



The Broken Wings of
Forgiveness

Seven Beacons of Hope

RICHARD SHEKARI

The Broken Wings of Forgiveness
By Richard Shekari
Copyright 2014 Richard Shekari

Thank you for downloading this e-book.
This book remains the copyrighted property of the author, and may not be redistributed to others for commercial or non-commercial purposes. If you enjoyed this book, please encourage your friends to download their own copy from their favourite authorized retailer. Thank you for your support.

Table of contents

Dedication

Michael

The awakening

Shelter

The headrest

Error in terror

The guardian

The dimming eye of sunset

The journey of journeys

The camp

The day of days

Dedication

To all the innocent children caught up in the unjust wars around the world, and to the beautiful people who work day and night to make the world a better place.

Michael

As the elevator doors slowly slid open, Michael stepped out with a rush, navigating through cubicles with no time to answer the greetings from his office colleagues and as the secretary spotted him smiling with a concerned look she said, 'Hey Michael, the senior has been buzzing for the past thirty minutes and everybody is worried! Is everything . . .'

'Yes, Clara, everything's fine! Thanks for asking. Traffic was hell!' He interrupted as he panted; Michael hurriedly picked a piece of candy from a bowl on her desk and threw it into his mouth.

'Bad boy!' Clara said, smiling as he made his way into the conference room. 'Well, don't give Junior an edge to uproot one of your plants, darling!' she added, then they both giggled.

A text came into his cell phone, he checked it and sender ID read 'P. James' he ignored it, putting the cell phone back into his pocket as he opened the door and shut it behind him. Clara bit her lower lip suggestively, staring at his bum but he didn't notice.

Michael bent his head and quietly manoeuvred to locate his seat in the boardroom, the board stopped chatting, setting all their eyes on him until he sat down. The leather chair made an awkward squeaky sound but he sat down anyway, forcing the candy down his throat. 'Well, the golden boy is here so shall we begin now . . . Poppa?' said Cannon Johnson Jr., also known in the office and popularly addressed as 'Junior' but no one dared say that to his face, of course.

Cannon Johnson Jr. was the only son but not a single child, after securing a degree in a course that did not relate to his current post, his father Cannon Johnson Sr. made him the head

of human resources for the company and since it was a family business, Junior got to do whatever he pleased with the staff, especially the females in a dishonourable manner and got away with it. This never brought pride to his father but Cannon Johnson Sr. still lives with the hope that one day his son will turn out to become a man of integrity, but for how long? Time waits for no one.

Cannon Johnson Sr. was going through his new high-tech touchscreen phone, swiping his finger across the screen and scratching his nose at the same time. Seated opposite Cannon Johnson Jr., he took off his reading glasses and placed it on the table yawning, 'Freaking tech stuff, they keep evolving! Clara should have gotten me a much cheaper easy-going and user-friendly gadget. I'm too old for this you know, one of those 2002 or the earlier versions would do just good!' said Cannon Johnson Sr. as he dropped his new gadget on the table staring at it.

'Well, Dad, I think we can talk about that later and this is the future, you're going to have to adjust to that. Gentlemen, shall we? I've got a plane to catch!' said Cannon Johnson Jr.

'Huh! The only thing you would have been able to catch, Junior, would be your broke behind on the streets, under the bridge if I hadn't made the move to secure this future for you! Huh! Plane to catch?' Cannon Johnson Sr. remarked as he shrugged, the entire board members burst out laughing but went hush suddenly when Cannon Johnson Jr. frowned, staring at them from his seat opposite his father. 'Michael, out of the thirteen-member panel set up to decide the future of this company, six have voted in favour of selling our largest portion of shares to Cranum-Tech Group of Companies, and six voted against it last week, even though one vote from the...pro Cranum-Tech team side had a sudden change of heart, but like I said earlier, we are not accepting changeovers once a vote is cast, so all that is left now is your vote Michael. I'm trying to be fair

here, so today, your vote seals this deal forever! Cranum-Tech Group of Companies or not. Period!’ said Cannon Johnson Sr.

