

The Lost Son

CHAPTER THREE

Six months after my sixteenth birthday, on a beautiful Sunday morning, I was at the church entrance handing out flyers and greeting everyone who walked in the door. My eyes fell on the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen. I suddenly became nervous as she approached me. Her name was Helen; Melody, a young woman from the church, invited her to the church to accompany her that day. When both ladies reached closer to me, I couldn't keep my eyes off her and said, "Welcome, you're so gorgeous. I mean, enjoy the service."

She shared a smile and said, "You're not too bad-looking yourself." We both shared a short laugh before she proceeded inside the church with Melody. As soon as the church started, I went inside, standing in the back to see if I could spot her, but it was impossible because the congregation was big. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack. I sat in the back and could barely focus on the message. I couldn't wait until the church was over to see her again, and I made sure of that. Soon after the church was over, I went and stood by the same doors

I met her and waited for her to walk out. After ten minutes of standing there, there was no sign of Helen. I was disappointed that she had left. I decided to walk over to the other entrance hoping to see her. As I was about to leave, I saw her coming out with Melody. I had a sudden smile on my face standing there, admiring her beauty as she approached me. She wasn't shy at all, and it appeared as if she was looking forward to seeing me. Once she reached me, with her breath-taken smile, she asked, "Were you looking for me?"

"How could I not," I replied in a flirtatious manner.

"I don't think your dad would approve of me, preacher boy. Besides, I'm eighteen, and you're probably what, thirteen," She said. A Nice old trick, I thought, and then said, "My dad doesn't make my decisions for me, and I'm sixteen years old for your information. It sounds to me like you're the scared one and quit using my dad as an excuse."

"You have no idea what you're getting yourself into, preacher boy," she giggled with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes. I thought, where has she been all my life replying with a smirk on my face, "Really, Am I supposed to be scared or something?"

I noticed Helen quickly glanced at Melody and said, "I like him." She

turned her attention to me as she reached down in her purse, pulling out a pen. She took my hand and wrote her phone number on it. Then, she did the unexpected, leaning towards me, kissing me on the cheek, and whispered, “Call me if you’re bad, preacher boy.”

“The name is Ian, and I will,” I replied to her feeling aroused. She had winked at me before they walked away. I was happy and nervous at the same time. Unfortunately, it was the best worst thing that happened to me because my behavior spiraled out of control since I got in contact with Helen. Within a few months, my behavior took a turn for the worst. On several occasions, I had Helen pick me up from church to go hang out without my parents’ consent. It became more of a struggle for my parents to get me to go to church because I lost interest. I started to go out more often with Helen and her friends. Sometimes, I would come home at 1:00 a.m. if not later sneaking in through my bedroom window. I usually hide out thirty minutes after mom and dad prayed over me and said goodnight. I remember when my mother found the box of condoms on my nightstand and approached me about it. It was embarrassing for me. She must have been snooping around my room because I usually hide the condom perfectly for her to have found it. I knew

something was up with the way she was looking at me from the time she picked us up from school. I was sitting on the passenger side that day. The minute she pulled up in front of the house, I noticed she turned towards the back and said, “You guys get out of the car, I need to speak to Ian.” I thought to myself, what did I do now? I knew I was in trouble but didn’t know what. I glanced towards the back, looking at my brothers awkwardly, and they also looked clueless. I turned my attention back toward the front and saw the disappointed look on my mother’s face. I wasn’t in the mood for a pep talk, so I turned my head away, facing the window, avoiding looking at her.

“Look at me, Ian,” She said. I reluctantly turned my head to look at her, and she said, “Sweetheart, what’s going on? Talk to me; I’m right here.”

“Nothing is going on,” I said irritably, turning my head away, and looking out the window again.

“Ian, I can’t help you unless you tell me what’s wrong?”

I asked with irritation in my voice, “What makes you think something is wrong with me, mom?”

“Okay, who are you having sex with,” She asked.

My eyes widened in shock, turned my attention to her, and asked, “How do you know I’m having sex?”

“Ian, there’s no need to lie to me. I found the open box of condoms in your drawer,” She said.

“You have no right to go in my stuff, mom!” I growled.

