



Book One
in the
Sisters Redeemed Series

Jerusha Agen

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Chapter One

“... in Christianity God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance...”

– C. S. Lewis

Nye Sanders pressed her lips into a grim line and glanced in the rearview mirror. The white snow that bordered the freeway gleamed back at her. There had been a time when the beauty of the Pennsylvania winter would have filled her with wonder. But this morning, her mood was as frigid as the outdoor temperature, and she put on sunglasses to block the snow-covered scene.

Annoyed with time lost on the icy residential streets, she pressed the accelerator harder. At least the six-lane freeway had been more thoroughly salted after last night’s freezing rain. Nye glared at the clock. She refused to be late to negotiations for—

Nye gasped as her tires hit black ice on a curve and started to skid. She slammed on the brakes. The car slid from side to side. Spun out.

She lost control.

Time slowed as the car swung into a 180-degree turn. Gravitational force pulled her toward the door, then away. Her fingers squeezed the wheel, nails bit into her hand.

White. Everything was white.

The force that spun the car sucked the breath out of her lungs. She was a toy. Something awful was playing with her.

Is this what he had felt? She wished she could see him. She tried.

“Dante!” She called his name as the car slammed into the guardrail. She closed her eyes against the impact. A painful crunch.

Force yanked her body again as the car ricocheted into another spin.

It stopped.

Nye slowly opened her eyes and half expected to see shattered glass scattered across her lap. She stared at the intact windshield. The car rested alongside the road, facing the direction she had been traveling.

Air filled her lungs in a sudden, deep breath, as if her body finally determined it would survive. She loosened her death-grip on the wheel, letting the sound of her breathing soothe her tattered nerves. Her hand shook as she removed her sunglasses and began a mental inventory of her condition. A bruise would likely develop from the seatbelt, and her neck was sore, but she didn't feel the degree of pain that would signal a serious injury.

Now for the real damage. Nye grabbed her white scarf from the passenger seat and wrapped it around her neck. She opened the door and stood against the icy wind that slapped her face. Her knees wobbled, almost collapsing under her. She braced her hand against the car as a lightheaded sensation washed over her and clouded her vision. She leaned against the door and closed her eyes.

“Are you okay?”

Nye started and whirled to meet the source of the deep voice.

A tall stranger watched her across the roof of her car. “Sorry. I was behind you when you spun out. Are you hurt?”

“Uh...” Nye’s mind seemed to work in slow-motion as she processed what he said. “No, I’m fine.”

He smiled. “Good.” He glanced down, then back at her. “I see your car wasn’t so fortunate.”

She stared at him, unable to concentrate on anything other than his smile, which was nothing short of gorgeous. It went well with his broad shoulders and unusual height. If he were standing closer, even Nye at five feet nine would have to tilt her head to see his face. She suddenly realized she was taking inventory and wanted to shake her head in disgust. Maybe she should add a head injury to the list.

His comment finally registered, and she walked around the front of the car, relieved her legs were steady. “Is it bad?”

“Could be worse.”

Nye frowned as she looked at the side that had hit the guard rail. A large dent caved in the back door and garish scratches slashed the black paint. Terrific.

“Thank the Lord you didn’t get hurt anyway.”

Nye turned to counter the religious statement, but the words died in her throat when her gaze collided with his eyes— as deep and rich as a melted pool of chocolate.

“Are you stuck?”

“What?” Nye tried to match the question to her train of thought.

“Your car. Is it in the ditch at all?”

“Oh.” A flush of heat filled her cheeks. “I don’t think so.” She seized the excuse to hide her embarrassment and looked at the car.

He was already heading for the other side of the vehicle, assessing the car’s position. “Looks like you’re mostly on the shoulder. Back tire’s in the snow a bit, but you should get out okay.”

Nye sighed. At least she wouldn’t have to spend hours trying to extract the car from a snow drift.

He came back and stopped close to her. “I thought for sure you’d end up in the ditch or worse when you spun out like that.” He watched a car drive slowly past, its occupants staring at the roadside scene. “That’s a nasty curve in this weather.”

“Tell me about it.”

He turned his dark gaze on her. “It’s a miracle you weren’t

hurt. Do you want me to call the police or the hospital or anyone?" He reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a cell phone. "You should see a doctor, just to make sure—"

"No, please. That's really not necessary." A twinge of annoyance ran through her at his assertiveness. But it was impossible to stay irritated when he flashed that grin.

"Sorry. Didn't mean to tell you what to do."

Taken aback by how quickly he interpreted her reaction, Nye paused. Maybe she was being unfair. The man was only trying to help. She mustered half a smile. "It's nice of you to be concerned, but I'm fine. And if I need help, I have my own cell." She reached into her pocket for the phone and winced at the pain that flared in her palm when she grasped the cold plastic.

"Are you okay? Did you hurt your hand?"

Nye slowly removed it from her pocket. "I don't know, I—"

Before she knew what he was doing, her hand was cradled in the warmth of his. "You are hurt." He examined the wounds that were beginning to smart as the effects of the adrenaline faded.

Her fingernails had punctured the skin of her palms, and a small amount of blood seeped out the gashes.

"That's pretty bad. You should have a doctor take a look."

Nye was far more concerned with the way her breathing sped up at his touch than she was worried about some minor

cuts. She pulled away. “I’m fine.” She glanced at his serious face. There was no call for her to be rude. “Thank you for your concern.”

He nodded, his brow furrowed.

The only reason she needed to see a doctor was to figure out why she was having such a strong reaction to a perfect stranger. She hadn’t even looked twice at any man since Dante. With the thought, a familiar coldness returned, and it wasn’t from the wintry gusts. An icy ache gripped Nye’s heart. She wouldn’t have to worry about being distracted by the man in front of her anymore.



