

ROOTS  
REAWAKENED



# ROOTS REAWAKENED

ROOTS RUN DEEP SERIES BOOK 1

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ROOTS REAWAKENED

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To David,  
who held me when I questioned God's sovereignty.  
Thank you for making God's unconditional love  
and grace tangible to me every single day.

“For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will  
enlighten my darkness. For by thee I have run through a troop;  
and by my God have I leaped over a wall. As for God, his  
way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler  
to all those that trust in him.” Psalm 18:28–30 KJV



# ONE

*East Wharf, England*  
*April 1890*

**A**fter days of searching wretched British inlets up and down the coast, his quest was at an end. He had found him. The man who had stolen what should have been his. Jonathan Davidson. A low-class charlatan with just enough pluck to play the game.

Everything would have been settled today if Davidson hadn't gone and gotten himself hitched. Word had it on the docks the girl was quite a looker. The man smiled as he ran his hands down his velvet vest. Even though the soon-to-be widow wasn't part of his original plan, it sounded as though she would do nicely for a passing fancy. Yes, quite nicely indeed.



“Bout three months along, I'd wager,” the doctor said, helping Justine Davidson to a sitting position.

*This can't be happening.*

“No morning sickness,” the doctor was saying as he wiped his hands. “That's a good sign. Maybe you'll be one of the lucky ones that has it easy all the way through.”

As Justine walked on shaky legs to meet her friend who waited

outside the office, she thought about that word. Luck. It wasn't how she would describe her life, given all that had happened in the past year. Assuredly unpredictable. Impossibly unacceptable. Positively off-kilter. Nothing the way she had expected.

"Well?" Carrie Anne asked with raised eyebrows.

"You were right," Justine said flatly. "I can't believe it."

Carrie Anne beamed back, her freckled face in joyful contrast to Justine's wide-eyed expression.

"I suppose I shall have to tell Jonathan straightaway. He'll be home for an entire week this time. But I don't think he'll be as excited as you are, Carrie Anne. He'll be angry about the doctor's bills and the added expense of a child. You know he doesn't approve of my work at St. Alban's. He says I should be earning a wage, not giving my time away."

"If it's not too far for you to walk, why don't we find out together what he thinks." It was a statement, with a hint of a question from her thoughtful friend.

Justine gave a distracted laugh. "It's not too far. I can manage."

The shipping office had informed her yesterday that the *CCS Blackstock* was due to disembark this afternoon. Justine had planned on being the first face Jonathan saw. She had wanted her husband to know things could be different if they only spent more time together. He needed to know and she needed to reassure herself they could be a real couple. That was yesterday. Now she wanted to turn around and run all the way to Brookefairshire. Back home. To her papa's arms. Something warm and familiar. Something safe.

But that was an impossibility. Papa was gone. Her security lay in the hands of a husband who had only been home ten nights in their four-month marriage.

Carrie Anne hooked her arm through Justine's, propelling her down the walkway. "Don't worry. He's going to be thrilled. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. Maybe Jonathan will start to feel that way once he hears the news," her friend said hopefully.

Justine shrugged as she paused to look through the glass panes of a



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dry-goods store. Inside stood rows of fabric lined up against the wall like tall, willowy women sporting their best dresses. Justine imagined opening the door sometime this coming summer and purchasing muslin and cotton to begin her baby's layette.

"Mrs. Davidson!" Mr. Navin and a group of orphans she knew from St. Alban's were across the way.

Justine waved, a smile lighting her face for the first time that day. "Hallo, dear friends!" she said, holding out her hands to the children. They hugged her in return, looking up at her expectantly. It was their sweet little faces, always their faces, that grabbed her heart and tugged her in. "I don't have anything in my pockets." Justine made a great show of turning the pockets out of her dress and inspecting them thoroughly. This brought giggles behind small hands. "But I can stop by tomorrow and read you a new story."

The two women continued toward the wharf with goodbye waves, Justine's heart swelling as she thought of her own little one. Someone to keep her company during the long days of Jonathan's absence. Someone who would have a favorite bedtime story one day and want to be hugged goodnight.

She sobered, thinking of the loneliness she knew as a child. If Jonathan kept up his current pace, her baby would grow up as she did. Just one parent. Half of a whole.

The very tips of the smokestacks of Jonathan's ship were coming into view. She and Carrie Anne were making good time. Too good, in Justine's opinion. Within a few blocks, the village would meld into the busy docks of East Wharf. Soon, she would be face to face with her husband, not at all sure she was ready for the encounter.

*God, why would you allow this? I don't want to raise this child alone.*

Justine freed her arm from Carrie Anne's, one hand on her stomach, the other keeping her hat from blowing away in the salty breeze as they gazed at the *CCS Blackstock*. It was not as large as the cargo and passenger steamer that made its way with alarming speed across the Atlantic and back again. No, Jonathan's home-away-from-home looked more like a toy in the harbor next to the *Blue Flag Line*.

