

STORMIE
OMARTIAN

Out of Darkness



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Verses marked niv are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Verses marked kjv are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

All of the stories related in this book are true, but the names of certain persons mentioned have been changed in order to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. Each name that has been changed is marked by an asterisk following the name the first time it is mentioned.

All photographs in this book are the personal property of the author and may not be reproduced without written permission.

Cover photo © by Michael Gomez

Cover by Left Coast Design, Portland, Oregon

Portions of this book previously published in Stormie.

OUT OF DARKNESS

Copyright © 2015 by Stormie Omartian

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Omartian, Stormie.

Out of darkness / Stormie Omartian.

pages cm

Continues: Stormie. 1986.

ISBN 978-0-7369-6638-2 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-5057-2 (hardcover)

ISBN 978-0-7369-5058-9 (eBook)

1. Omartian, Stormie. 2. Omartian, Stormie—Childhood and youth. 3. Abused children—United States—Biography. 4. Adult child abuse victims—United States—Biography. 5. Women drug addicts—United States—Biography. 6. Life change events—United States. 7. Spiritual healing—United States. 8. Christian authors—United States—Biography. 9. Christian biography—United States. 10. Women musicians—United States—Biography. I. Omartian, Stormie. Stormie. II. Title.

CT275.O54A3 2015

270.092—dc23

[B]

2015020231

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 / DP-CD / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Special Thanks

To my husband, Michael Omartian, for his faithfulness to God and to me.

To Suzy, Susan, and Roz, my prayer partners of more than 30 years, for all of your labor in praying for me and my family. I'd pray that the blessings you have given me through your ongoing prayers would be heaped a hundredfold back upon you, but then again I don't want to limit God!

To my son, Christopher, and my daughter-in-law, Paige, and to my daughter, Amanda, and my son-in-law, Dallas, for your love and support. And to my granddaughter, Scarlett Grace, for bringing everlasting joy to me and my family. I love you all much more than mere words can ever express.

To Bob Hawkins, LaRae Weikert, Kim Moore, Terry Glaspey, and the staff at Harvest House Publishers for your constant support. Special thanks to L.Rae, T.Glass, and B.Hawk for all of those special times we spent together talking about the future and how to best serve God. Our more than 30-year relationship has been a source of great happiness and encouragement to me.

Contents

Dear Reader	7
1. Paralyzed by Evil	11
2. The Great Escape	21
3. Sinking Deeper	35
4. Living in Darkness	43
5. Terminal Hopelessness	55
6. Failure to Commit	67
7. Choices for Death	77
8. Truth Without Freedom	89
9. Finding the One True Light	95
10. Not Guilty by Association	103
11. Meeting the Deliverer	109
12. Keys to Unlocking the Kingdom	123
13. Stepping Out of Darkness	129
14. The Unexpected Abuser	133
15. Unimagined Miracles	145
16. Hidden Unforgiveness	155
17. Peace Beyond Understanding	161
18. Confronting the Past	175
19. The Follower	181
20. Moving to the Promised Land	185

21.	Ending Up in the Wilderness	193
22.	The Giant Shake-Up	199
23.	The Powerful Turnaround	203
24.	A Near-Death Experience	215
25.	In Sickness and in Health	225
26.	A Place of Safety	231
27.	Staying in the Light	237
28.	Let the Redeemed Say So	243
	Notes	247



*That was the true Light which gives light
to every man coming into the world.*

JOHN 1:9

Paralyzed by Evil



I never dreamed I would live this long. I thought I would die before my late-thirties. And I certainly never imagined I would write this book. I loved to write from the day I could hold a pencil. I wrote plays, stories, essays, song lyrics, and poems. There was something in me that made it impossible for me not to write.

Writing is like breathing for me. In fact, I feel suffocated if I don't have time to write something every day. Writing always brought freedom to my heart and soul, and peace to my tortured mind—even if only temporarily. I wrote in diaries and journals about things that happened to me and the negative emotions I struggled to overcome. Writing released me and kept me alive.

I tried as hard as I could to overcome my situation and rise out of it. I wondered, *Why can't I be like other people who have never had to struggle as I have?* I clearly remember the day in my mid-twenties that became a turning point in my life. It started with a terrible tragedy for other people that severely affected me.

That day I woke up late. It was 10:00 a.m. and sunlight blazed through cracks in the window shades. My head throbbed as I opened my eyes. The stifling air indicated that already the day was hot. Long into a California heat wave typical

of August, my tiny, two-room apartment never cooled down much. There was no air-conditioning, and it was too dangerous to leave the windows open even a crack. I sat up on my single-sized daybed and then fell back onto my pillow. Exhausted from a fitful night's sleep, I was too groggy to get up.

I had found another rose on my front door handle when I arrived home around midnight. This made the tenth consecutive rose placed there every evening after dark. It was beginning to bother me. What at first appeared to be a flattering gesture by a secret admirer was now becoming creepy. Only someone with a sick mind would continue this odd ritual day after day without identifying himself. I had a longtime problem with insomnia anyway, and this wasn't helping.

I had worked late the night before taping another television segment of *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*—one of the top shows at the time. Originally hired as one of Glen's four regular female singers who dance, I had begun acting in comedy skits as well. Working with different guest stars each week was always a challenge, especially when there never seemed to be enough rehearsal time and I suffered from chronic doubt about my abilities. Taping day before a live audience began before dawn and lasted into the evening. I had once been very excited about it, but lately all I felt was fear and exhaustion. It wasn't the production. Glen and all the people with him were the best. It was me.