Cullen Chandler did his best to distance himself from the stranded woman. She’d placed distance between them—both mentally and physically. Her reserved but friendly demeanor suddenly chilled. For a moment, some emotion he couldn’t read flickered in her eyes. Then a cool detached expression slid into place. Confused, but also curious, he tried to think of a way to prolong their conversation. If he read her correctly, she was working on the opposite problem.

Loose strands of blonde hair whipped against her smooth cheek. She pushed them back, her gaze taking in the few cars that slowly passed. “I suppose we should get out of here before another car skids.” She turned those enormous blue eyes on him, and he completely forgot what she said. He was in big trouble.

Her eyes widened a fraction, and she cleared her throat.

The sound snapped him out of his trance. Feeling as though he had just been hypnotized, he scrambled for something to keep her there.

“We should probably call the police and have them document the accident.” Not bad. If he didn’t get hold of himself, he’d be asking for her phone number next. He couldn’t believe he was having such a schoolboy reaction to a woman he’d just met.

She glanced at the dent. “I don’t think it’s going to be expensive enough to warrant that. Besides,” she pulled back the sleeve of her coat to look at her watch, “I have a meeting to get to.” She started to walk around her car then paused to look back. “Thanks for stopping.”

“No problem. That is quite a dent. You might need insurance coverage. Are you sure you don’t want to call the police? I’d be happy to wait with you ’til they get here.” He cringed inwardly, hoping he didn’t sound as desperate as he felt.

From the driver’s side of the car, she nodded. “I really have to go, but thanks. Hope you didn’t freeze on my account.”

He laughed and waved. “No, not at all.”

She got into her car, and he turned to walk to his. Freeze? He had forgotten it was even cold outside. One look from those stunning blue eyes had warmed him thoroughly. Something more than beauty was responsible for burning the image of her

eyes into his mind. They were filled with a haunted, mournful expression that dominated her beautiful features and made him hurt for her, a stranger.

He got into his SUV and sat behind the wheel. His phone vibrated in his pocket. He could finally feel the numbness of his cold fingers as he reached for the sleek electronic and looked at the screen: another message from the office—already the fifth that morning.

Cullen glanced up. The woman's car gradually disappeared into the distance. A sinking feeling pressed against his chest. He should have been impulsive enough to ask for her number. She was gone, and he didn't even know her name.

About the Author

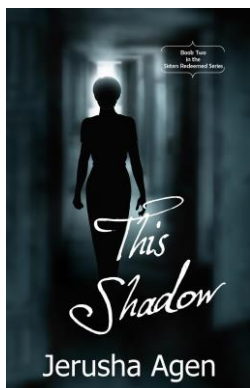
Jerusha Agen is a lifelong lover of story--a passion that has led her to a B.A. in English and a highly varied career. A member of American Christian Fiction Writers, Jerusha is the author of the *Sisters Redeemed Series*, which includes the titles *This Dance*, *This Shadow*, and *This Redeemer*. She also co-authored *The Heart Seekers Series* novella collection and the e-book *A Ruby Christmas* from Write Integrity Press.



Jerusha relishes snowy Midwest winters spent with her two large, furry dogs and two small, furry cats.

Visit Jerusha's website at www.JerushaAgen.com. Follow Jerusha on Twitter @SDGwords, Facebook (Jerusha Agen – SDG Words), and Pinterest.

Other Books by Jerusha Agen



This Shadow

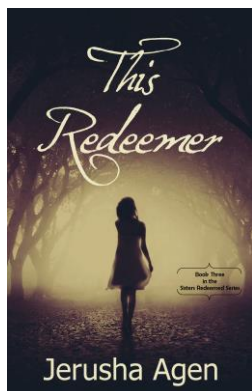
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Sisters Redeemed Series**

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She's famous for her upbeat outlook.
Then the world goes black.

Oriana Sanders is always happy. And why shouldn't she be? She enjoys a close relationship with God and a purpose-filled career teaching troubled kids. She even has the potential for romance in her sister's friend, Nicanor, whose dark good looks and brooding manner make him an intriguing project for Oriana.

Oriana's attempts to reach Nicanor with the joy of the Lord are brought to a halt when a confrontation with her student's drug-dealing brother ends in tragedy. Facing darkness she has never known, can Oriana learn to forgive the unforgivable and find her way through the shadows to the light?



This Redeemer

**Book Three in the
Sisters Redeemed Series**

**Available now on Amazon, Kindle,
Barnes & Noble, and by special order
from most local booksellers.**

Not all prisons have bars.

Charlotte Davis should know—she's

lived in one for years. She can handle getting slapped around by her boyfriend, Tommy, and even being forced to do things she would never choose, but when Tommy turns on her 10-year-old daughter, Charlotte must try to escape. With nowhere else to turn, Charlotte runs to the stranger her dying mother believed would help her.

Looking only for shelter or cash, Charlotte finds a family she longs to call her own and a gentle man she could learn to love. But if Tommy catches up with Charlotte, these strangers could learn the truth about her. Will they send her back to Tommy? Or can a Father's love set her free?

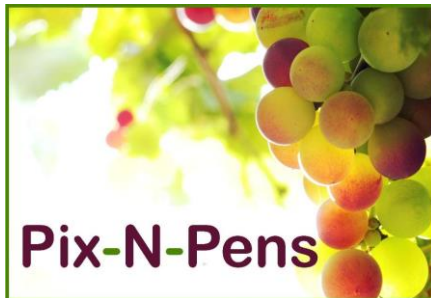
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