



BENITA

A POWERFUL CHRISTIAN
NOVEL SERIES

SEASON 3

— ✧ — WRITTEN BY — ✧ —

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SEASON 3 · EPISODE ONE

The Journey Begins



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I have made my choice. I will not return to the life I left behind.

— DIDI'S PROTECTOR

The gang leader stood directly in front of the young man with his gun pointed at his chest. The young man did not move, because although he knew the situation had become dangerous, he was determined not to allow fear to control him. He moved slightly in front of Didi, using his own body to shield her from the men, and Didi stared at him in terror.

The gang leader slowly cocked his gun, and the sharp sound made Didi's heart jump.

“You have made your choice,” the leader said coldly. “Now you will face the consequences.”

The young man swallowed hard, but he remained where he was.

“I have made my choice,” he replied. “I will not return to the life I left behind.”

The leader raised the gun higher, and Didi suddenly screamed in fear before turning to run. She ran away

from the men and disappeared into the thick forest beside the narrow track road, which was not a proper highway but an old farm road used by villagers and farmers who travelled into the bush to tend their farms.

Didi ran without looking back because she did not know what was happening behind her and only knew that she had to escape. Branches slapped against her face as she forced her way through the thick vegetation, and she stumbled over roots and nearly fell several times. Her clothes became caught in the bushes, but she pulled herself free and continued running until she heard gunshots.

Bang! Bang!

Didi's heart almost stopped when she heard the shots, and her first thought was of the young man who had stood between her and the gang. She slowed down for only a moment, but fear quickly pushed her forward again and she ran deeper into the forest.

Her feet struck stones and roots as sharp branches scratched her arms and some of the grasses tore her skin. She stumbled and fell against a tree, but she quickly pushed herself up and continued running while

tears streamed down her face.

She did not know where she was going, whether the men were following her, or whether the young man was still alive, and all she knew was that she had to get as far away from them as possible. She continued running until the sounds from the road disappeared completely and the forest became strangely quiet.

Didi stopped and turned around, but there was nothing behind her. She looked in another direction and still saw nothing, and it suddenly occurred to her that she had gone too deep into the forest. She realized she was lost, but she was too afraid to return, so she leaned against a tree and began to cry.

“For the first time, Didi fully understood the seriousness of the road she had travelled, because she had become involved with dangerous people and now the life she had chosen had turned against her.”

She looked around at the thick forest surrounding her where there was nowhere to go and no one to turn to. She wiped her tears and began walking again.

TWO DAYS LATER

Two days had passed since the frightening encounter,

and while Didi was still somewhere in the forest, another important event was taking place in Benita's home. Benita was preparing to leave for her NYSC Orientation Camp with her bags packed, her documents ready, and with her mother having made sure that she had everything she needed for the journey. She had been mobilised for national service and was about to begin the compulsory three-week Orientation Course, after which she would be posted to a Place of Primary Assignment for the rest of her service year.

THE EVELYN RESIDENCE

A SEND-FORTH GATHERING BEFORE NYSC ORIENTATION CAMP

It was a new chapter for her, but for Benita it was more than the beginning of national service because she saw it as another opportunity to serve God. That morning, several people had gathered in her house to pray with her before she left, including Mrs. Evelyn, Clara, Benjamin, Jonathan, Cynthia and some members of Benita's drama ministry had also come to see her off, and the atmosphere in the house was joyful.

Someone started a worship song, and before long everyone joined in until the house was filled with

singing as voices rose together in worship. Benita lifted her hands and worshipped God as she remembered where she had come from, including the battles, the betrayal, the spiritual attacks, and the days when she had almost given up. She remembered the moments when the future had looked uncertain, yet God had brought her through every one of them. Then she opened her eyes and looked around the room at the people who had become part of the new chapter of her life and smiled.

After the worship, Benjamin led them in prayer for protection, wisdom, favour, and strength, and he prayed that wherever Benita was posted, she would become a light and that God would use her to touch lives. When the prayer ended, everyone said, “Amen.”

Benjamin looked at Benita.

“My sister, this is another phase of your life.”

Benita nodded.

“Yes.”

“Do not see this journey as merely going somewhere to serve the nation. See it as an opportunity to

represent Christ.”

Benita listened carefully.

“Wherever you are posted, stand out for God. Do not allow the environment to change you. Instead, allow God to use you to influence the environment.”

Everyone became quiet.