“I have every right as long as you live in my house! For crying out loud, Ian, you’re only sixteen years old! What has got into you?” I was so upset with her; that I opened the door, got out, and slammed the door shut. I walked towards the house and went inside. I walked straight to my room and slammed the door. Dad would be home soon, and I knew she was going to tell him about it. I immediately called Helen and asked her to pick me up. I asked Helen to meet me down the street. I waited until my mother walked into the house, I sneaked out the window, and left. Just as I thought, she told my dad as soon as he got home. When I saw my dad calling me, I let it go to my voicemail. I was going to come back early that evening, but I decided to wait until after they were asleep. I knew once I got home, my dad would confront me about the condom and all. I had Helen drop me off at home around midnight. I tried to open the door quietly, and as I was closing it, I saw my dad coming from the family

room, and I murmured, “Here we go.” I embraced myself because I didn’t know what to expect from him. I honestly thought he was going to hit me. So, I stood by the door just in case I had to run out. Nonetheless, I wasn’t about to fight my dad because that was a fight I couldn’t win. Once he reached closer to me, he asked, “Where have you been, Ian? Do you have any idea what time it is?”

“I was out with my friends,” I replied, avoiding making eye contact with him.

“Do I know them? Are they from the church?”

“No.”

“What are you doing, Ian?”

“I’m not doing anything. Why you and mom are always assuming I’m doing something,” I replied, still avoiding making eye contact with him standing by the door. The scariest thing about my dad was when he looks reticent. At that point, I started to worry. I noticed he started walking toward me, and I quickly put myself in a protective position because I thought he was going to hit me. I tighten my body waiting for him to hit me, but he didn’t. Instead, I saw he leaned toward me and sniffed me, and asked, “Were you smoking weed?”

Knowing I was, I didn’t want to admit it, and I asked, “Can I go

to my room now?”

“No, you can’t. I’m not finished,” my father said, still calm. I looked over my dad’s shoulder, and I saw my mother standing on the stairs staring at me with her arms crossed over her chest, my dad asked, “What do I have to do for you to change your ways, Ian?”

“There’s nothing wrong with my ways.”

“Do you think smoking weed and having sex before marriage, and God knows whatever else you’re involved in is the right thing to do at your age?”

You find out when you’re wrong, the last thing you need is someone to keep reminding you about your wrongdoing. So, I got into defensive mode and said with frustration, “Why don’t you wake up, dad! The so-called Christians in your church are doing it too! If it’s so bad, why don’t you do something about them and stop lecturing me!”

“My job is to preach the word of God to the people, not make them follow it. It’s up to them to choose to do the right thing, Ian.”

“Then, if it’s up to me, why are you on my back,” I replied angrily.

“Because I love you, and you’re my son,” he replied.

“No, no, why don’t you say it’s because you love your reputation at the church and hate the fact that I’m not behaving like the little

angel you hoped me to be! You don't care about me! Why don't you stop lying to yourself? You don't want me to ruin your perfect family portrait!" I replied to him, still angry. It was the moment I was waiting for him to grab and throw me on the ground, but he stood there quietly for a few seconds as his eyes wandered before turning his attention to me, nodding, and saying, "This is the worst attitude I've ever seen."

I was surprised that I was still standing as he shook his head in disappointment. I guess he realized that he wasn't going to win because I always had an answer for everything. Finally, he took a deep breath and said, "You know what? I'm not fighting with you because you seem to have everything figured out. But, if you want to live here, you will be attending every service, and you will not walk into my house late unless you're working at the church or you have a job that lets you out late. I'm not telling you whom you're supposed to hang out with because it's your choice. You will not come to my house smelling like weed, and whomever you're sleeping with, you either marry her or lose her because fornication is not something I will tolerate in my house."

He turned around and started to walk away; I stood there thinking

for a few seconds about what he just said to me. I didn't want to go back to that church, and I wasn't going to stop hanging out with Helen because I loved her. As he reached halfway up the stairs, I said, "And if I don't, dad."

I noticed both he and my mother glanced at each other before he turned his attention to me and said, "If you don't, you will no longer be part of this family." He turned away, and they continued upstairs to their room. I went to my room thinking about what my dad said, and I decided that I didn't want to live with them anymore.

CHAPTER FOUR

I called Helen; she quickly picked up because she thought I got into a fight with my dad and asked, “Is everything all right?”

“No, not really,” I replied.

“You got in trouble, didn’t you?” She asked, but I didn’t reply. She continued, “If you want, one of my friends has an extra room in his apartment. You can come live with him for now until you figure things out.”

“I’m not working, how I’m going to pay him.”

“Don’t worry about it. You can move in with my friend and get a job later. I’ll talk to him.”

“Okay, thank you for doing this for me.”

“Get your stuff ready; I’m coming to pick you up.”