I sat up again, slowly this time, and leaned across the bed to turn on the television. I wasn't much for watching TV because I was afraid it would make my mind irreversibly numb. However, this morning, in order to get my thoughts off the rose problem, I turned it on.

The screen was full of a news report detailing the grisly stabbing deaths of actress Sharon Tate and four others in Benedict Canyon during the night. That was not far from my apartment! I drove over that canyon and went by her street frequently. Horror gripped me as the details of what happened unfolded. I didn't know Sharon Tate and her friends personally, but I knew who they all were. The slaughter would horrify anyone, but what I began to feel was beyond horror. Fear was growing inside me to a paralyzing terror.

It was the knives. Sharon Tate was stabbed! I had always had an unreasonable fear of knives. For as long as I could remember, I had suffered from

recurring nightmares in which I was stabbed repeatedly. The mere *thought* of knives made me deathly afraid—far beyond what would be considered normal.

My phone rang and temporarily broke the grip of fear that kept me riveted to the TV. “Did you hear about Sharon Tate and the others?” inquired a friend on the other end of the line. Many similar calls followed. No one could believe what had happened, nor could they even begin to understand why. There seemed to be no motive for the murders, which made them even more frightening.

That evening I went out to a restaurant with friends, and the murders were the total topic of conversation. We all agreed that the heat wave made people crazy, and that the flourishing psychedelic drug scene of the sixties had brought with it a kind of evil madness that pervaded everything. This was August 10, 1969.

When I returned to my apartment about 11:00, there it was—another rose draped across *my front door* handle. I shuddered with fear as I suddenly realized there was a pattern to this madness. The roses had started out as tiny buds. Gradually, they had gotten bigger each night. And now they were beginning to open. *What will happen*, I wondered, *when the roses are in full bloom?* I hurried into the apartment, bolted the door, and went to bed in terror.

The next morning I turned on the TV as soon as I was awake to see if there was further news about the Sharon Tate case. Desperate to understand what happened and why, my mind was filled with unanswered questions. Much to my horror, during the night there had been two more stabbing deaths. A husband and wife by the last name of LaBianca were butchered. The details matched those of the Sharon Tate murders, and the police suspected that the killers were the same people.

Fear spread like wildfire all over town. The rich put up security fences, installed burglar alarms, and purchased guard dogs. The rest of us bolted our doors and windows and didn’t open them for anyone. I couldn’t stand being alone, and my boyfriend, Rick*, was out of town. My apartment was too small to have people over, so I went out with friends again that night, as I desperately needed to be with someone.

When I returned to my apartment at around 2:00 a.m., there was another rose on the door handle. This one was beginning to blossom. I quickly threw it into the bushes, ran inside, and bolted the door.

As I dressed for bed, my mind sorted through the macabre details of the stabbing death of Sharon Tate. Here was a beautiful and wealthy young woman, nine months pregnant, living in a big house with burglar alarms and an electronic fence. She was totally protected and yet totally vulnerable. I knew that she, and the others murdered with her, were not the type of people to be involved in occult practices as was implied by certain news reports. They were also not the type of people you would ever think could end up murdered. If Sharon Tate could have the sanctity of her home invaded in that way, then what protection was there for me? And the knives—I couldn't even bear to think about the knives.

But something more was bothering me. Something about the *spirit* of what had gone on there that was way too familiar. It was like meeting someone you know you've met before, but you can't seem to place him.

I'd been heavily involved in the occult for years. It started with Ouija boards and horoscopes, and then I'd dived headlong into astral projection and séances to summon the dead. Numerology fascinated me so much that I considered changing my name when I learned that if the letters in your name added up to a certain number, you could become successful and fulfilled. However, I knew of a promising young actress who paid a numerologist to devise a new name for her. She changed her name legally, moved to New York City to begin her life of success, and was never heard from again. A numerologist sending me into obscurity was not what I had in mind, so I decided to go on to other things.

I took hypnotism classes, which were very popular in the entertainment industry. I frequently went into a trancelike state and told myself things I wanted to hear. "Stormie," I would say, "you are a beautiful, successful, and wonderful person. You can talk, sing, and act, and you are not afraid."

But as with all of the other things I had tried, whatever help I received was fleeting, and afterward I felt worse than before.

Next, I threw myself into a manmade religion—also very popular in that

town—that believed there was no evil in the world except what existed in a person’s mind. And if you could control your mind, you could control the amount of negative experiences you would have. I bought every book available on the subject and read each one thoroughly. I associated with other like-minded advocates, which wasn’t hard to do because so many of the Hollywood show business people, especially actresses, were into it. It didn’t work out for me because, no matter how I tried to think good thoughts, I could still see evil everywhere, and the fear, depression, anxiety, and panic in me grew worse.

I became involved in anything that told me I was worth something and that there could be a life without pain in my future. I frequently visited mediums, hoping they could give me good news. When they didn’t, I was despairing. I rode an emotional roller coaster, and there was no balance to my life.