Benjamin continued.

“There are people you will meet there who may never enter a church until they meet you. There are people who may never hear the gospel from a preacher until they hear it from you. There are young people who may need encouragement. There are people who may be discouraged, confused, or spiritually lost.”

He paused.

“Be the light in the darkness.”

Benita nodded.

Benjamin raised his Bible.

LUKE 19:13 · MARK 16:17-18

“Occupy till I come... I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

“Jesus said, Occupy till I come. You are going there to occupy for the Lord. You have been given authority. Jesus said, I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

“Amen,” everyone responded.

“So wherever you step, remember that you carry the presence of God. Do not be afraid of the powers of darkness. Trample upon them. Stand for righteousness. Stand for truth.”

He looked at her.

“God will help you.”

“Amen.”

“I say, God will help you!”

“Amen!”

“Everybody say, Amen!”

“Amen!”

The room erupted with laughter and joy, and after the prayer, food was served while people ate, talked, and laughed until the atmosphere gradually became

relaxed. Benita and Benjamin sat together, talking and laughing about something that nobody else could hear, and Clara watched them for a moment before suddenly shaking her head.

“Chai!”

Everyone looked at her.

“What is it?” Cynthia asked.

Clara pointed at Benjamin.

“Husband material!”

The entire room burst into laughter, and Benjamin laughed while Benita immediately looked embarrassed.

“Clara!”

“What?” Clara asked innocently.

She pointed at Benjamin again.

“Look at him. Fine young pastor. Husband material.”

Everyone laughed again, and Clara turned towards Benita.

“You people should marry now oh. Do and marry!”

The laughter became louder, and Mrs. Evelyn shook her head and smiled.

“We are waiting for your wedding invitation.”

“Mummy!”

Benita covered her face.

“There is nothing like that.”

Mrs. Evelyn laughed.

“Nothing like that? Am I a child? I can see what is happening. You two are a perfect match.”

Benjamin laughed.

Jonathan immediately joined the conversation.

“Yes o! When the wedding comes, I will be Benjamin's best man.”

Cynthia raised her hand.

“And I will be Benita's chief bridesmaid!”

Everybody laughed again, and Benita shook her head.

“You people should leave me alone.”

The laughter continued, but beneath the laughter,

something else was happening. Clara was watching Benjamin with her eyes remaining on him longer than they should have, and there was something in her expression that Benita did not notice.

After some time, people began preparing to leave, and Benita went into her room to bring out her travel bag while Clara remained behind. She moved closer to Benjamin and held his hand.

Clara lowered her voice. “Ben Ben... I know you would like to marry Benita.” Benjamin frowned. “Stop.” “I’m serious. I can see it in your eyes.”

“Clara, will you stop that?”

She smiled.

“Stop what? Calm down, man of God. Don't you have feelings?”

Benjamin smiled and shook his head, but Clara continued holding his hand.

“You know Benita is leaving for NYSC. She will be away for quite some time.”

Benjamin looked at her.

“Okay.”

“I'm just telling you that I am here for you.”

Benjamin raised his eyebrows.

“Here for me?”

“Yes. I can help you with certain things in the church.”

Benjamin laughed.

“What kind of help?”

Clara smiled.

“I can be mommy GO.”

Benjamin laughed again because he thought she was joking, but Clara was serious.

She continued.

“You will see. I can help you organise things in the church while Benita is away.”

Benjamin looked at her.

“What is all this?”

He said it quietly, almost to himself.

Clara smiled.

“You will understand later.”

At that moment, Benita walked out of her room and stopped when she saw Clara holding Benjamin's hand. For a few seconds, nobody moved, and then Benjamin immediately removed his hand while Clara also released him.

The silence became uncomfortable as Clara began scratching her head as though she had suddenly forgotten what she had been doing. Benita looked at both of them.

“I hope nothing is going on between the two of you.”

Benjamin immediately responded.

“Ah! No, now. What are you saying?”

Benita looked at him.

“I asked a simple question.”

“Nothing is happening. Please remove that thought from your mind.”

Clara quickly joined in.

“Benita, please, how long have you been standing there?”

Benita did not answer but looked at Clara for a few seconds before picking up her bags. Benjamin quickly moved towards her.

“Let me help you.”

He took one of the bags from her, and they began walking towards the door while Clara followed them. Benita was quiet, but inside her heart, a troubling thought kept returning because she wondered whether Clara might try to take Benjamin from her while she was away.