The *Blue Flag's* gangplank was pulled up, not yet ready to welcome its next passengers aboard. The *CCS Blackstock*, however, was releasing its crew like dozens of dusty children who had been let out for recess. Men were everywhere, shouting orders above the noise of ships clanging against the docks. Others were busily engaged in bringing down the cargo from their last stop or greeting loved ones on the pier. Justine searched the faces, looking for Jonathan, a man she barely knew. A man who would now be a father, whether he desired that title be bestowed upon him or not.

"Excuse me, ma'am," a sailor with a Scottish accent said as he wheeled by with a handcart stacked high with boxes. Justine felt that she and Carrie Anne were in the way as they watched the crew finish their work. "Let's go stand over there so we don't get plowed into." Justine motioned with her head to the side of a warehouse.

As a quarter hour passed, then another, Carrie Anne began to look doubtful. "He's not coming, is he?" Carrie Anne knew all too well Jonathan's propensity for staying away longer than his job necessitated.

The wharf was emptying rapidly as men made their way home after their long journey. Jonathan was not among them. Justine would keep her solitary status a bit longer, it seemed. "Let's go."

Turning at the end of the warehouse, Carrie Anne pulled Justine up short. "What in the world? Carrie Anne —"

But Justine was cut off by the look on her friend's face. Justine peeked around the side of the wall and saw an image that both instantly and irreversibly seared itself onto the soft flesh of her heart. A woman stood too close to Justine's husband, gazing up at him with kohl-darkened eyes.

"Here's something you'll definitely want to take a look at," the woman said.

Jonathan quickly folded whatever the woman had handed him and seemed to stuff it up his coat sleeve. "I knew you'd come through for me." Jonathan's smile was intimate as he ran a finger down her cheek. "I'll see you tonight, my beauty. Midnight."

"I'll be waiting."

Jonathan began to walk away, whistling a merry tune. Where would

he be at midnight? *Lying next to me.* Justine had half a mind to stalk after him and demand an answer. But her self-protective half didn't want one. Didn't want to be lied to and didn't want to know the truth.

"Oh, Justine." Carrie Anne laid her hand on Justine's arm. "Scriptures say a man who commits adultery destroys his own soul."

Justine didn't want pity in the form of Scripture. She didn't want an explanation from Jonathan. She didn't want this life she had stumbled into. She sank back against the warehouse, searching for a way to fix what seemed irrevocably broken.

Jonathan stopped his loping gate toward home when a blond man in a business suit placed his hand on Jonathan's arm. By the way their heads were bent, Justine could see the two were in deep discussion. She felt pulled by unseen hands, each claiming they knew the right way.

She could let betrayal force her to go home and hide out. Shelter herself from danger, from harm. She could let hope coerce her into pretending that nothing was wrong when her husband slipped away in the night. Or she could face this head-on. What would God want her to do? With sudden determination, Justine marched toward the two men. Her future with Jonathan was now or never.

Justine stopped short upon hearing the stranger's words.

"Mr. Davidson, I have come here with the express interest of giving you your portion of this little stratagem that's been cooked up. It seems the payout was bigger than either of us had anticipated. I will meet you right here at eight o'clock tomorrow morning with your money."

Jonathan's portion of what? They were barely making it month to month. Scrounging to make ends meet.

The gentleman with the wavy dark blond hair shook hands with Jonathan. "It's been good doing business with you. Allow me to purchase a cab for your trip home."

"That's not necessary—"

"Nonsense." Justine was close enough now to clearly hear the businessman's American accent. He motioned to a waiting hansom and within moments, Jonathan was headed northeast.

Justine spun on her heel and walked back to Carrie Anne, who had

wisely stayed back from the forthcoming fray. If Jonathan was going to deal with unscrupulous men and associate with women of the night, let him go home, thinking Justine was there to meet him. It would serve him right to walk into an empty flat.

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength,” Carrie Anne was saying as they slowly walked toward the village. Her recitation of Isaiah 40 swirled in Justine’s mind along with pictures of learning the verse at her father’s knee. His casket being lowered into the ground next to the church. Sacred vows said on her wedding day. The doctor’s face upon his announcement of a baby on the way.

“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their—”

A loud boom sounded ahead, shaking the air with its power. A horse screamed. From behind the buildings ahead, smoke wasted no time reaching its black fingers to the sky. Men shouted. People scattered. Justine exchanged a frightened, knowing look with Carrie Anne. Both women picked up their skirts and ran toward a scene Justine had a feeling would change her life forever.



Garrett Cole stood on the pier eyeing the *Blue Flag Line*. He was ready to get home, ready to cross the Atlantic. Maybe even for the last time. He had been feeling for some time that he needed to get out of the game. In a couple of days, he would let the huge steamship return him to Waterford Cove where he could pray through what God had planned for him next.

