

The Green Scapula

A Novel



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It is doubtful that God can use a man greatly
unless He has hurt him deeply.

A. W. Tozer

Preface

“Why me?” Marie asked with an abruptness and intensity that stunned the old priest. “Why was I chosen for this, for any of these things that have happened in my life? I’m nothing special. I’m no different from anyone else who has just come by,” Marie continued to demand through clenched teeth as she gestured toward the many people walking by on the ocean path before them.

“I can’t answer that, my friend,” the retired priest feebly tried to answer the woman beside him, a woman he had known as a friend for many years. “Only God knows the answer to those questions. I’m just an old priest. I don’t have the answers you are seeking.”

Marie’s intense gaze finally softened. She looked down and away toward the ocean before them. Fighting back tears she was finally able to regain her emotions in

spite of her intense physical and emotional fatigue. In a softer voice she continued.

“My life has been filled with such extremes. I’ve known extreme poverty and neglect as well as extraordinary wealth and attention. I’ve achieved success on a level others could only dream about. My life has been filled with repeated abuse and violation on one hand along with worldwide adoration and love on the other. It has been such an extraordinary journey. The hand of God has been all over my life since I was a child. I’ve never questioned that. God has been physically and spiritually present and active throughout my life. Others actively strive and seek a connection to the divine for years without success. My connection was simply there. Throughout everything that happened to me I knew, beyond any doubt whatsoever, that God was by my side. Through the assaults and violations He was there. In the lonely years He was there just as He

was through the extraordinary wealth and the highest of spiritual giftedness.”

Finally Marie seemed to be without words. She looked down to the scars still visibly present in the open palms of her hands. She slowly turned them over to see the scars that broke through on the other side. The depth of sadness on her face deeply troubled the old priest sitting quietly on the bench beside her. He had no idea what to say. Her questions were ones he had heard so many times. Yet never had he heard them from someone with a background and life history as extraordinary as this present woman sitting beside him.

“Why me?” Marie weakly continued. “I just don’t understand why it was me who was chosen to live this life.”

In quiet surrender the old priest simply and silently prayed, *Dear Lord, Please grant me Your gift of words. I don’t know what to say.*

Marie could both feel and hear her friend Pam approaching the hospital business office area where she had been working for nearly a dozen years. It seemed as if Pam lived to be noticed while Marie tried always to be invisible. Being invisible usually required little effort on Marie's part. It was often simply a fact of life for her.

"Hey, I have a great idea," Pam abruptly stated as she finally flew into the crowded office Marie shared with several other workers.

"I'd like to go to the beach Sunday afternoon. It's supposed to be a nice day. I'll pick you up at 2:00," Pam further stated obviously quite pleased with herself.

Marie simply closed her eyes and looked away.

"I'm practicing some of my music with that new band," Marie finally replied in slow deliberate words. *You know that*, she disappointingly thought to herself.

“OK, no problem. I guess I’ll see you on Monday then,” Pam swiftly uttered as she flew off, stopping to talk to as many as she could before leaving the office area.

“I’m fine today, thank you,” Marie thought to herself as her feelings of worthlessness and insignificance began to rise up once again.

“Why do you take that from her,” Marie’s angry coworker and semi-friend Rachel abruptly voiced from the desk next to her.

“She knew perfectly well you were doing that on Sunday afternoon. That was a bogus invite. She had promised to take you out on Saturday night for your birthday. She must have gotten herself a better offer. That’s why she was fishing around just yesterday trying to find out what your plans were for the weekend. You already told her what you were doing. Now she pretends she doesn’t remember and changes her invite to the time she “knows” you are not available. Can’t you see that?”

By this time Marie had withdrawn into herself. Rachel's continuing words were beginning to fade as she thought back to how little sleep she had the night before.

I could use a weekend to myself without this aggravation, Marie forced herself to think as she tried desperately to eliminate her rising feelings of disappointment and hurt. *A nice quiet meal and some sleep would be nice.*

The moment she thought of the word sleep the memory of the previous night's vision was brought back into her consciousness. Marie could still see in her mind's eye the woman standing at a kitchen sink area. Marie had not seen what the woman looked like. She appeared to be bending slightly over the sink as if in great despair. Marie had only seen her from behind. With long shoulder-length blond hair and a slight build she appeared to be somewhat young in age. As if in slow motion Marie saw the woman finally reach over for a large kitchen knife on the counter to

her left. Again in slow motion the scene changed to a large drop of blood as it splattered onto the white tile floor.

Marie was suddenly overcome by the blackest and most intense feelings of despair and hopelessness. She fought to remain in control as the emotional weight of her previous night's vision threatened to overwhelm her. She could feel her insides beginning to shake, often the first sign of an approaching anxiety attack.

Dear Lord, please pray for, bless, and heal this woman. Wherever she is please surround her with many angels to both protect and encourage her.

As Marie continued to pray this prayer again and again she could feel the emotional and spiritual weight beginning to lift.

Why me, she thought. Why do "I" get these visions? I'm nobody. I'm not really that religious or spiritual.

"Are you listening to me," Marie finally heard Rachel say from the next desk?

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