

Kerri

A Sister's Love

by

Janet A. Nicolet

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my family and the many wonderful friends who have encouraged and prayerfully supported me during the writing of each “*Kerri*” book.

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Other books by Janet A. Nicolet:

Non-Fiction

Vintage Years, *A Fulfilling Life After Divorce* 2007

Kerri Series - Fiction

Kerri, *An Incredible Journey* 2008

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Preface

Growth had taken place over the past couple of years in the life of Kerri's entire family. Not only did the family expand in numbers, but also grew in emotional and spiritual maturity. They had weathered the storms of life that befall us all - sustained by their *love for* and *faith in* God.

Tommy and Sharon Evans, Kerri's parents, had moved from Seoul, South Korea, to Rancho Vista, where he was recovering nicely from a horrific car accident.

Kerri married Joey Ramirez, a widower and policeman with a young son, Andrew. Of course, we mustn't forget Luisa, the curly-haired Havanese puppy that quickly fit right into the family's life.

Cal Evans, Kerri's younger brother by two years, a widower and building contractor, married Brenda, a widow with a teenage son, Conner.

Major Ken Evans and his wife, Cindy, stationed in Washington D.C., now have a second daughter, Ashley, who joined a sister, Kimberly.

Cathy Evans, the youngest sibling, who had become a flight attendant after graduating from high school, continues to travel the globe.

As the story continues - a year has passed since Jerry proposed to Cathy Evans at her brother, Cal's, wedding. Cathy moved to Seattle months later, where the couple plunged headlong into making preparations for their Christmas wedding. Suddenly, she is faced with the challenges of unbearable circumstances. Would this impact their future plans?

Chapter 1

Cathy Evans awoke from a deep sleep, disoriented for a moment in her new and still unfamiliar apartment surroundings. Sitting upright, she pulled her long beautiful chestnut hair away from her eyes.

That's when she sensed that her bed was rocking from side to side. Both hands flew to her chest; her breathing came in short, quick bursts synchronized with her racing heart. "What happened?" She tried to process what had just taken place and couldn't.

The windows rattled, items fell to the floor in her bedroom, and also in the living room. Her gorgeous hazel eyes were wide open in a terrifying stare.

She had moved to Seattle three weeks earlier and as yet had not become acquainted with anyone in her apartment complex, making her feel so alone and terrified. At this early morning hour, the only person she knew well enough in the entire city to call was Jerry, her fiancé. But, at that moment, he was thousands of miles away in Amsterdam, Holland.

Closing her eyes for a moment, she pleaded, "Dear Lord, please help me!"

Trembling and with beads of sweat popping out on the sides of her nose and on her forehead, she reached and felt in the dark for her bedside lamp, and finding it, turned it on – but nothing happened. "Oh, no. The lights are out." This alarmed her even more.

She glanced toward the bedroom window looking for the light that each night beams into her room from the streetlight on the pole in front of the apartment building. *Oh, no. It's out, too. This is a nightmare. I need your help.*

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Sitting up on the side of the bed she said out loud, “I can’t believe that it was just last week that I complained to Jerry about that so-called ‘night light’ flooding my bedroom, keeping me from falling asleep. Oh, how I wish it was on. What I need right now is my flashlight. Where did I put it? Oh yeah, in the kitchen.”

Standing up to go search for it, she hit the leg of the nightstand with her toe. Writhing with pain, she bit her lip, and sitting back down on the side of the bed, grabbed her foot and held it, all the while her body was rocking back and forth.

Her eyes darted to and fro in the dark room, and as she did, realized that the movement of the building had stopped.

“I don’t like this one bit. I should have stayed in Memphis where I belonged,” she blurted out. “We only had to contend with tornadoes there, and at least with them, we have some kind of warning before it strikes.”

Just then the lamp on her nightstand came on. “Oh, thank God,” she said with a big sigh of relief. She leaned over and pulled open the drawer to the nightstand, and “What-do-you-know - there it is.” Staring up at her was the yellow and black flashlight Jerry had given her when she first moved to Seattle.

In a quick move of her hand to her mouth, she said, “Oh... tsk... I remember now. I used it last week to look under the bed for my lost shoe and then stuck it in this drawer. I could have sworn I last saw it in the kitchen. Sometimes I wonder about me – do I have an early onset of Alzheimer’s?”