“Okay,” I replied before hanging up. I quickly packed most of my things, put them in trash bags, put the house key on the kitchen counter, and left. That night was the last time my parents saw me. The following day, I had Helen take me to her school to register because I wanted to be as far away as possible from my parents and

the church people. A few months later, Helen's friend got me a part-time job at McDonald's, where he worked. Finally, I was free to do whatever I wanted, and I didn't have to worry about getting in trouble with my parents anymore. Helen and her friends were down to earth. I felt like they were the only people that could understand me. They never judged me or pushed me to do anything that I didn't want to do. I started trying new things like smoking, drinking, and going clubbing with Helen, and I loved it. What I didn't know was all of that would come to an end soon. As much as I hate to admit it, my parents were right about my friends. Don't get me wrong; they were great friends, but they weren't steering me in the right direction. Unfortunately, my relationship with Helen started to take a different turn after a year of dating. Smoking, partying, and drinking began to wear off. I felt this void within, but I didn't know how to fill it. So, I hung on to Helen and the sex to keep me satisfied. In my senior year in high school, Helen started pressuring me to get a full-time job because my part-time wasn't paying much. I didn't know she was serious about us moving in together. Although Helen mentioned it several times, I wasn't ready for all of that. How I knew she was serious was when I got blindsided one day during lunch at the

cafeteria. Gary came patting my back and said, “Congrats, man! I heard you and Helen are moving in together.”

“We are?” I replied, looking puzzled because I didn’t remember having that conversation with Helen.

“You didn’t know? She told us that you’re going to rent an apartment because you are going to start working full-time now.”

“I am, huh?” I replied. Soon after I finished my lunch, I called her, but she didn’t pick up. We don’t always eat together because sometimes she would leave early. She had all her credits, but she had to show up to school for one class. Later, when I got home from school, Helen was already at the apartment with Eric. As soon as I walked in, Helen greeted me with a kiss and said, “Hi, babe!”

“Hi, can we talk?” I said and noticed she glanced at Eric looking confused.

“Yeah, what’s up?” she replied. I took her hand, walked into my room, closed the door behind us, and said, “Um... You told Gary that we’re moving in together.”

“Yeah, remember we talked about it. Once you start working full-time.”

I shook my head and said, “No, we didn’t talk about it, Helen.”

“Yes, baby, we did.” She insisted. I took a deep breath and said, “You asked me to work full-time, but I can’t because I’m not even done with school yet. I told you that I’m going to college, and I can’t do that if I don’t graduate high school.”

“So, what are you saying?” She replied with an attitude.

“I’m going to finish school,” I said to her. Helen opened the door and just walked out. I followed her and asked, “Where are you going?”

It appears Eric tried to listen to our conversation, standing in the hallway near the door, and asked, “What did you do to her?”

“Nothing,” I replied, glancing at him before turning my attention to Helen and she stopped. She looked at Eric and said, “I’ll see you later.” She started walking towards the door, and I said, “Baby, wait!” She opened the door, walked out, and slammed the door in my face. I ran after her outside. I reached out and held her arm so she would stop walking away from me. She pushed me angrily and said, “Get your hands off me!” I had never seen her angry before. I stood there in shock, looking at her as she got in her car and drove out of the parking lot. When I walked back to the apartment, Eric was standing by the door and asked, “What happened, man?”

“Nothing,” I replied in frustration, walking past him, and making my way to my room. I called her to apologize, but she never returned any of my calls. A few days went by, and I didn’t see Helen at school, nor did she come by like she usually did. I decided to visit her at her home, but when I got there, Helen’s dad opened the door and asked me to leave. I didn’t argue with him, and I left. I called her several times after that and left her several messages, but she never returned any of my calls. Two weeks later, I got a text from Helen telling me that she was breaking up with me. I was devastated about the breakup because I loved her so much. I went to her home after I got her text, but she wasn’t there. I decided to wait for her outside. I don’t know if her dad didn’t like me, but he never invited me to come in. So, I waited outside for her until she showed up around midnight. She was shocked to see me sitting on her porch and asked, “What do you want? I thought I told you that I’m through with you.”

“Why? Because I want to finish school to go to college? I’m doing this for us, Helen. I want to be able to take care of you. I don’t want to work for McDonald's for the rest of my life.”

“You can still go to college and work full-time.”

“I know that, but it will take me longer to finish. I want to go to

school full-time.”

“Good luck!” She said and started walking towards the door to open it.

“Helen, please, babe, you are all that I have, and I love you.”

“If you love me like you said, why is it so hard for you to do?” She asked. I stood there for a few seconds thinking, and Helen said, “That's what I figured.”

She opened the door to walk in, and I said, “Okay, I'll do it. I'll work full-time to get us our place.”

“Goodnight.” She said before she walked in and shut the door, leaving me standing outside.

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