

Gray Cascade

*All Roads Lead
Home*

Darlene Bieber Elsbree

GRAY CASCADE

All Roads Lead Home

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Although familiar names have been used, none of this story is true except scripture.

Every attempt has been made to properly source all quotes.

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Also By

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My Life Story God's Way

Gray Cascade Series in order:

Gray Cascade

Gray Cascade - The Gift of Life

Gray Cascade - All Roads Lead Home

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Gray Family Tree

HUSBAND

Paternal Great Grandfather:

Peter Gray I

WIFE

Paternal Great Grandmother:

Lydia (Grace) Gray

HUSBAND

Paternal Grandfather:

Peter Gray II

WIFE

Paternal Grandmother:

Mazie (Meredith) Gray

Gray Family Tree

HUSBAND

Father:

Peter Gray III

WIFE

Mother:

Katherine (Richards) Gray

GRAY FAMILY CHILDREN:

Peter Gray IV

May Elizabeth (Gray) Broderick

Husband: Chad Broderick

Broderick Children:

Adelynn Marie Broderick

Chadwick Omar Broderick, Jr.

Christina Mary (Gray) Douglas

Husband: Clint Douglas

Douglas Children:

Willow Marie Douglas

August Lydia Gray

Kane Michael Gray

Adam Thomas Gray

Fannie Meredith Gray

Hazel Gray

Matthew Gray

Pearl Esther Gray

Richards Family Tree

HUSBAND

Father: William Richards

WIFE

Mother: Betty Sue (Harding) Richards

Children:

Dennis Richards

WIFE: Carol (Barns) Richards

Children: Dennis Richards Jr.

Rose-Marie (Richards) Kennedy

HUSBAND: Tommy Kennedy

Children: Dennis James Kennedy

Larkin Richards

WIFE: Sara (Stevens) Richards

Children: Kyle Larkin Stevens

Katherine (Richards) Gray

CHAPTER ONE

List of Reasons

Psalms 121:1-3

1 I lift my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; NIV.

I WAS LYING IN BED awake just thinking about my wedding day, the day before. I looked over to see my husband sleeping so soundly and peacefully. I didn't want to

wake him, so I decided to get up and make him (what some would call) a lumberjack breakfast. Our home was filled with the aroma of bacon, sausage, home fries and onions, eggs, toast, coffee, and orange juice.

It wasn't too long after I began making breakfast that Clint came walking into the kitchen with this big smile on his face. He came up to me and put his arms around me. He looked into my eyes, gave me a kiss, and said he loved me.

"Good morning Mrs. Douglas."

"Good morning Mr. Douglas. You were sleeping so peacefully. I couldn't bear the thought of waking you. I hope you are hungry. I made you a breakfast fit for a king."

"I'm starving. It smells so good."

I handed him a cup of coffee and told him I had a table set up in the sunroom in front of the house. The sun was rising, and I didn't want us to miss that. I handed him the newspaper.

As Clint started walking toward the sunroom with his coffee and newspaper, he turned and looked back at me and said, "I can get used to this, Mrs. Douglas."

I just said, "I love you, too. Breakfast is almost finished. I will meet you in the sunroom in just a few."

One of our wedding gifts was a breakfast roll cart. I loaded it with our breakfast, coffee, and juice, then wheeled out onto the sunroom. The sunshine was so magical.

"Christina, breakfast is so yummy."

“Thank you, Hon. I wish we could stay here all day... but church is in a few hours.”

“We will have many more mornings like this.”

Clint and I enjoyed our first breakfast as man and wife for nearly an hour. He insisted I get ready for church while he took care of the breakfast dishes. He wouldn't take no for an answer.

“Clint, are you sure? I can help.”

“No, Hon, really... you go on ahead and get ready. I got this.”

I walked up to Clint, gave him a kiss of gratitude, and said, “I can get used to this,” and smiled.

Clint and I decided to attend worship service at his church near the Marina. He

wanted to show me off to his church family. Some members of his congregation were invited to our wedding; therefore, had already met me.

When we arrived at church, Clint grabbed a bulletin. We sat near his family toward the front. Heather (Clint's sister) sat next to us. Many people came up to Clint and me, introducing themselves to me. Everyone was so inviting and so polite. I felt very welcomed. Clint was soaking it all in. I caught a glimpse of him while conversing with one of the members there. Pride was written all over my husband's face. "I just love that man," I said to myself.