Devoting myself to Eastern religions, I began meditating daily. However, the God I searched for so diligently was distant and cold, and peace eluded me. Once, when I was in the middle of meditation, I opened my eyes to find that I was looking at my own body lying on the couch across the room. This was the out-of-body experience I had read about and wanted, but it didn’t bring me the “oneness with the universe” I had been told would happen. Instead, it brought greater terror. The more involved I became, the more I saw strange things—odd beings and forms floating in front of my eyes. I didn’t understand what was happening or why.

Despite the frightening aspects of the occult, I was irresistibly drawn to it. I knew there was a real spirit world because I’d seen it. And the books promised that by pursuing these methods I would find God and eternal peace. Why did it seem to have the opposite effect on me? Yet because I was desperate for anything that could possibly fill my emptiness inside, soothe the intense emotional pain I felt constantly, and quell the unreasonable fear that threatened to control my mind, I continued my search. There had to be an answer for me, and I was going to find it.

Something about my occult practices reminded me of the Sharon Tate murders. I felt I was a part of what happened even though I knew I wasn’t. Remembering the old adage “You always recognize your own,” I found the events all

too familiar. Somehow, I was aligned. I could feel it. I feared that if I continued the path I was on, what happened to Sharon Tate could happen to me. Yet I felt powerless to stop it.

I can't think about it anymore, I thought to myself as I slipped into a thin summer nightgown and headed into the bathroom to wash my face. I flipped on the light switch and was startled by the sight of hundreds of large cockroaches scurrying everywhere on the tile floor. I had lived there for more than a year and had never seen a single one before. But I had also never come into the bathroom so late.

I dashed into the kitchen for a can of pesticide and sprayed the bathroom ruthlessly until every bug was dead. The thought of sleeping there with even one living cockroach drove me on. When there was no sign of life, I finally stopped. By then the smell of poison was deathly strong. In my tiny place I knew I couldn't stay in those fumes for long, yet at two o'clock in the morning it was too late to go anywhere else. I opened the bathroom window as wide as it would go to air out the room and the whole apartment.

Then I went to my closet right outside the bathroom and began to hang up the clothes I had tossed there. As I put the last garment in place, I heard a rustling of leaves through the open window. My apartment building was located in the Hollywood Hills and surrounded by trees and bushes. I would often hear small furry animals scampering about outside.

I held very still and listened for more sounds. The rustling came closer and sounded more like footsteps than small animals. They stopped directly under the window, and I heard something slide slowly up the wall. When I saw what I thought was a hand grab the top of the windowsill, I was terrified. Having no place to hide, I screamed with every bit of bodily strength I could muster and ran for the front door. Thoughts of Sharon Tate, the LaBiancas, and bloody knives raced through my mind.

The one-story apartments in the complex I lived in were situated on a hillside, and each one was isolated in a checkerboard effect with bushes and trees in between. For me to run to someone else's apartment would be risky, especially if no one was home. Once outside, I stopped screaming and hid in the thick bushes.

I hardly let myself breathe. My heart nearly pounded out of my chest. I stayed like that for what must have been close to a minute. Then I heard movement again, this time on the roof of the apartment closest to me. That apartment was situated above mine and nestled into the hillside so that a person could hop on the roof easily from the street above it. I peered through the bushes, and a man's form was coming cautiously over the roof. He held a flashlight and shone it to and fro on the ground just in front of me. In back of him I perceived another person. The glare of the flashlight made it difficult to see clearly, but it appeared that there were two men dressed in black. One man yelled in my direction.

"Is anyone down there?"

I was silent.

He shouted it again with more conviction. I held my breath.

The third time he yelled, he turned in such a way that I caught a glimpse of a gun in its holster and what looked like a policeman's hat. From the bushes I called, "Yes. I'm down here! Who are you?"

"We're the police. Come out where we can see you."

"Thank God!" I cried as I moved cautiously from my hiding place. "Someone tried to come in my bathroom window. I screamed and ran outside and hid here in the bushes."

"We heard the screams from our police car as we were patrolling the neighborhood. You stay right there. We'll check around back and see if we find anything."

I was filled with relief that they had providentially arrived with perfect timing, but I didn't want them to leave me alone. I hid in the bushes again as they conducted their search. It was only a minute or two before they came to my door and said, "Whoever it was is gone now. Your screams probably scared him away."

They escorted me back inside the apartment and searched it to make sure no one was there. The apartment was so tiny it took all of 30 seconds to check the kitchen, under the single bed in the main room, in the closet, and the shower. There was no place else to look. They could have just passed it off as nothing but a petty burglar, but I could tell that because of the Tate-LaBianca murders

they were taking this event seriously. I desperately wanted them to stay because I was still afraid. Instead, I thanked them profusely, bid them good night, and locked the door and the bathroom window. After they were gone, I couldn't believe that in my fright I had forgotten to mention the roses to them.

I went to bed but tossed and turned. With every noise my body stiffened and my heart pounded. I could hardly breathe from the heat, and sleep eluded me.

The next day Rick called. He was back in town after a long tour with his band. We had sung together in the same group for a couple of years and then started dating. I told him about the events of the night before, as well as about the roses, and of course we talked about the Tate-LaBianca murders.

We went out that night, and on the way back home we drove over Benedict Canyon near Sharon Tate's house because it was a direct route from Beverly Hills to my apartment. The road was deserted and appeared unusually dark. Terror crept over my back, inside my chest, and up into my throat until I was nearly paralyzed with fright. The fear was so strong that if someone had touched me at that point, I'm sure my heart would have stopped. I tried desperately to pull myself together so Rick wouldn't notice what was going on inside me. Keeping up a good front was always a priority. I had to make sure no one would ever discover what an emotional mess I was.