Michael stood up, rearranged his necktie looking straight at Cannon Johnson Jr. then set his eyes on the entire board members saying, ‘I’m not in favour of Cranum-Tech Group of Companies, sir, with all due respect we can put this company back on its feet, and it’s just a tiny blip. It’s a usual thing, we have been through this before several times and got back even stronger, and my vote stands against CTGC. Besides, we all know what they intend to do with this company.’ He then sat down, fixing his necktie as majority of the men in the boardroom clapped, nodding in agreement but Cannon Johnson Jr. was not pleased.

‘Wise decision, Michael, men like you have given this company a firm footing to stand on even in the deepest of oceans, I am proud of you, thank you very much!’ Cannon Johnson Sr. remarked. Michael nodded honourably.

‘This is cowardice, you are all afraid because you are too old, too weak, and stone-aged to face the future.

Look at yourselves . . .’ said Cannon Johnson Jr. who didn’t hide his intentions and disappointment, ‘and you ...’ he added, staring at Michael, ‘the future of this company is in my hands or at least it will be . . . soon! I will decide at my own time what should be done! I brought a good idea to this table, to this company! Sooner or later the man that always stands for you would not be here anymore and . . .’ before he could say what was next on his mind, his father interrupted saying, ‘And that’s why the future of this company has no room for your arrogance and incompetence, Cannon Johnson . . . Junior. I choose and have appointed Michael Henning to lead the company as the new GMD/CEO starting from Monday!’ This statement sounded unbelievable to Junior’s ears, Michael himself was surprised but remained mute. ‘I am speaking on behalf of the board, let it be known that it is my will and order that Michael stays as

GMD/CEO for eight years before the board can decide on whom next to head the company unless Michael himself decides to resign on any reasons or terms best known to him in the future, and as for you Junior, you are the new Assistant Human Resource Manager. Your assistant, Mrs Shawn Kipola, will head that department, this should remain so until there is found a suitable position for you at the appropriate time by the board,' added Cannon Johnson Sr., who stood up and walked toward the thick glass window viewing the city.

'You're all dismissed!' Were his last words, the men silently found their way out of the conference room happily.

After the meeting, while in his office, Michael pulled out his cell phone, scrolled through his contacts and dialled the number from the text he got earlier, telling the man that he and his family would be traveling the next day, which was a Saturday but would be back Sunday evening. The man wanted them to meet but Michael told him he would check on him as soon as he gets back from his short trip.

Michael almost changed his mind minutes later to go visit the man he just spoke with but remembered that it was time to go pick his daughter from school. On his way out, Michael stretched for more candy on Clara's desk, at the same instant politely uttered, 'Have a nice weekend.'

She replied, saying 'thanks and you, too, handsome!' while her eyes and attention was soaked in her dirty imagination about him yet again.

While on his way to the school, Michael tuned different radio stations and one of the stations had a prerecorded talk show and the host was talking about a man named P. James, who happened to be the man Michael spoke with over the phone earlier. Michael giggled as the host over the radio was talking about the time P. James was once the most charismatic presidential candidate the country ever had—a true democrat, a potential leader—until the day he decided to abandon politics about seven

years ago, withdrew his entire money from his banks, gave half to charity and opened up a church in the city close to the hill. The host made fun of the ex-politician now preacher saying, 'P. James said he had to answer his call, which was to become a pastor and lead God's people. If you really wanted to lead God's people, what better way than to be president and not fail the millions of citizens who trusted you to lead them as the good leader that you claimed to be, only to disappoint them and step down as the man of the people on the eve of election? I've never voted before because I don't believe in demon-crazies, whoops! Pardon me, I mean democracy! But when I heard P. James was up for presidential I even encouraged my friends to stamp their thumbs for the man, could you believe that? Now he opened up a church to rob the poor . . . the real God be praised, he would have turned the country's budget into his personal piggy bank and the country would be as broke as this hopeless fellow . . .'

Michael laughed, shaking his head, driving through the city as the host over the radio continued saying, 'now the country is being run by the opposition and I heard he goes to see the president once every week, for what? Are you broke, Pastor James?' The audience over the radio laughed, Michael changed to CD player instead and played some cool old school music as he tried to catch up with the lyrics of the song.

