. Even more unsettling was there was no one at her bedside waiting for her to wake up. The papers went on to say she had been diagnosed with a very rare liver cancer only a few months ago. She was now back at Community General, one of PinnacleHealth's hospitals, to determine why she continued to feel severe stomach pain after the initial reports stated the tumor was isolated to the liver.

"The poor girl," I whispered, gazing at her.

She mumbled something I couldn't decipher and rolled her head to the right. The anesthesia was wearing off. I walked over to the dry-erase board hanging next to her bed on the wall and wrote my name in big, loopy letters so she'd be able to see it easily. As I turned back around, she was fighting to hold her eyes open, watching me, sizing me up, and blinking slowly as her surroundings still blurred.

"Well, hello there," I said. "How are you doing? My name is Tricia and I'm going to be your nurse today. It's really going to be easy to remember your name because it's the same as mine and it's spelled the same way, too."

She unstuck her tongue from the roof of her mouth and groggily formed some words. "Oh . . . that's kind of neat, isn't it?" she said, gazing sleepily at the board.

I went around to the pumps at each side of her bed and checked the settings. Her side table was covered with a child's drawings and handmade crafts. That swirl of heaviness returned to my heart. So many questions

trickled through my mind. So who was taking care of her child since she didn't have any local family listed on her report? I believed that all she had as a contact was a close friend. No father for the boy. No parents to rally around her. It was rare if ever I came across a patient in the oncology wing who had no one to bring him or her "Get Well" balloons. Usually there were family, friends, a circle of love around the patient. At least someone to lean on and hold their hand. This woman was like an island, alone in a sea of trouble. All I could do was say a silent prayer that her biopsies would come back normal.

I hovered nearby and let myself look at the drawings a bit longer this time. I could only imagine how hard it must be for her to be away from her son. As if reading my mind, she popped open her eyes. I'm sure she was fighting to get back to him as soon as possible.

"You can call me Trish," she said, picking right back up where our last conversation left off. "Everybody does." Her eyes struggled to focus through the glass lenses. She cleared her throat and swallowed.

"Trish it is. That's good. So, how are you feeling?"

"I'm just trying to wake up."

"So, how did the procedure go?"

She went to nod and must have thought better of it. Too much, too soon. "Good, I think. They were able to look at everything they needed to see."

"Are you having any pain?" I adjusted her pillow a bit higher.

She closed her eyes again but stayed with me. "I'm just so tired. So, so tired."

"Well, you had a pretty big day, you know. I'm sure you need a little rest."

Slowly, she pulled her heavy lids open and focused on my face. I smiled softly knowing it probably didn't even make a dent in the turmoil she must be feeling. "I'm just hoping they can get to the bottom of what's happening," she said, taking a cleansing breath. "I need to get some answers."

I glanced back at the drawings. It wasn't my job to go any further than to monitor the patient's condition and provide the proper care. I see many patients during the day, but something pulled at my heart the moment I met Trish—maybe it was because my boy, Noah, was close to her son's age and also loved to draw pictures for me. I wanted to learn more. Something inside hungered to know her story.

I checked her IV bags and casually asked, "So, if you don't mind sharing, how did you get to this point? Can you tell me about your journey?"

I wasn't sure if I had overstepped my bounds. A sliver of silence hung between us. But then Trish opened her eyes all the way—as if the clouds had cleared and she was actually seeing me now for the first time. She pushed her glasses farther up her nose, wincing at the IV in the crook of her arm. I couldn't read the expression on her face, but if I had to, I would have thought it was desperation. She wanted to talk—that much was clear.

Trish told me she had a Bernese Mountain Dog named Molly, whom a staff member at the hospital was now dog sitting. Trish had been walking Molly every day, trying to stay fit, and eating a healthy diet. She said she

felt well and even though she was dropping weight, she thought it was from all of the exercise. Then, in the fall, she began having a nagging belly pain. She tried to ignore it at first, but it only grew stronger. When she went to her family doctor, they ran some blood work, but nothing remarkable showed and the pain kept getting worse. It got to the point where even sitting upright was becoming a challenge.

“I worked in customer service, talking to customers all day on the phone, fielding problems and such,” Trish explained. “The pain got so bad that I’d sit at my desk with one hand on the computer keyboard and the other bracing my stomach. I tried as long as I could to pay the rent and bills, but I had no choice but to quit working.”

Trish went on to say that in October of 2013, she went to the emergency room where doctors decided to do a CAT scan, which revealed a tumor on her liver. They scheduled a biopsy. The results showed that she had a rare form of cancer, but they thought it was controlled and hadn’t spread or invaded any other tissue. In fact, they didn’t even think it could be the cause of all her pain. From their conclusion, this area on her liver wouldn’t cause those kinds of symptoms.

“But I knew something wasn’t right,” she said, shaking her head. “I mean, I couldn’t work. I couldn’t sit up. I couldn’t even stand right anymore. It’s been unbearable, but I’m hoping now to finally find out what’s causing it.”

“Who watches your son?” I stood next to the table admiring one of his crayon drawings with a heart and the word “MOM” inside of it.

“I have a neighbor who watches him and then some trusted friends that I worked with. They take turns off and on because it’s just too much to expect any one person to care for him. He kind of bounces around, I guess you could say.”

I was going to suggest she must miss him, but before I formed the words, she had her phone out and was bringing up photos of him. “His name is Wesley,” she said as she smiled. I noticed how much better she looked just talking about him. “He’s eight years old in second grade. Look, here he is. There we are goofing around. I love his smile, don’t you? I wrote him notes when I was in the hospital before. I just needed to talk to him, and he wasn’t there, so I would jot down the things I was feeling. It just brings me peace even if he never sees them.”

His images melted me. I could tell he was a charmer, and I enjoyed the fact she was sharing with me. It was as if she were opening the door to her heart, letting me in and holding me there. And I wanted to be there. It wasn’t something I’ve ever felt before. Of course, I had compassion for all of my patients. I enjoyed conversing with them, trying to make them smile, and meeting their families . . . but this wasn’t in that realm. What it was, I didn’t know. It went beyond anything I’d ever experienced before. Yet maybe it wasn’t so odd. After all, it was only human to feel sympathy. It looked like she didn’t have a lot of resources and was struggling on her own with her illness. It must be terrifying to lie in this bed, alone and not knowing what was going to happen. She already had a cancer diagnosis. She was in such pain and must have sensed her condition was serious. So why did I begin to feel this strong tug toward her? Why did I want to identify this feeling and give it a name?

Now that Trish was fully awake, it seemed she needed to talk, and I had all the time to listen. She told me a little about her past, her dating history, Wesley’s father being out of the picture, both of her parents passed away from cancer, and she and her brother didn’t communicate much. It was a heavy first conversation, especially for someone who had just come out of surgery, but Trish’s words were like air rushing out of a

balloon. She seemed pressured to release them. Every word spoken with such urgency. She then asked about my family, and I briefly shared about Dan and the kids. I almost felt guilty for having what she most likely ached for desperately. I also told her my parents divorced a few years ago, but that my mother lived just down the road from us in the same house I grew up in.

It had been nearly an hour and I had to move on to help my other patients. But I couldn't stop thinking of her. Wondering about her. The things she said repeated in the corners of my mind. The photos of Wesley haunted me long after I went home that night and soaked up the smiles on my own children's faces.

Users Review

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