Making a quick potty-stop and then sitting back down on the edge of the bed, she reached over to the nightstand for the remote control to her bedroom TV. “Maybe. Just maybe, I can find out what’s really going on. Is it or isn’t it an earthquake? Or was it some kind of explosion?” She

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continued to talk out loud, comforted by the sound of her own voice, making the eerie silence a bit more tolerable.

Still being a novice to Seattle's TV channel lineup, she first had to surf the channels to find some local early-morning news station. "Ah, there it is."

The female anchorperson was talking at a rapid pace, her hand on her chest. "You're just as scared, as I am," said Cathy to the woman on the screen.

"We're experiencing another after-shock at this very moment, but it seems to be a small one," said the young woman.

"Small one. Lady, it may be small to you, but not for me," said Cathy, as she watched the curtains swaying back and forth and the bed beneath her trembling a bit. She sat back against the headboard, pulling her knees up to her chin. Hearing a loud crash coming from the apartment above, she jumped, letting go of her legs, and let out a scream. Covering her ears with her hands she said, "Dear God, please make it all go away." Raising her eyes to the ceiling, "That must have been something really big to make such a loud noise."

Once again she wrapped her arms around her knees that were drawn up and she tried to relax. "Don't know how much more of this I can take. I've been trained for plane crashes and fires, but not for earthquakes. I'll never get used to something happening out of the clear blue like this."

She heard the reporter say, "I'm told that the first shock wave was 4.8 on the Richter scale." At that same moment, the young woman grabbed the desk in front of her with both hands saying, "Folks, we're experiencing another after-shock. I've been told that we might even be in for a larger one at any moment."

"I feel it, too, lady, " said Cathy, once again talking to the TV screen.

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The TV reporter did her best to look composed and improvising a smile, she continued. “We’re getting reports from the downtown area via a listener’s cell-phone that bricks and other debris have fallen from a few of the older buildings, but thankfully because of the early morning hour, so far, there are no reports of any death or injuries. The listener took pictures and is uploading them to our website right now. As soon as they are available, we’ll put them on the air. We do have reports of power outages across the city, but we’ve been informed that it won’t be long before power is restored.”

Turning toward her co-anchor she said, “Jim, if this had been a much bigger quake, the damage assessments would have been far greater.

Just lately, I’ve heard reports that the Seattle area could have a seismic event more significant in magnitude than the 6.8 quake that hit the city back in 2001.

The next big quake could be the size of the one that hit the San Francisco Bay area on October 17th, 1989, just two decades ago, Jim. The 6.8 earthquake struck at 5:04 p.m. local time killing sixty-three people and causing nearly six billion dollars in damages.”

Jim jumped in with, “Here’s a little tidbit about that quake. The third game of the World Series was just starting in San Francisco between the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland Athletics. Thirty minutes before the first pitch was thrown, and while the two teams were still warming up, television viewers heard broadcaster Al Michaels say, ‘I’ll tell you what, we’re having an earth...’ and that’s when the cable feed from the ballpark was lost.”

“Bet that’s a day that Al Michaels will never forget,” said his co-anchor.

“You’re probably right. As the stadium swayed, it became obvious to the fans sitting in the stands that an earthquake was taking place. Thirty minutes later the game

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was postponed - fans, workers, and the teams evacuated the ballpark.”

The TV camera now fastened on the young lady as she said, “That had to be a scary situation with all those people trying to leave at one time - everyone pushing and shoving to get out. I wouldn’t have wanted to be there that day.

Jim, those images we saw from the ’89 quake of the double-deck Nimitz Freeway collapsing and crushing cars on the lower deck were horrendous. If I remember right, one section of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge also collapsed.”

Cathy sat with her mouth wide open while staring at the TV screen, mesmerized by the pictures of words those two reporters were painting. She couldn’t move.

“We’re told that the devastation will be horrific when that future quake hits the Seattle area. The general public should be thankful that those reports have aroused the attention of our Mayor and the City Commissioners to be proactive in preparing for the *big one* to hit here.”

“According to reports,” said her co-anchor, “the 6.8 quake that hit the Seattle area in February of ’01 had one death, over four hundred injuries and the estimate of damage was somewhere in the neighborhood of two billion dollars. The next one could be as damaging or worse because of its size.”