She glanced briefly at Clara, but meanwhile, Clara was thinking about something completely different. She wondered why Benita was behaving as though Benjamin already belonged to her, and she questioned whether Benjamin had proposed to her or asked her to marry him. She thought that if Benita was truly serious about him, they should already be married, but she pushed the thoughts aside and continued walking.

Then Benita turned towards her.

“Clara.”

“Yes?”

“I am handing the drama ministry over to you while I am away.”

Clara's face immediately brightened.

“Really?”

“Yes. Take good care of it until I return.”

“I will.”

“Make sure the team remains united. Continue the work. Don't allow disagreements to destroy what God has started.”

Clara nodded.

“I understand.”

Benita smiled and then placed her hand on Clara's shoulder and prayed briefly for her.

“Father, help Clara to be faithful with what You have committed into her hands. Give her wisdom, humility, and the grace to lead well. Let the ministry continue to grow while I am away, and let everything we do bring glory to Your name. In Jesus' name.”

“Amen,” Clara replied.

Mrs. Evelyn came out of the house because she had

been watching from a distance and she understood what was happening. She looked at Clara, then at Benjamin, and shook her head.

“Kai! All these girls.”

She smiled to herself.

“They like snatching what is not theirs.”

Then she raised her voice.

“Benita! Come and enter the car. I will drop you at the park.”

Everyone began moving towards the car as Benjamin helped Benita with her luggage while Jonathan and Cynthia said their final goodbyes and Clara stood nearby. Benita looked at Benjamin one more time because there was something she wanted to say, but she could not find the words.

Benjamin smiled.

“Go and serve God.”

Benita smiled back.

“I will.”

They entered the car and Mrs. Evelyn started the

engine. As the car moved away from the house, Benita looked through the window while Benjamin remained standing outside waving, and she waved back, but neither of them knew what the next few months would bring.

“Neither of them knew what the next few months would bring.”

BENJAMIN'S NEW BEGINNING

Benjamin's life had also entered a new season because the seed Benita had once sown into his life had become part of a larger testimony. The young man who had previously helped Benita had continued to support her ministry after telling her that God had laid it on his heart to become a blessing to her work, and then other people began to support her as well.

Men and women and different people who had heard about the ministry and believed in what God was doing through her began to contribute. Mrs. Evelyn also became a consistent supporter. She began to see what Benita was seeing and began to understand that the ministry was not merely a personal ambition but a divine assignment.

Benita had given towards Benjamin's ministry, and Benjamin used the money wisely to rent a place and start his church. What had once been a small gathering gradually became a growing congregation, and Benjamin was now functioning fully as a pastor.

He was still young, but he had become more mature spiritually as he preached, prayed, counselled people, visited the sick, and encouraged people. Whenever he remembered how everything had started, he thanked God because he knew that the seed Benita had sown had produced more than money could explain and had opened a door.

LOST IN THE FOREST

Didi had been in the forest for days and had completely lost her sense of direction. On the first day, she believed she would eventually find her way out, but by the second day, fear had begun to consume her, and by the third day, she was exhausted.

She had scratches all over her body, her clothes were dirty and torn, and her feet were sore from walking over stones, roots, and rough ground. She had tried several paths, but each one seemed to take her deeper into the forest, and sometimes she thought she heard

voices.

She would stop and listen, but there would be nothing, and at other times she heard the movement of leaves and became convinced that the gang members had found her. Fear would take control of her, and she would begin running again, barely sleeping because she was afraid, hungry, and thirsty.

One evening, Didi sat beneath a large tree and looked up through the branches where the sky was barely visible through the thick leaves. She was alone in a forest with nowhere to go and no one to turn to, so she lowered her head and continued crying.

The forest remained silent, but somewhere beyond the trees, something moved and Didi suddenly lifted her head to listen carefully. There it was again, a sound of someone coming, and her heart began to beat faster as she quickly stood up.

She did not know who was approaching, whether it could be the gang, someone who had come looking for her, or even the beginning of her escape. She looked around desperately as the sound of approaching footsteps grew louder, then the movement stopped and

Didi remained completely still.

She waited and waited while the forest was silent again, and then she heard the sound once more, this time closer. Didi's heart pounded as she stared into the darkness between the trees because someone was there.

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END OF EPISODE ONE

WATCH OUT FOR THE NEXT EPISODE

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