Garrett had the desire and the means to put down roots. Yet he had no one with whom to start the greenhouse of his life, not to mention there was never enough time to cultivate a meaningful relationship. He’d learned that anything of value was hard to grow when a man spent nine months out of the year traveling between wharfs and factories and hotel rooms.

An explosion that sounded like it belonged on a warfront erupted

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not far from the pier. Never one to back down from a challenge, Garrett wasted no time coming upon the source. But the pageant that played out before him was worse than he had anticipated. Someone had removed Jonathan Davidson from his cab and had placed his mangled body on the cobblestone. Lifeless.

A young woman knelt by Jonathan's side, his hand in her lap. The thin gold band on her fourth finger told him what he needed to know.

Studying her slumped shoulders, Garrett felt his heart go out to the young widow. She couldn't be more than nineteen or twenty years old; just a youngster in his opinion. But her beauty could not be ignored. Though she wore tattered clothing, her shiny chestnut curls held a hint of auburn, her slender form that of a virgin. What would become of her now that she had no husband? Surely, she had a father or some doting uncle who could take her in.

He could just leave her be and move on with his life. Go back home. Erase her anguish from his mind. But he knew his conscience wouldn't let him get away with that. If she truly was Jonathan's widow, then she deserved what was due her.

Stepping through the small crowd, Garrett made his way over to her. She turned wide blue eyes on him as he came to her side, his heart taking in her look of total confusion and shock.

A cab careened around the corner and two constables jumped out of their conveyance. Garrett backed away and stood with the onlookers while the accident was inspected, the unconscious cabbie taken by ambulance and Jonathan's body placed in an awaiting wagon. Some officers took testimonies while others began to investigate the shattered remains of the cab. A cab Garrett had hired for Jonathan Davidson.

Raking his hand through his hair, Garrett considered his options. This had not gone as expected. A final errand, a few days roaming the English countryside, then homeward to Virginia to begin laying a new foundation for his future. Now this. He couldn't leave without telling Mrs. Davidson of the situation. But would she care now that her husband lay dead?

As the bystanders slowly dispersed to their evening engagements, Garrett placed his hat on his head with conviction. This was not over yet.



Justine lay in the darkness on her lonely bed and listened to the sounds of life outside the window. Couples laughing, enjoying a walk in the evening's fresh spring air, men hurrying home to be with their families after a hard day's work. Justine laid a hand on her stomach, wondering what she would one day tell her child about his father.

This morning had been the funeral. The calendar showed it was her twenty-first birthday, a day for commemorating life. It had become a day of bereaving all that would never be. Even when she had laid her father to rest, she hadn't known such a feeling of solitude was possible. God was with her, yes, but still she felt deserted and alone.

Growing up without a mother, Justine had learned to be content with fewer interactions than other children. But her father had been a kind man, always there when she needed him. Then when Jonathan came along, she knew she would never feel isolated again.

Now it would just be her and the babe growing within her. How would she support the two of them? Perhaps the laundry where Carrie Anne worked would hire her. But who would take care of the baby while she was away for ten hours a day? An unbidden image sprang to mind. She shuddered at the thought of having to give the baby to the orphanage, even though she knew the children were well cared for. If it came to that, she could content herself by visiting the child every day and overseeing his care as much as possible.

Guilt washed over her as she pondered the unwelcome thoughts. She hadn't succeeded at being a good wife, one that a husband would want to come home to. Now it looked as if she was already failing motherhood. She sighed as she turned over on the lumpy mattress and faced the dark wall. Reason and sense told her she should be hungry, should eat for the baby's sake. Her stomach had another opinion.

Was Jonathan really gone? It seemed surreal. Had he been less than faithful to her? She would never know for sure. Who had wanted him dead? No enemies came to mind. Maybe if she could see and touch some of Jonathan's things, she could remember their few good days

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together. The thought beckoned her as she got up and lit the lantern.

Carrie Anne had located a box of Jonathan's and added to its contents the things that had been found on Jonathan's person. Justine brought it to the rickety table near the stove. Lifting the lid, she saw Jonathan's coat on top. It had been damaged by the explosion but remained intact. She withdrew it and inhaled the scent she had come to associate with her husband. A mix of sea and man. She reveled in holding something that had held her husband and kept him warm on the days he was out on the open water. But who else had held him? A painted lady on the docks? A woman in every port town? The thought made her put the coat back in the box.

She sank into a chair as the heartache she had tried to hold at bay while in the company of the small group of mourners came bubbling to the surface. Rocking back and forth, deep penetrating sobs wracked her body.

All of a sudden, a gush of something warm between her legs caused her to stop swaying. Justine gasped as she stood up, lifted her dress, and saw blood making a trail down her leg. With a cry of realization, she ran to the chamber pot.

In an anguished voice she ground out, "God, what are you doing?"

The box forgotten, Justine barely had the strength to stumble across the cold floor back to her bed and fall into an exhausted sleep.