He walked me up the long, winding stairs to my door, and there, draped over the handle, lay another rose. He picked it up. The beautiful red velvet petals were unfolding.

"Stormie!" A young woman's voice penetrated our intense silence. It was my friend Holly*, who lived a few apartments down the hill. She was just coming in with her boyfriend. I grabbed the rose and ran down the stairs. "Holly, look! Another rose! They keep getting bigger, and I'm afraid that whoever is leaving them might be planning to do something terrible."

She was concerned as well. This had seemingly started as a joke, and we had laughed over it just the week before. But now it wasn't funny anymore.

"I have an idea," she said. "Let's wait out in the bushes tomorrow night to see if we can discover who it is."

“Are you serious?” My voice betrayed my fear.

“Don’t worry. He’ll never notice us. We figure he comes around ten every evening, right? Let’s meet here at nine.” Rick and Holly’s boyfriend agreed to watch with us.

When the time came, we positioned ourselves in four strategic places, hidden in the bushes outside of my apartment. In order to get to my front door, the rose man would have to go by one or all of us.

We waited.

No one came.

We were silent except for a brief exchange at about eleven concerning whether we should stop at midnight or continue on. We continued. Midnight came and went, and still no one showed up. Finally, we were tired and aching from staying cramped for so long and decided to call it quits.

Holly and her boyfriend went home. Rick walked me to my apartment, came in for something to drink, and then left around twelve thirty. I readied myself for bed, and then I went to the front door to make sure it was locked securely. As I opened the door to slam it tightly shut, a bright, beautiful rose, almost in full bloom, fell at my feet.

I gasped and my heart started to pound. Quickly, I slammed the door shut and locked it. My mind raced. Always before, the roses had come around ten and never after midnight. The only answer was that the rose man knew we were waiting in the bushes. He knew Rick was in my apartment. He knew when Rick left.

He had been watching me.

I quickly called Rick, who had just arrived home. Without giving him a chance to speak, I told him what happened. “Obviously, we were being watched,” he stated. “Perhaps it’s someone in the apartment complex.”

I called Holly, and she suggested that the two of us go door-to-door in the morning, telling our neighbors about the roses and the near break-in, and asking questions. Maybe someone had seen or heard something.

The next morning we started knocking on doors. *No one* had heard the screaming of two nights before, even though two policemen driving by had

heard it from inside their car. No one had seen anyone suspicious. But, yes, they would tell us if they did.

The last apartment we checked belonged to a large, dark-haired, mustached man named Leo*. He was in his mid-twenties and a would-be actor like nearly every other male in town. We had talked briefly on several occasions, and each time he had asked me to go out with him. I always assured him I was seeing someone and he always backed off. I tried to maintain a friendly but distant relationship with him because something about him was strange.

When we questioned Leo, he said he had heard the screaming. This was odd because other people who were home the night of the attempted break-in, and whose apartments were closer to mine, had *not* heard it. I was amazed that he'd heard me cry so desperately for help but didn't check to see what was wrong. I told him about the roses, and he said he had seen no one suspicious.

"I'm concerned," I said. "Anyone who would leave a rose on my door handle fourteen days in a row without identifying himself has got to be a weirdo with a sick mind."

The moment I said "weirdo with a sick mind," I saw Leo's eyes wince and his expression darken. It was ever so subtle and only for a moment, but his look was exactly what one would expect if I had said that about *him*. In that very instant, I knew it *was* him. I had wounded him with what I said, and now I was even more afraid. Politely, I thanked him and we left quickly.

I knew I had to get out of my apartment as soon as possible, so that afternoon I found another apartment over Laurel Canyon and into the valley away from the Hollywood Hills. I moved quietly and secretly early the next morning while it was still dark. Because I had few belongings, the move was easy. I left no forwarding address.

Afraid that the rose man would find out where I lived and follow me, my first few nights alone in the new apartment were filled with fright. The Tate-LaBianca murderers were still at large and, as far as I was concerned, so was he.

But nothing happened. The roses stopped. Only the fear remained.

The Great Escape



I rushed past the guard at the entrance to the giant CBS building. Having seen me almost daily for years, he just waved me on through. After going up the elevator and down the hall to the enormous sound stage where *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* was being filmed—right across from the large studio where *The Carol Burnett Show* was also being filmed—I practically collided with the director.

“Sorry I’m late, Jack,” I apologized, as I had done countless times before.

“You’re working yourself too hard, Stormie,” he reprimanded in his stern but kind voice. He knew I was filming another local TV program on the three days away from *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*, which meant no time off whatsoever. The look on his face questioned my sanity. He always showed a fatherly kindness toward me I so appreciated.

Unable to confess that I was too insecure to turn down any work, I joked, “They’re hounding me, Jack. Dumb blondes are the rage this year, you know.”

He gave me a hug and said, “Get to makeup quick. Cher is sick and can’t do the skit with Glen. You’re going to do it.”

“What!” I exclaimed with surprise, sudden terror in my heart.

“You’re exactly the same size, so her costume will fit,” he assured me. “You are

a quick study and will have no problem with the lines. Besides, you've watched them rehearsing, so you'll remember the blocking."

I was constantly amazed at Jack's faith in me. "What about my own skit with Glen?"

