

What readers have said about *The Adventurous Years*

I think you have done an amazing job at processing this over the years, to be able to say that you are finally at peace. All credit to you, it really is inspiring. That lack of bitterness, your ability to forgive and love your family, how you have built a life around the things you love to do, such as music, and found a new community in your church, are all a testament to your strength and resilience - and your sense of humour! I applaud you, Kate! — KMcC

I have so enjoyed reading this. Entertaining. Thought provoking. Inspiring. A tearjerker. It certainly makes one laugh – and cry. Encourages one to pray. To think about God. To think about priorities, family, relationships. An honest exposure of feelings, vulnerability and standing firm, overcoming difficulties, hurts and disappointments by trusting in the sovereignty and goodness of God and WHO HE IS. — JS

I couldn't stop reading. Parts made me smile; parts made me tear up.... wow. So much honesty and vulnerability. — CC

It's been so inspiring to read what Kate has overcome, not only in her younger years, but how this resilience helped her thrive in her more adventurous years. Her ongoing struggles are told with humility, strength, wisdom and always with hope and love. — OW

EXCLUSIVE LEGACY

The Adventurous Years

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2008-2025

KATE SCARLETT

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To Graeme – a gift from God Himself. You supported me throughout my never-ending health issues, the family dramas, and the baggage of the past that came with me – a remarkable feat for someone with no siblings or children, or knowledge of the Exclusive Brethren Church. Thank you for walking the last part of the journey with me. Much love.

Contents

	The Story So Far...	xi
ONE	I Acquire A Flatmate, Take My First Overseas Trip, And Jo Gets Closure	1
TWO	I Become A Scarlet(t) Woman	11
THREE	Earthquakes, Renovations, And Other Challenges	19
FOUR	Woofers And A Christmas To Remember	24
FIVE	Graeme Has A Heart Attack And I Leave My Job	28
SIX	A Business Venture And More Health Woes	35
SEVEN	Tripping Around	38
EIGHT	Musical Interlude — Choral High Notes	57
NINE	A Memorable Milestone, A Heavenly Homecoming & Some Musical Mayhem	62
TEN	A Devastating Diagnosis	70
ELEVEN	A Spectre From The Past... And The Best Laid Plans	78
TWELVE	Adapting To The New Normal	84
THIRTEEN	Disquieting Echoes Of The Past	94
FOURTEEN	Putting The Past To Rest	107
FIFTEEN	Pickleball And Parkinson's Are Not Compatible	121
SIXTEEN	Diary Of A Reluctant Hospital Patient	129
SEVENTEEN	Moving Forward In The Aftermath	153
	Epilogue	168

APPENDIX B	Tribute To My Dad On His death	181
APPENDIX C	Salvation, Gospel, etc	184
	Notes	189

The Story So Far...

In the second instalment of my trilogical memoir, I face the enormous challenge of raising five children alone, without family support.

Nurtured by a small church that took my family under its wing, I found the real God of the Bible. My newfound faith provided a much-needed anchor as I grappled with the shocking discovery that my daughter had been abused. I had to deal with custody issues, ongoing interference from the Exclusive Brethren, and testified in a high-profile court case.

I also discovered previously unknown relatives, gained a Business Diploma, entered the workforce as a middle-aged grandmother, reconnected with old school friends, began making peace with my past, all while learning to navigate life as a single mother. I also sat my Performance Diploma, became a professional accompanist, restaurant pianist, and funeral organist. No mean feat for a single mother with five growing children.

I left the reader dangling at the end of my second book, when I introduced you to my new male work colleague...

ONE

I Acquire A Flatmate, Take My First Overseas Trip, And Jo Gets Closure

My new colleague Graeme was an unusual man, although he had a quick wit. I quickly discovered that he didn't tolerate lengthy explanations though. He'd cut me off mid-sentence, saying, 'I don't need the full explanation.' It irked me and I'd sit at my desk and seethe. Ironically, he would give me an 'audit report' type of explanation himself, and I'd find my eyes glazing over. I remember thinking that I wouldn't like to work for him!

At the time he moved into my office, I was having some health issues, although they were more 'mishap' related rather than ill-health. Jo's third child (a boy) had been born five weeks previously and I had gone down to help. While there, I very stupidly agreed to help my son-in-law move some hunks of concrete from around the back of the house and badly wrenched my back. I then compounded the issue one day at the supermarket, just a few days before Graeme's arrival. I walked through the unidirectional barrier arms without collecting the trolley first, and when I realised, I attempted to reverse direction, completely forgetting those things only went one way. The sudden impact of the pole sent waves of pain through my leg and jarred my back even further. Within a day or two, I had an enormous and spectacular

bruise on my thigh. Graeme noticed I was limping and enquired about the problem, so I explained – and he was suitably sympathetic. Unfortunately, it spread to my sciatic nerve. My right leg became numb and tingly, and I was in significant pain. Three sleepless nights spent writhing and pacing followed. The irony is that I'd been enjoying my newfound freedom in having the house to myself, and suddenly realised it wasn't all it was cracked up to be. There are downsides to being on your own. On the third day, I held out until 6am and then rang my colleague, Julie, who came and collected me and took me to her chiropractor. He did some serious thumping and twisting, and I was almost screaming in agony, but it freed me up enough to go to work. After a second session, I was absolutely shattered. Various colleagues carted me about as I couldn't drive. I also had to pull out of a Christmas choir performance as I knew I wouldn't be able to stand for any length of time.