“That one in 2001 was a bad one, Jim. Reports say that we could have one that causes as many as a thousand deaths and may even devastate the city’s infrastructure. That future one will have a probable magnitude of 6.7.”

With every word of doom and gloom coming from those reporters, fear drove itself deeper into Cathy. She shook her head in rapid succession, as though to get rid of what her ears had just heard. She then hit the off button and threw the remote control across the room.

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“The big one! The big one! Is that all they’re going to talk about. This one was big enough for me. Oh, Jerry, I’m sorry, but I can’t handle this. I’ve made up my mind, I’m going back to Memphis.” Out of sheer frustration, she attempted to take off her engagement ring and throw it across the room - but it was on her finger too tight. Now, weeping, she grasped and held her left hand, covering the beautiful diamond ring. “I’m so confused.”

Moving her legs to sit on the side of the bed, Cathy caught sight of her digital clock on the nightstand blinking at her with a continual 12:09, 12:09. She picked up her wristwatch lying beside the clock to check on the time, in order to reset the clock. She was surprised when she saw that it was 4:30. “It’s so early. Do I go back to bed? Nah. I’m too upset to ever get back to sleep.”

Cathy, a flight attendant with an airline based in Seattle, had recently transferred to Seattle from Memphis, Tennessee to be near Jerry, her fiancé. Living in separate cities, the two saw very little of each other. They had spent countless hours talking by phone and e-mailing or texting each other. He was determined to have more time with her, so he asked her to transfer to Seattle. She agreed.

His work also had prevented them being together, because he traveled a lot, sometimes keeping him away from home for a week at a time. His company has clients all over the world, especially in Amsterdam and Stockholm, as well as in many of the larger cities in the United States. He had found her an apartment on the south side of Seattle, making it easy for her to commute on the new rail line that services the Seattle-Tacoma (Sea-Tac) Airport. Now, with her living in the same city, they would at least have more opportunities to be together.

Cathy and Jerry had been high school sweethearts back in Rancho Vista, Texas, but their choices for college took them in different directions. Their close relationship died a slow death due to the separation in time and miles.

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They didn't see each other again for several years. While on a business trip to Amsterdam, Jerry spotted Cathy dining at a restaurant and ever since then a close relationship ensued.

They became engaged the previous July at the home of her parents, Sharon and Tommy Evans in Rancho Vista, Texas, during the wedding reception for her brother, Cal and his new bride, Brenda. The final decision for Jerry's request for Cathy to move to Seattle hinged on the airline's approval. The company okayed the transfer, but she had to wait for an opening to become available, which took almost ten months.

Plugging in the coffee pot, Cathy almost jumped out of her skin when the phone rang. She grabbed the receiver without even checking the caller ID, and then became ecstatic when she heard Jerry's voice at the other end.

"Sweetheart, are you all right?"

"Yes, Jerry. Yes. How did you know that something was wrong?"

"CNN broadcasts over here, too."

"Oh yeah. What time is it there?"

"It's just past lunchtime. I heard that it was 4.8 on the Richter scale. Since it wasn't a strong one, did you feel it?"

With sarcasm in her voice and the words rolling off her lips in rapid succession, she said, "I don't know. I was asleep when it hit. Besides that, I've never experienced an earthquake before, so I have no idea if it was big or little. I just know that it scared the wits out of me. The lights went out and I couldn't find my flashlight. Jerry, I'm not sure that moving to Seattle was such a good idea. I need to move back to Memphis."

"Whoa there, girl. Come on, it was only a small quake, and Seattle has withstood loads of quakes. I'm just glad you're okay."

"You may take this lightly, but I'm not."

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“Cathy, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to imply that it was nothing. I’m just pleased that you’re okay.”

“Me, too,” she sighed, her shoulders relaxing for the moment. “But, I can’t fathom the idea of a bad one – this one was bad enough. I heard on TV this morning that a big one could devastate Seattle soon.”

“I’ve heard that too. I was in one in Japan that registered 7.0, and it did a lot of damage. Like you, I was scared to death, but lived through it.”

“I can’t imagine being in something that horrible. Right now, I feel so alone. If you had been in town I could’ve at least called you and felt better by just hearing your voice.”