"You'll be able to do both. Cher's costume lady will help you with the fast changes. I'll send someone to run over your lines with you right after makeup."

I ran straight to the makeup room and collapsed in a chair in front of the head man. "I need a miracle, Ben. They're making me a star today, and you have to make me beautiful," I said, laughing.

Ben Nye and his father were experts at makeup—and very well known in the industry—so I didn't have to worry about what he was going to do. I closed my eyes and tried to breathe calmly and pull myself together. It was only eight in the morning, and already I was exhausted. In the months following the Sharon Tate murders, I had filled my life with work. Not only did I have two TV series a week, but I also crammed every spare hour with recording sessions and commercials. I was obsessed with working. It helped me minimize my deep feelings of inadequacy and my fear of being hungry and homeless, and it enabled me to keep a tighter rein on the depression and fear that always threatened to control my life.

Depression was something I dealt with daily. For most of my life, at least as far back as 13 years old, I awakened every morning to the thought, *Should I kill myself now or can I make it through another day?* When my alarm had sounded at five this morning, I lay frozen in bed, trying to decide what to do. *You have an important job to do today*, I had told myself. *You're doing a great skit with Glen Campbell. Rehearsal has gone well.*

No, I can't kill myself today, I'd finally decided. *If this part I'm doing turns out great, I might be recognized as an important talent. Then everyone will love me and I won't feel any more pain.* It had taken only a few minutes to get myself out of bed this morning; some days it took hours. Unfortunately, I believed I was only as good as my last performance, so when a job was over, so were my good feelings about myself and my life.

"You're gorgeous!" Ben said as he put the finishing touches of mascara on my false eyelashes.

"You're a genius, Ben." I smiled my thanks to him as I ran off to Cher's dressing room. It was the fancy one with the big star. The crew had taken down her name and put up mine in their own handwriting. It made me laugh, and I appreciated their constant support. I admired Cher, who was also in her early twenties at the time, and I thought she was one of the most beautiful stars I had ever seen. I was sorry she was sick, but I was also thrilled to fill in for her.

"Hi, Maggie," I said, greeting the costume lady.

"Stormie, we're late." She was concerned for me as well as herself. Jack ran a tight schedule, and wardrobe people were responsible for having the star dressed and in the proper place at the proper time. An aide came by with my lines, and Maggie helped me dress as I quickly studied them.

"All cast for the opening scene on stage immediately," boomed the assistant director over the loudspeaker just as Maggie zipped up the back of my costume. "It fits perfectly," she said, beaming.

I hurried to take my place in front of the camera on the mark designated by a little piece of blue tape on the floor.

Glen Campbell came in and gave me a big hug. "How're you doing this morning, lady?" he asked, smiling.

"Great!" I lied. "Do I look enough like Cher?" I nervously ran my hands through my long blond hair and blinked my blue eyes. Compared with Cher's dark-eyed, black-haired beauty, I felt terribly inadequate.

"You look sensational!" Glen stated in his usual sweet, encouraging manner. He was a wonderful employer, and besides admiring his talent, I adored him as a person.

"Cameras are rolling! Five, four, three, two, one...action!"

I remembered all of the blocking, and with the help of cue cards I got through all the lines without a mistake.

"Great!" boomed Jack's voice over the PA system. "Let's run it one more time, and I think we'll have it. Good job, Stormie. I knew you could do it!" I was elated to hear that encouragement and wondered why I myself could never feel that good about anything I did.

On my way back to the dressing room after the scene was over, one of the

other singers said, “The costume looks great, Stormie. Too bad you don’t have Cher’s voice.”

“Yes, and her money too,” I replied, laughing to hide my hurt.

While perhaps the comment was spoken innocently, it triggered a memory from far back in my past. Unreasonable fear gripped my chest, and unbearable pain from deep within my gut rose up into my throat and made it difficult to speak. My breathing became labored, and I felt as though I were suffocating. I had to get to a bathroom, dressing room, or empty rehearsal hall as soon as possible.

“I’ll be right back, Maggie,” I said breathlessly as I ran past her into the female cast bathroom. “Just give me a few moments.”

Once inside, I locked the door of the stall and braced myself against the wall. I tried hard to stifle the convulsive sobs that were just beneath the surface. The pain in my gut was so intense that I wanted to die. When I contained myself enough to return to work, I acted as if nothing happened. Keeping up a good front for others was a constant requirement for me.

“You okay, honey?”

“Sure, Maggie. Just a minor emergency,” I said, trying to laugh it off.

I breathed a shaky sigh of relief. Once again, no one suspected anything about my anxiety attacks. Because of them I didn’t allow relationships to get too close. How could I ever explain my actions to someone else when I didn’t understand them myself? I assumed I had these attacks because I was strange—a misfit. If I let someone get near, they might figure that out, and I couldn’t bear the thought of rejection. Besides, in my eyes everyone else was perfect, and I fell short by comparison. The closer I got to other people, the more intense the comparison became, and the more aware I was of all my shortcomings. It was better to remain at a distance.

After one more dress rehearsal, we went live to tape with a studio audience at about three in the afternoon. The taping day ended a success and I was relieved. “Great job, Stormie,” a beaming Jack said as he left the sound booth to go home. “See you in a couple weeks.”

“A couple weeks?” Then, before he could answer, I said, “Oh, of course. The two-week hiatus while Glen’s out of town. Sure, see you then.”