Michael picked up his daughter, Gillian, from school and as they headed home, Gillian spoke excitedly about a recurring dream of a man in a shiny white garment, who always come to save her from a pack of lions in her dreams and that she had the same dream the night before. Michael smiled and asked her, 'Was it Simba and his friends, the warthog and meerkat, again, darling?' He laughed and Gillian hit him playfully saying, 'Daddy, that's not funny.'

Squeezing her lips, he then kissed her on the forehead and told her he believed her, Gillian turned the volume on the radio up and the two sang along happily on their way home.

He parked his car behind a minivan in front of the house, the minivan had a deflated tire. Michael frowned at it, shaking his head. His wife, Jana, was watering the beautiful flowers in front of the house on their arrival. Michael reluctantly picked his briefcase walking towards the door while Gillian kissed her mother and ran into the house.

‘Not even a kiss, honey? How was your day and what happened? Who messed with my hero again today, huh?’ said Jana as she wrapped her arms around him and kissed him on the cheek. He stood there without saying a word.

‘Now give me a smile, honey, I know that kiss found its way into your beautiful heart,’ Jana added smiling, he smiled back and kissed her on the lips.

‘We’ve been promoted again!’ he said, looking into her eyes.

‘Oh my God, honey, for real?’ she asked and he winked.

Jana was so excited and happy for him.

‘You are looking at the new GMD/CEO, better give me that sweet and luscious kiss again, darling,’ he said, as he bit her left ear. The couple kissed and Jana held him firmly in a tender way.

‘Come in, my king, your meal is waiting for you,’ she said, Michael pinched her and hit her on the bum lightly and said, ‘Which one?’ They both laughed as she ran into the house with Michael running after her.

‘Mom! Dad! Get a room . . . please!’ Gillian voiced out.

The next morning was Saturday and the family had a tradition of paying homage to Michael’s parents by placing flowers on their grave at the cemetery every anniversary of their demise. Michael lost his parents in a tragic accident seven years ago, in a hit-and-run by a drunk driver when Gillian was only seven, and what made the visit more meaningful to them was that the family always embarked on a vacation and picnic at the lake close to Michael’s hometown—the place his parents were buried side by side, which was about an hour flight from the city. It was a beautiful cottage left for him by his parents in his hometown

and it was not far from the cemetery and very close to a lake, the beautiful couple packed a few necessary things and made love that night like they have never had.

The next day, the family took a taxi to the airport and boarded an early morning flight to Michael's hometown. Gillian wanted the family to stay at the motel in town because the cottage home was on the outskirts of town but she had to put up with the family rule of 'sticking together every time, everywhere, whenever!' The Henning's were a lovely and adorable family; Jana and Michael lived like a newlywed couple all the years they've known each other, since they met at the university about the time Michael was graduating, coupled with a year and a half of courtship these two butterflies flit their wings together. Jana was a florist and a landscape architect by profession, she loved her work very much and she was the only woman on earth as far as Michael's eyes could see, and as far hard as her heart could beat, the only drum stick capable of making that heart pound was Michael. The two were good to each other, they certainly had their share of ups and downs like any other married couple, but they were more of friends than husband and wife and always made it through.

The two-day vacation was superb, the couple made love with the little alone time they got away from Gillian and they, too, had to put up with her constant nagging and presence in their bedroom as she claimed to be scared of the place unless they moved to the motel in town though her phone kept her busy, as she was constantly chatting with her friends online. The family also took a trip on a boat down the lake together where Michael tried to teach Gillian how to fish and later went to the grocery store where Gillian saw a boy she liked, the teens exchanged phone numbers unknown to their parents. After the Sunday service the next day, the young boy drove to the cottage home to see Gillian in his father's pickup van but he reversed as soon as he saw her parents sitting outside the house. Gillian stepped out and

mentioned she wanted to take a stroll but Michael refused, Gillian ran and whispered a few words into her mother's ears and the mother whispered to her as well then Jana turned to Michael and smiled after giving him a warm kiss, he raised an eyebrow but didn't protest. She yelled at Gillian to be back in thirty minutes and in a short while the boy walked Gillian home and introduced himself to her parents. Michael wasn't comfortable with it but Gillian kept squeezing her face at him to look friendly until he successfully masked his true feelings with a friendly grimace.