At the same time, things went pear-shaped at work, and I was caught in the middle. Two of my colleagues – Julie being one – had decided to go out on their own, and had privately asked me if I would agree to go and work for them. They had intended to start after the New Year. Unfortunately, the tech person discovered an email relating to the new enterprise and my two colleagues were confronted and summarily dismissed. They had just one day to clear their desks and leave. I wasn't well enough to go to work that day, which was a blessing in disguise as I was spared the ensuing unpleasant ruckus. It took quite a bit of courage on my part to hand in my notice a month later – just three days before Christmas – thereby admitting that I had known about the plan too. I felt a little guilty as they'd been very good to me, and I'd only been there a little over two years.

Back to Graeme. During our conversations, he revealed he was looking for a new place to live, as the elderly lady he was boarding with would lose her accommodation support unless he moved out after a specific period. He'd come back to his hometown of Nelson after the break-up of his marriage a few years previously. Graeme was also concerned about the state of my health and offered to mow my lawns and do some jobs for me. He took me out to lunch, and we discussed all the pros and cons. I had been wondering if I needed a male flatmate to do all the tasks that Ben used to do, as I was unable

to keep up with the section, particularly after my mishaps. Graeme said he didn't want a typical flatting situation with younger people, so it sounded ideal. I understood he was housetrained and after my first assessment of his unique weirdness, he didn't seem too bad.

He moved in on January 8th, and it was a huge adjustment. I'd never been in a flatting situation before (it wasn't allowed in the EB church) and having a strange male in the house put me to the test. As two single middle-aged adults, and both set in our ways, it was somewhat challenging for a while. He was very neat and orderly, so I had no complaints there, but I had a routine and a certain way of doing things, and he frequently trod on my toes. I was acutely embarrassed when he took it upon himself to take down my 'smalls' that had been drying on the overhead line in the lounge, folding them and putting them on the end of my bed. That was way too much, and not part of his job description! He couldn't understand why I wasn't very thrilled about it. I wasn't used to having a non-family person in my space, and there were times when I almost regretted the decision, despite knowing that with my current state of incapacitation I needed the live-in help. So, I didn't have much choice but to let him step up and take over the running of the house, the meal cooking, grocery shopping, errands, firewood chopping, fire lighting, and lawn mowing. His main Love Language appeared to be Acts of Service, and he seemed to enjoy mucking in, which made me feel less guilty. I had to reluctantly acknowledge that without his presence, I wouldn't have survived and that it was a big blessing. I think the Lord knew that I needed him, and we gradually settled into a sort of rhythm. I was also thankful there were two bathrooms because it took me so long to do anything that one was frequently in use for long periods. Getting dressed was a major challenge.

The financial aspect was beneficial too. Living on my own had become a struggle to make ends meet, so the extra money from his board took some of the pressure off.

Graeme also went next door and politely introduced himself to my cantankerous neighbour Harry,¹ and interestingly, Harry didn't utter a single swear word during the exchange. Graeme was a gentleman, very polite and well-mannered, and people seemed to instinctively be respectful in his

presence. In fact, his speech was so proper that people sometimes assumed he'd been privately educated.

At the beginning of February that year, on my 49th birthday, I started my new employment out in Richmond. It was another adjustment, but my new bosses were very understanding and made allowances for my (hopefully) temporary health challenges.

Graeme had an Anglican background and, after his return to Nelson, had begun attending a Bible study connected with All Saints Church in town, and which was held at the home of the elderly lady, Maggie, with whom he'd first boarded. He told me he'd been made to go to Sunday school as a child but resented the fact that his mother stayed at home in bed. Children always see through this hypocrisy! He'd been part of the youth group as a teen but stopped going to church when he moved to Christchurch to attend university, and this trend continued in the subsequent moves around the country and during his first marriage. I was curious about where he stood on the issue of salvation, so one night I asked him a question about heaven and whether he thought he was going there or not. He responded that it wasn't up to him to make that decision. That answer was quite telling. Choice, not chance, determines our eternal destiny. He was a good person, yes, but without a grasp of what true salvation was about. Heaven isn't for good people – it's for *saved* people. He did eventually decide to follow Jesus some months later, although he never mentioned it to me. But later I overheard him talking to someone about it and it was the first I knew of it. When I asked him why he'd never said anything, he said he didn't think it was that important. Surely when you first get saved, you want people to know and celebrate with you! Anyway, it seems he was reading some book in bed one night, and a particular passage resonated with him, which motivated him to make the decision. He said he couldn't remember any specifics other than it was a Thursday night, because a phrase from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* said the world was destroyed on a Thursday! As I said earlier – weird.

As for me, I had recently started attending Hope Community Church (HCC), which was a little way out of town. After RSC closed, I drifted for a while, trying out several different churches over the next year or so, but it