Once we sat down, worship began. I remember the voices being so powerful and

so moving. There were more members at Clint's congregation than at the church my family and I attended. The singing was incredible at my church as well, just at a lesser volume. There are no musical instruments at our church (Clint's or mine). Our voices are our instruments.

I noticed Heather just gazing off. I asked her if she was all right. She said that she was just thinking about the next day. Heather's ex-boyfriend had been harassing her and threatening her. On my wedding day, she confided in me what was going on. I encouraged her to file a restraining order against him and that I would be happy to go with her for moral support. She agreed.

One of the men at church read the

announcements and congratulated Clint and me on our marriage. The entire congregation began clapping. I felt slightly embarrassed, but then Clint grabbed hold of my hand, and I immediately relaxed.

Clint and I had to finish packing for our Hawaii Honeymoon. So, we decided to grab lunch and take it back to the house. I knew that my time with Heather (the next day) would take a while, so I needed to focus on packing and making sure Clint and I had everything we needed for our trip. We were leaving early Tuesday morning.

Monday came. Heather knocked on the door at eight o'clock in the morning sharp. I knew then that she meant business in taking

action against her ex-boyfriend. I was glad to see that.

“Good morning, Heather. Come on in. How are you feeling this morning?”

“Hey, Christina, thank you. I am doing okay. I must admit, however... I am a little nervous about filing a restraining order against him.”

“I understand. But if you don’t, he will be getting away with this unacceptable behavior. He should be held accountable. His behavior is NOT the way a man should treat a lady.”

“I know. You’re right. I have no choice if I want him to leave me alone.”

“You have been dealing with his threats for too long now. Nip it in the bud. Filing a

report against him tells him you refuse to accept his threats. It's telling him that you mean business and are one NOT to mess with."

"Heather, Christina is right. You have to let him know that this behavior is not the way to treat you or anyone else, for that matter," Clint said.

I told Heather to wait for me in the sunroom because I needed to grab my purse in the bedroom.

"I will join you in a minute, Heather. I need to tell Christina something," Clint said.

"Ya know, Christina, you have a kind, caring heart. Thank you so much for all you are doing for my sister. I was getting concerned about the path Heather was

taking. I see a positive change in her ever since you came into our lives.”

“Thank you, Clint. I am happy to help. She is going to be all right. Try not to worry. Go sit with her for a little bit, and I will be right down.”

When Heather and I arrived at the Courthouse, she began to get nervous. She was having second thoughts.

“Oh, Christina, I don’t know if I can go through with this. He’s only beaten me a few times, and I haven’t seen him parked outside my workplace in a couple of days. Maybe he’s backing off now.”

“Heather, are you telling me he has beat you more than once?!”

“Well... yes, but he was drunk and didn’t mean to hurt me. He promised that he would never do it again. He was so genuine, and I really believed him.”

“Heather, I cannot tell you what to do. All I can say is that guys like him need a wake-up call. I know this is not easy for you to have to go through. If you can find the strength from inside and do this, you very well could be saving someone’s life... You could be saving your own life. When you think about it, maybe you could be saving HIS life indirectly. Right now, he is just so lost and clearly has no clue how to work out his issues properly. And maybe that is why he lashes out at others.

“Filing this restraining order will teach

him that he is not above the law. He cannot treat women the way he has treated you. I will be right here with you. Did you bring with you your list of reasons why you want to file this report?"

"Yes, I have it in my purse."

"Would you mind taking it out of your purse, and you and I can read through it together right now?"

"Sure. I don't mind us doing that."

Her hands trembled as she took her list of reasons out of her purse. My heart was breaking for her. Her ex-boyfriend had really done a number on her. I know she will surpass this! She wants better for herself.

She shows me her list. I asked her to read each one out loud.

“1. He verbally abuses me; he tells me I’m not pretty enough. He tells me that I need to lose weight.

“2. He becomes violent toward me when I say no to drugs and alcohol.

“3. He spat in my face during a heated argument.”

I am sitting in the driver’s seat of my car, listening to her read aloud the reasons why she wants to file a restraining order. I am about to burst with a vengeance. She continues...

“4. He left a red mark on my face.

“5. He punched me in the face, giving me a black eye. He punched me in the back. He threw me across the room, holding me down, and threatened me with a knife.

“6. He sits in his parked car, where I work, waiting for me to get out of work and begins harassing me with threats.”

Heather begins to cry aloud. She hears herself reading aloud her list of reasons. She was physically there with me... but her mind was not.

“Heather, I had no idea how bad this was. It bothers me that you didn’t lead onto anyone. Heather, this guy is really dangerous. Heather?”