The young man left after having lunch with them but before Gillian saw him off to the door, she whispered into her mother's ears again and got a negative response, she then walked away and didn't say anything. Michael had no idea what the two girls were up to but he was sure he didn't like it. 'Let's just hope she didn't ask you if she'd kiss him,' he said, staring at Jana. She almost choked to his statement while she was drinking juice from a glass cup.

'Darling, come on, she's 14 . . .' said Jana, 'besides, she will become a woman just like when you met me and would get married when she meets the right man at the right time, cheer up!' she added, blowing him a kiss. Michael was not comfortable with it but he knew his wife was right.

The family took the evening flight back home that same day, Gillian slept in her father's arms from the airport that night on their arrival. The family took a taxi from the airport and on their way home, they saw a lot of police checkpoints with long hold-ups and heavy traffic but they managed to get through wondering what was going on in the city, the scenario was unusual but calm. The cabman said he had no idea what was going on, he was just out to make ends meet, when asked if he knew what was happening.

The family got home safe, Michael took Gillian to her bedroom and tucked her in bed, he kissed her forehead and switched off the light in her room. As he shut the door to Gillian's

room behind him, he overheard a thud from the master's bedroom, assuming it was a bag or an object that dropped, he walked down calmly whistling their favourite love song when to his surprise, he saw Jana lying in the pool of her blood on the floor of their bedroom, calling his name in agony. Out of shock he rushed toward her, shivering in confusion, but was hit with a bat on the back of his head, losing his consciousness.

Michael was awakened by the sound of sirens, his vision was blurry. All he could see was blood in his hands and his own house on fire. Quickly he was strengthened as he stood up and staggered toward the house, missing his steps, falling and rising along the way, a fireman held him.

'You can't get in there, sir!' said the fireman. 'Gillian, Jana . . . honey! Darling?' said Michael.

'What? I can't hear you, sir. Come with me, sir, please!' said the fireman, as he ordered another officer to grab hold of Michael, who guided him to a nearby ambulance. The firefighters arrived at the scene but came late to put off the blazing flames that engulfed the house. Michael could not breathe so he passed out again in the officer's hands.

The Awakening

Michael found himself in another world; the place was dark and he was surrounded by a mob all dressed in black yet none amongst the mob uttered a word to him, their numbers felt like sand spread around him while their eyes all fixated at him. He studied his new environment and realised that it was some sort of an underground world, he had never seen a place like it in his life and could not recognise anyone, he then felt something mysterious slowly making its way behind him through the mob from the back and paving its way like a snake through thick shrubs in the dark. Michael did not turn back to see what was coming and neither did the mob that surrounded him but they gave way for it to pass and as it got closer to where Michael was standing, Michael felt its presence and tried to stand his ground. It occurred to Michael that even though he had no eyes behind his head, he was aware of what was going on behind him and around him, he was totally conscious of the world he found himself in. It was so surreal he could not fathom whether it was a dream or real. Michael then heard a voice whisper his name, he turned around but could not see anyone.

‘I’m here!’ said the voice again but this time, it sounded very close and behind him, Michael turned quickly and was simultaneously levitated. Below him was a man in thick-decorated dark red robe holding his finger as though controlling Michael’s flight in the air; Michael’s body defied the gravity of that world and he floated in the air and while up, he got a clear view of the great number of population of the people that surrounded him all dressed in black, the man in robe drew Michael closer to him until they were face to face. ‘Oh, Michael,

and I thought you'd be hard to find! Now, I've got many worlds to seize therefore, have got little or no time. Something special is planted in men like you and I want it!' said the man, Michael felt as if his body was trapped under the sea but he could breathe, he begun to get angry but was helpless. 'Join us, Michael, and I shall open your eyes to much greater things and place in thy hands much precious things than the ones the worlds have seen and would give you a portion of the worlds I shall own to rule to eternity, don't you want to see her again, Michael?' added the man, as he turned and evoked saying, 'come forth!' Michael was about to speak when he saw someone that looked like Jana stepped out from the mob that surrounded him and she stood next to the man in robe with her head bent, the man in robe with his left hand controlling Michael's levitation used his other hand and touched her chin then lifted her face up a bit for Michael to see, but her eyes were like that of a serpent—it looked dark and she seemed sad, the man turned to Michael saying, 'Gillian is here too, want to see her? Join us! I've got many secrets to reveal to you! Secrets that would blow your mind and turn you into the god that you are Michael, after that you, your wife, and daughter would be worshipped and not be slaves to the one you and your kind called God!' The man spat on the ground.