My heart sank. Because my other TV show had just ended its 13-week season, that meant no work at all for two weeks. The thought terrified me. When I wasn't working, I lived in the throes of constant depression. I found that drugs helped, and because it was the late 1960s, they were everywhere. In fact, they were almost difficult to avoid. Psychedelic drugs were used commonly too, but people were freaking out from them all the time, with some ending up in a mental hospital. I wasn't about to drop any acid. I was too close to ending up in a mental hospital as it was. And no cocaine. I had my standards. Simple marijuana was good enough for me.

I found that as long as I was either working or stoned I could survive life, but I was extremely careful not to combine the two. I was way too professional to do anything stupid, such as drinking or smoking pot. Work meant too much to me to jeopardize it in any way.

That night I took some pills to help me sleep and went to bed dreading the next day. As expected, I woke at midmorning thinking, *You're no good. Why don't you kill yourself?*

You did well yesterday, but yesterday is gone and you won't do anything good again.

You'll never amount to anything.

Who are you kidding? Everyone knows you don't have it.

You're a nobody.

Slowly and steadily depression sank on me like a thick, heavy blanket. When I couldn't fight back the force of it any longer, I knew I was entering one of my typical "blackouts."

For the next two weeks I could barely function. I lay in bed unable to read or even watch TV, getting up to do only the minimum requirements for life. The only thing that could have lifted the "blackout" was a call for work. But no one called.

When *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* resumed, I returned to CBS with the usual mixed emotions. I was eager to work, yet always fearful that someone would find out about my lack of ability and my intense fear. I waved to the guard at the gate. "Did you have a nice vacation, Stormie?" he yelled.

"Great!" I called back. "Not long enough, though."

“I know what you mean,” he said, laughing. I laughed with him and perfectly masked the person I was.



As helpful as it always seemed, I recognized that marijuana was becoming a problem for me. One night before a trip to Las Vegas to work with Glen in the main showroom of the MGM Grand Hotel, I stayed up late getting stoned with friends. I slept a few hours and then left at 6:00 a.m. for the airport, not realizing I was still under the influence of the drugs from the night before. Traveling down the main boulevard to the freeway, I didn't hear an ambulance coming full speed in the opposite direction until it came over a hill. We were inches from a head-on collision. I jerked to the right as he swerved left. We were so close as he sped by that the air between us violently jostled my car. I braked to a stop to catch my breath, and I realized that everyone else on the road had already pulled to the side. They had heard the sirens; I hadn't heard a thing. I knew then that I was going to kill myself if I didn't back off from the drinking and drugs.

A few weeks later at Rick's house, I baked a pan of brownies with a large amount of marijuana he had mixed in the batter. Rick ate a few pieces, and I nearly finished off the rest of the pan by myself. I had an uncontrollable chocolate habit, and once I started eating it, I couldn't stop until it was gone.

It takes longer to get high from *eating* marijuana than smoking it, but once the high happens it doesn't wear off for a long time. I didn't pay attention to the amount I had eaten. At first I got giddy and silly, and then dizzy and numb. Suddenly, I realized I had eaten way too much because a crushing heaviness settled in my body and I felt as though I were going to pass out.

“I have to lie down,” I said breathlessly to Rick as I stumbled to the couch and fell facedown. I hung on tightly to the cushion as the room began spinning so fast I thought I would disintegrate. Soon I couldn't move. I was paralyzed. My body felt dead, but inside I was still very much alive, trapped and unable to escape.

Where is Rick? Why isn't he helping me? I called his name. Or at least I thought I did. But there was no answer.

Six hours later I finally managed to lift my head. I could see Rick in the bedroom asleep. It took another two hours to force my body to the kitchen, where I washed my face with cold water and got something to drink.

What a stupid move! I'd almost killed myself again because of drugs. I knew I had to take action to correct my lifestyle or I was going to self-destruct, but I felt powerless to do it. Something inside was driving me to keep making bad choices—choices for death—over and over. I entertained suicidal thoughts every day, but it wasn't that I really wanted to die. It was just that I didn't see any other way out of the unbearable pain.

In the months that followed the Tate-LaBianca murders, the mystery surrounding them began to unfold. A group heavily involved in the occult and drugs was responsible. *I* was involved in the occult and drugs too. Was that where I was going to end up, with my mind so fried that I didn't even know right from wrong or life from death? Fear engulfed me more than ever now—fear of death, fear of rejection, fear of failure. I wished desperately that I didn't have to live alone.

One morning about four thirty, as I slept in my apartment, my bed began to shake violently, and a loud, overwhelming rumble from the bowels of the earth convinced me I was in the middle of a very bad earthquake. It shook more violently than any I'd ever experienced before. I thought the walls and ceiling were going to cave in under the weight of the apartment above me, and I would die a painful death—crushed, maimed, and all alone. The quake was violent enough to frighten anyone, and because my normal state was one of fear, this made me hysterical.

I ran for the door of my bedroom, but the force of the shaking threw me back and forth against the walls of the narrow hallway leading to the living room, where I landed hard against the coffee table.

I grabbed the phone and stumbled back to the hall doorway, where I knew I was safest. Falling to the floor, I tried to dial, but the tremors were so violent that my fingers couldn't even rest on the numbers. I tried three or four times before

I realized the phone was dead. The power was off in my place. There were no street lights outside either. In total darkness I dropped the phone, grabbed the doorjamb, and hung on tightly to keep from being thrown against the walls. “God, help me!” I pleaded. “God, please help me!” I had never been so terrified.