It was like she was in a trance or something.

“I know, Christina. I know what I have to do. How can anyone treat another human being that way?”

She then took out photos only she had

seen. I was completely in shock. Just in case she decided to press charges, she would need to show proof of her bruised body. So, she had taken pictures of herself using a Polaroid camera.

After all the paperwork was filled out and completed, the judge granted Heather an emergency order, which became effective immediately. The Judge informed her the order needed to be with her at all times and that her ex-boyfriend would be given a summons. The hearing was scheduled two weeks later. He advised her to get a lawyer to represent her at the hearing.

Everything was so overwhelming for her that she just began to cry in fear. I told her that my brother Peter was a family lawyer

and would be happy to represent her; and for her not to worry. That lifted her worries.

As soon as we got back into the car, I phoned my brother Peter and asked if he had time to see Heather and me. Luckily, his afternoon client had to reschedule.

Once we got there, Peter could see how upset Heather was. He looked at her, then at me with concern.

“Peter, Heather’s ex-boyfriend, has been harassing her because she broke up with him and won’t have anything more to do with him. He had been very abusive toward her. We just left the courthouse. She filed a restraining order against him and was hoping that you would represent her.

“Clint and I are scheduled to leave on our

Honeymoon tomorrow morning. I need to know that you will take care of her while we are away.”

Heather began explaining everything to Peter, showing him her reasons for filing a restraining order against her ex-boyfriend. She showed him her photos with the many bruises left on her body.

“Heather, I would be happy to represent you. I know how difficult this can be. Just know that you are doing the right thing. People like him need to understand that abuse is not the way to solve anything. I will be with you every step of the way. Is there anyone else that can come with you to the hearing?”

“My sister, Hope. I am sure she will be

able to come with me. Thank you, Peter, for all your help. I really appreciate it. I'll just be glad when I can put all of this behind me. My family is not aware of what I've been going through. But I guess they are about to find out now. This is so embarrassing. I never saw myself as that kind of person...."

"What kind of person is that?" I asked.

"The kind of person who is victimized," Heather replied.

"Heather, you didn't ask to be victimized, punched, slapped, or spat upon," I said.

"I know. It's just so sad how anyone can fall into such a trap."

Peter said, "Consider yourself lucky, Heather. You do not have any children with this guy. You were strong enough to escape.

There are many people that remain in their abusive situation because they feel as though there is no way out. Some women feel it's better to take the abuse for the sake of the children. You are doing the right thing. I will contact you in a few days. You will need to come in, and we will then discuss the Hearing and what to expect once we are there."

"Thanks again, Peter. I will let my sister know what's going on so she can plan on being there with me."

CHAPTER TWO

Getting Involved

Matthew 5:16

16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. NIV

FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE morning came fast. Clint and I loaded the car with our suitcases the night before to save us from having to rush around in the morning. We were so excited. It was going to be a long flight into Maui, approximately thirteen hours, with a layover in Chicago. Clint

brought with him a copy of my manuscript to read. I thought I would also do one last read-through of my manuscript before sending it off to the publisher. I had everything I needed to mail it from Hawaii.

I made sure to bring snacks, magazines that included puzzles, and water. Clint, of course, had a carry-on suitcase with his goodies. We were set. The plane we were on was so big. They had television screens throughout the cabin for those who wanted to watch whatever show was featured. I rented Clint and me headsets for when we wanted to watch a show.

As I read through my manuscript, I was reminded of the hardships my great-grandparents had to endure. I thought

about the life they led back then and compared it to the life I have been blessed with... Every hardship endured back then prepared me for the life that I am now living. I am so grateful to Great Grandpa Gray and Great Grandma Lydia.

Clint appeared to be moved by what he was reading in my manuscript.

“Christina, I had no idea your great-grandparents endured such hard times. Your great-grandpa died at such a young age. I could not imagine being a coal miner and ingesting so much coal dust.”

“That was one reason why Grandpa decided not to work in the mines and become a dairy farmer. He and Grandma Lydia hated seeing him work so hard.”

I was happy when we arrived at our layover in Chicago. I have never flown before. I felt the need to stand up and walk around a bit. Clint and I decided to grab a coffee and a snack while waiting for our connecting flight to Hawaii.

Clint was listening to music on his device and continued reading my manuscript. I was just people-watching. Chicago O'Hare International Airport was huge. I had noticed a couple sitting not too far away from Clint and me. They must have been close in age in comparison to Clint and me. The young lady's phone rang. She answered it. I noticed her husband giving her an angry look. She then immediately hung the phone up. I do not usually make it a habit to stare

at people, but this man was starting to make a spectacle of himself, and I could tell that that woman was beginning to get nervous or upset.