“I’m sorry that I wasn’t there for you, sweetheart.”

“Hey, you can’t help it that you’re running around the world making money.”

“Whoa there, girl. That’s a jab below the belt.”

“Sorry. This earthquake has me all uptight.”

“Tell you what. When I get home on Thursday, how about I take you to the Space Needle for a sumptuous dinner. Will you promise me that you won’t pack up and leave before I get home?”

Her shoulders tightened during her tirade at him, again relaxed, but the scowl remained on her face. “Yeah, I guess so.”

He really wanted to hold her in his arms to wipe away the helplessness she was feeling – but that was impossible. Instead he blurted out, “Come on now. You can’t let one teeny-tiny earthquake chase you away from me – now can you?”

He could not see that her face was now distorted like that of a child who was ready to burst out crying. “What do you mean, teeny-tiny! How dare you minimize what I just went through. I’ve lived through emergency landings on several occasions, but at least I had someone else to talk to

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during those emotional times. Jerry, I had no one, do you hear me, no one to turn to when that quake hit.”

“Sweetheart, I’m sorry, but you’re a strong lady who I think can go through just about anything.”

“Don’t patronize me.”

He sighed, wondering what he could say that would not send her off. “I’m really sorry, Cathy, that you’ve had to ride this out alone. Tell you what. My plane gets in to Sea-Tac at three on Thursday. I’ll take a taxi home, clean up, change clothes and swing by to pick you up by six. How does that sound?”

Her voice relaxed a smidgeon, “Okay. I haven’t been to the Space Needle since I was on a flight into Seattle about four years ago. The other flight attendants hadn’t ever been there, so we splurged and had dinner at the restaurant at the top of the Needle. Can’t remember the name of it.”

“Think it’s called ah... Sky something or other. Oh, yeah, Sky City.”

“Loved it. While eating, the restaurant makes a complete 360° turn. It was early evening when the three of us got there and by the time we were through eating it was very dark. It took us a long time to eat ‘cuz we were so mesmerized by the beautiful view of the bay, Mt. Rainier, the Cascade Mountains, and ah... what’s that mountain chain to the west?”

“The Olympics.”

“Oh, yeah. We had a wonderful time that night.”

“Last time my mother came to visit me,” interjected Jerry, “and before having lunch, I took her up to the deck where we could see the ferries and cruise ships coming and going. She loved it.”

“Isn’t that called the ‘O Deck’, because everyone says ‘Ohhh’ when they first step out onto that deck?”

“Yeah. It’s funny you mentioned that. That’s exactly what we both said. That view is so spectacular. Sure hope

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the weather is nice on Thursday, so that we can have a romantic dinner while catching sight of the lights of Seattle by night. Also I can't wait to see those beautiful hazel eyes of yours looking across the table at me."

"You're such a romantic, Jerry. The evening sounds terrific. Please don't worry about me. I'll be all right. Before I head out to the airport, I've got some cleaning up to do of things that fell off shelves."

"Did you have much damage?"

"No. The quake knocked some things off my dresser and off the knick-knack shelves in the living room. In an instant, the lights went out, but came on within five or so minutes. Other than that, it just did a shake-rattle-and-roll for a few seconds, which seemed like minutes."

"Well, I feel better now that I know you are alright. Gotta go, sweetheart. I'll talk to you tomorrow. Love you."

"Love you, too."

Standing there in the lobby of a large European corporate high-rise, Jerry flipped his cell-phone closed, thinking *the invitation to dinner seemed to take her mind off the situation she's in – at least for the moment. It should give her heart-rate time to slow down a smidgeon.*

With those thoughts smugness arose within him, believing he had been her knight in shining armor, rescuing her from what she had just experienced. He grinned as he walked back to the meeting place. *Thank you, Lord, that she's okay.*

Pressing the button for the elevator, his demeanor suddenly changed when he heard within him *Jerry, you'd better watch what you say in the future to Cathy when she's upset. You've forgotten how sensitive women really are, or rather how insensitive men are.* At those words his jaw dropped and he released a sigh of guilt. *Forgive me, Lord, for upsetting Cathy, and help me to be more understanding and compassionate in the future.*

END OF SAMPLE...