All around I could hear the crashing of my dishes falling out of the cupboards, paintings dropping off the walls, and lamps shattering against the floor. The enormous roar of the earth rumbled so loudly that I could barely hear my own screams.

What lasted only a few moments seemed like an eternity. Finally, the rumbling and shaking stopped. The sun was just beginning to rise, but I hung on to the doorpost until I could see enough to get to the bedroom, throw on jeans and a T-shirt, grab my purse, and get out. I didn’t check the damage. That was the last thing that concerned me. Earthquakes that violent would have aftershocks that could bring the roof down. I was terrified of dying alone.

Once I was outside, I ran to my car and sped off as quickly as I could to Rick’s house. Broken glass, debris, and fallen trees were everywhere. While I was driving, the first aftershock hit, and I pulled to a stop away from power lines to wait it out. The highway rolled and rippled as if it were made of soft rubber. Fissures in the road formed, and I had visions of the earth opening up and swallowing me so that I would never be heard from again. When it was over, I drove more cautiously.

On my way to Rick’s place, I resolved that I would not live alone any longer. I wasn’t brave enough to live openly with a man, and I couldn’t live with a girlfriend because I desperately needed a man’s affection. My steady stream of boyfriends would irritate even the most patient of women.

Marriage was the answer, and Rick was the most likely candidate. I had known him the longest of all the fellows I’d dated. We were somewhat compatible. Beyond eating together and having sex, what else was there to any relationship? Besides, he was one of the few men I was dating who was not married. I was forever ending up with some guy who had just freshly separated from his wife—or was intending to, as I would later find out. They weren’t good candidates for the security in marriage I needed. Even if Rick wasn’t the greatest

choice for me, I decided I would rather have a two-year marriage with a nice friendly divorce than live alone.

Over the next few weeks I set about to manipulate Rick into asking me to marry him. I cajoled, pleaded, threatened, and sulked. I told him I didn't want to live alone, and we must either make plans to be married or the relationship was over. Finally one night he said, "Okay, I'll marry you. But it has to be 50-50 financially. I'll make a down payment on a house if you pay the mortgage and all the rest of the bills."

I told him that was fine with me. At that time I was making more money than he was anyway. Besides, I would have agreed to anything at that point.

After he put the down payment on the house we chose to live in, we made plans to get married right away. His family was Catholic, and although I had never heard him mention God in all of the years I had known him, he insisted on a Catholic wedding. What did I care? A Buddhist wedding would have been fine with me. I just wanted a male roommate.

A few weeks before the wedding, Terry, a young singer friend of mine, called to ask me to sing on a Christian recording session. She was the contractor for at least half of the studio sessions I did, and I'd also worked with her on many TV shows in the preceding years. It was three days of work, and I was eager to do it.

From the start, this recording session was peaceful and pleasant, in direct contrast to the stress and pressure of the Hollywood recording business. I didn't know any of the people in the studio except Terry, who informed me that everyone there was a Christian. She never mentioned the fact that I wasn't. She'd often talked to me about God and her church. And I thought that was nice—for *her*.

I watched each person carefully. Christians to me had always fallen into two categories. Either they were insensitive and obnoxious, trying to beat you over the head with their Bibles, or else they were bland, boring, uninteresting, and without any known personality.

The Christians on this recording session were different. In some ways they *were* boring because nobody drank, smoked, did drugs, or partied. I wondered what they did for excitement. Yet there was a very appealing quality about

them. They were genuinely caring, and when I was around them I felt comforted and peaceful. They treated me like someone special, as opposed to the outsider I knew I was.

On our first break of the first day, Terry introduced me to a young man she had been telling me about for weeks. I gathered she thought we would be perfect for each other, so I was somewhat wary but curious at the same time. The minute I saw him, however, all doubts were dispelled. He was the cutest guy I'd ever seen. He had thick, dark, curly hair; beautiful olive skin; and large, expressive brown eyes that confirmed his Armenian heritage. He had an intensity about him and a sense of purpose that was very attractive to me. I was smitten the minute I saw him.

"Stormie, I want you to meet Michael Omartian," Terry said, and then she left us alone. Michael was warm and friendly, and I enjoyed his company immensely. As we talked I was transported to another realm, where no one else existed except us.

We were together every spare minute over the next few days, never running out of things to say. During one break, everyone except for Michael and me left the studio to go for coffee. He sat down at the piano to play, while I leaned across the side of it to watch his hands and listen intently.

When he finished the song, I said in amazement, "Michael, you're one of the greatest piano players I've ever heard."

He smiled, looked down at the keyboard, and shook his head. "That's nice of you, but it hasn't been easy finding work." I heard the frustrated musician in his voice.

"It's only a matter of time for you. You're a major talent, and it won't be long before other people recognize it." I'd been around Hollywood long enough to be certain that what I was telling him was true and not just flattery.

"It just depends on what the Lord wants."

"The Lord? What does the Lord have to do with it?"

"Do you know anything about Jesus, Stormie?"

"Sure. My Science of Mind books teach that He was a good man. Play me another one of your songs," I said, wanting to change the subject.

He complied, and I studied his intensity as he played. I was attracted to him in a profound way. He had a confidence and an energy I found irresistible. As my attraction for him increased, so did my confusion. *What am I doing?* I asked myself. I had no answers.