I began to think of Heather and the abuse she had endured. That woman in the airport was exhibiting the same demeanor as Heather. I saw the man grab hold of her arm, take her phone away, and whisper something into her ear. She yanked away from him and went into the lady's room. I watched him watch her all the way. He had such an angry look to him.

I told Clint I needed to run into the lady's room and that I would be right back. When I got in there. I saw no one. But then, I heard her crying in one of the stalls. She

immediately stopped crying once she heard someone else entering the powder room. I just pretended I knew nothing, washing my face and hands, waiting for her to come out.

She finally exited the stall, appearing that everything was all right. She never gave me eye contact. I noticed bruises on her arm and, what looked like, a burn mark on her neck. Me being me, I simply said to her, “You know, you don’t have to live this way.”

“Excuse me,” she said.

“Forgive me for intruding. I couldn’t help but notice your husband’s demeanor with you out there. Please forgive me for saying this... but it’s not too late for you to escape this situation.”

“I’m sorry, but who are you, and you have

no idea what you are saying?"

"My name is Christina. I went with my sister-in-law just yesterday for moral support while she completed filing a restraining order against her ex-boyfriend because of the abuse and severe threats given to her. I know the signs. There is help out there... all you have to do is ask for it."

"I'm sorry, but you have no idea what you are saying. I appreciate your concern... it's not what you think."

She left the lady's room and went back to where she and her husband were sitting. Her outward behavior was so apparent. There was no doubt in my mind that something was just not right about that couple.

I decided to give Heather a call to see how she was feeling. She told me that Peter called earlier that day to set up a convenient time to meet with him. She and Hope were scheduled to meet with Peter in a few days to discuss their plan of attack at the hearing. Peter said that her ex-boyfriend had been served his summons.

When Heather got out of work that night, there was a note on the windshield of her car stating that she would regret filing a restraining order against him.

“Don’t let that note tear you down. He’s just trying to intimidate you. Make sure you give that note to Peter. It needs to be added to your other reasons for doing this.”

"I know, Christina. I will try not to let this wear me down. Now, I do not want you and Clint to give this another thought. I can't wait to hear all about your Honeymoon."

Our flight to Hawaii was being announced. As Clint and I walked toward the gate, that same woman I chatted with in the lady's room gave me eye contact that screamed, "HELP ME!" They were walking toward the gate behind us. I Tried not to be too conspicuous, watching her husband latch onto her as if she were his prisoner.

I told Clint I would meet him on the plane and that I had forgotten my phone charger where we were sitting and ran back to get it. I really didn't forget anything. I needed to

voice my concerns to the airline attendants once I knew everyone was just about aboard the plane. Also, there was no time to lose. The woman saw me run back to my seat and tried not to be too conspicuous. When I reached the location where Clint and I were sitting, I noticed a folded-up piece of paper on the floor near where she and her husband were sitting. I picked up the piece of paper, then glanced up at her. Her eyes were glued to mine as she was entering the passenger boarding bridge.

Before I, too, entered the jetway, I had an opportunity to speak with the airline attendants. I gave them the note she purposely dropped on the floor. I explained to them what I observed and the look of fear

the woman gave me. I suggested they investigate the situation and the man before departing.

The note said, "Please help me. I am being held against my will. This man is not my husband. He has a gun. He will kill anyone who gets in his way."

I was not allowed to get on the plane. The pilots were notified of what was happening, and they notified the air marshal on board. Security swarmed the area like wildfire.

I started to panic because Clint was on that plane. Before I knew it, the man and woman were being escorted off the plane. The man was in handcuffs, and the woman was not. She looked at me, and I read her lips, saying, "Thank you."

The authorities did ask me if those they had in custody were the same people I was talking about. I said, “Yes.”

I could not believe what had just happened. The airline thanked me for my bravery in getting involved. They allowed me to board the plane. Clint and I were in first class, so I saw him as soon as I entered the cabin. Everyone just began clapping. Apparently, the pilot explained what was going on, saying that a brave young woman prevented a violent act of crime. Clint just hugged me and said, “I love you, Christina.”

“I love you too, Clint.”

As soon as things calmed down and we departed Chicago, I told Clint everything I observed. His words to me were, “I am so

proud of you and so proud to be your husband.”

The flight attendant brought Clint and me a glass of champagne. Clint and I clanged our glasses and said, “Happy Honeymoon.