Something told Michael that who he saw was not Jana, but all he wanted was to be out of that world at that time and wanted nothing to do with it. The man understood that Michael did not have any interest in the woman he summoned so he got mad and cast a spell on Michael, releasing him from the air to fall down to the ground. The man ordered the woman to leave, she walked back and disappeared into the mob as they murmured, he then turned away from Michael and yelled, 'Can't you see? Don't you understand that this world and its people are mine? If you stand with us, Michael, I'll give you the world to own and everything in it!'

Michael realised he was too weak to stand up, his body was becoming one with the ground and was sinking, the man stood still with the entire mob staring at him, Michael struggled but his entire body sank into the ground leaving his head which was also slowly sinking. The man in robe stretched his left hand toward Michael and said, 'Hold my hand, Michael!'

Michael got terrified, his head sank underneath the ground and could no longer breathe but he could see the mob and the man in robe standing above him looking at him, his eyes could see through the ground like glass, Michael tried so hard to breathe but there was no air, he felt his lungs squeezing in and expanding at the same time as if they would explode, the man in robe bent down a bit stretching his hand further; Michael tried to scream God's name but his tongue was stuck to the roof of his mouth, his entire lips were glued and so were his nostrils, in his mind he cried out God's name but all he could hear was a big bang that shattered his ears.

Michael woke up to the sound of the electrocardiograph machine, his eyes popped open and he was sweating, he got up ripping the syringe off him; he fell off the hospital bed and was trying hard to breathe. An old man lying on another bed next to him who was shocked, groaned as his heart almost leaped out in fear but Michael ignored him as he moved out of the room in his hospital gown with a bandage wrapped round his head, he pushed his way through the hospital passage—pushing the stretchers and an empty wheelchair on his way, scaring some of the patients. A nurse rushed towards him to stop him, while some other workers didn't mind about Michael, they set their eyes on the television at the reception with the news channel broadcasting breaking news of numerous attacks around different states in the country. Michael ignored the nurse, pushed aside the security man by the entrance and hurriedly entered a cab that was standing by.

Michael got to his home hoping that what he thought he had seen earlier that night was just a dream but what awaited his arrival was nothing short of a nightmare—a cold shattered burnt house. Right after he got out of the taxi, he knelt down and fell to the ground, his lips touched the soil as his nose blew up some dust and ashes on the ground. With the dust in his mouth, tears in his swollen eyes, he got up and walked through the house as if his family were still in there. In his imagination the house was still standing there, he could see Gillian's school bag hung on the wall with her bicycle right next to it, the family photo at the entrance and their favourite sofa facing the television. The cabman didn't ask for his fare, he silently entered his car and drove off feeling sorry for the stranger he took from the hospital.

The neighbours gathered looking at Michael as the siren wailed in, some officers approached Michael and introduced themselves to him, the men told him they needed to talk to him down at the station, and Michael followed them without saying a word to neither the officers nor his neighbours.

On their arrival at the police station, one of the officers directed him to a room where they asked him questions but he remained silent.

'We want to help you, Mr Henning, we need your cooperation on this case,' said one of the officers who introduced himself as Detective Samuel, with his left hand in his left pocket, the detective threw some pictures on the table. He asked Michael to have a look, the pictures had the bodies of Jana and Gillian lying on the ground at the backyard of his house on the night of the attack. Michael's attention went to the pictures. He quickly went through them and realised that his wife and daughter didn't burn in the fire. 'Where are they?' He cried out. 'Where's my wife and daughter!' He exclaimed standing up his seat, he pushed the detective to the wall yelling, 'Please, where's my family!' The men carefully subdued him then asked him to please be calm and follow them.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