At the end of the third day, I invited Michael to my apartment for a health drink. He had been sick for weeks, he told me, and was unable to shake the congestion in his head. Having been into health foods for some time, I had a combination of things I knew would help.

“Hi, Michael.” I smiled at him with enthusiasm as I opened the door to my home. I was eager to see him again.

“Hello,” he said coolly. I was taken back by his sudden change from the warm and friendly person I’d met at the studio.

There was little conversation as I mixed up a concoction of brewer’s yeast, wheat germ, lecithin granules, vitamin C, acidophilus, and more into a glass of grape juice. As he drank it, I could tell he thought it might kill him. However, my credibility was saved when 20 minutes later his head started to clear.

We made small talk quietly and with hesitation on his part. There was something different about him now. He’d been friendly at the studio, but now he was cold. I didn’t understand it. Perhaps I’d misread his friendliness. Or maybe he felt uncomfortable about being in my apartment late at night. After all, he was one of those Christians. Or maybe he saw through me and found many things he didn’t like.

When he left, I was painfully sad. I’d felt unusually good being with him at the studio, and yet this encounter had been strained. It reaffirmed my beliefs that there were no good relationships, only tolerable ones. You just had to grab a tolerable one and get all the life you could out of it until it was time to go on to the next one. I was getting married simply because I couldn’t take living alone and Rick was the most tolerable of all the relationships in my life. We would do well if we could stand living together for two years.

Even though I accepted the fact that what seemed like a potentially fantastic relationship had fizzled, I couldn’t get Michael Omartian out of my mind. There was a quality in him that I loved. Something beyond just physical,

although that was certainly there too. I couldn't give it a name, but it was the same dynamic of life I'd recognized in my friend Terry.

Two weeks later she asked me to go with her to visit her friend Paul Johnson, a well-known Christian musician. Michael happened to be one of his two roommates. They lived up in the hills of Sherman Oaks in a beautiful, large, modern house with enormous windows that overlooked the city. The view was tremendous—and the view inside was even better with these three good-looking fellows. All of them had clean, healthy, vital good looks, plus that sweet, loving, irresistible quality I still couldn't put into words.

When I saw Michael again, he wasn't cold this time. Just tentative and cautious. As before, I was caught up somewhere between heaven and earth as we talked about one thing after another. He asked me out for dinner the following night, and I accepted.

At the restaurant our conversation began to move beyond things, places, and people to the deeper topic of feelings. He explained that the reason he turned suddenly cool at my apartment was because Terry had just revealed to him my plans to be married. He was confused and baffled. "Terry thinks you're making a big mistake, Stormie," he said emphatically, "and so do I."

"I know I'm making a mistake, but I can't do anything about it. The whole thing is set in motion and I can't stop it." I swallowed hard to fight back tears.

I couldn't tell him I was terrified to live alone, that I didn't deserve anything better, and that if any man were to find out what I was really like, he wouldn't want me. I believed there were no good relationships, at least not for me.

I saw Michael every night for the ten nights before my wedding. Rick never questioned where I was, and he never wanted to get together. He was at his mother's house. One night Michael came to my apartment to pick me up for dinner, and Rick dropped by for a few minutes. I introduced them. Rick left immediately and never at any time asked for any explanation about Michael. The incident was indicative of our nebulous relationship.

It was obvious that Rick and I had no basis for a marriage. We barely saw each other for the two weeks before the wedding. It was insane. I knew Michael thought I would call it off, but my life was out of control. It was spiraling

downward at a horrifying rate, and I thought getting married would keep me from hitting rock bottom.

The night before the wedding, Michael and I saw each other to say goodbye. He picked me up at my apartment, and we went for a drive. I was so depressed I could hardly speak because I knew we would not see each other again.

“What are you doing, Stormie?” he asked, his voice tense with frustration. “You’re marrying a man you don’t love. Everyone thinks you’re making a big mistake, and I *know* you’re making a big mistake. You can stop this now, so why won’t you call it off?”

“I can’t, Michael!” I cried. “I know it doesn’t make any sense, but I can’t stop it.” My fear and my intense emotional needs were making my decisions for me. The self-doubt and pain were greater than my ability to do what was sensible. But I didn’t know how to explain that to him. It would never make sense.

He pulled to the side of the road, took my hand, and said, “You know I love you very much.”

“I love you too,” I said as I fell into his arms and began to cry. “I love you more than I’ve ever loved anybody.”

“Then why won’t you call this whole thing off?” His voice now betrayed anger.

“I can’t,” I said, sobbing. “I just can’t.”

It must have confused him terribly. No normal person would have behaved that way. No one was forcing me to get married. I was choosing this myself.

Weeks earlier, when Michael had briefly tried to talk to me about Jesus, I had wanted no part of it. I’d assumed it would mean intellectual suicide to identify with Christianity, and I just plain didn’t want to hear about it. Now I wished I had listened more, but it was too late. Even though I found it difficult to let go of the purity and cleanness of our relationship, I knew I had to forget Michael and get on with the problem of survival. We said goodbye, and I went to bed and cried myself to sleep with the kind of tears that mourn a death.

The next morning I awoke with my usual depression and suicidal thoughts. The sense of futility was greater than ever. I was getting married. This was the only feasible alternative for my life, and it felt as if I were headed for hell.