

A vibrant tropical beach scene at sunset. The sky is filled with golden and blue clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. A long wooden pier extends into the turquoise ocean. Palm trees are visible on the left and right sides of the frame. The sand in the foreground is wet and reflects the sunset colors.

JARREN  
HALDRICK

A TIMELESS  
JOURNEY

BEGINNING

A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

# **A TIMELESS JOURNEY**

**BEGINNING**

**A story of friendship and love**

Written:

**Jarren Haldrick**



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## **Time for thanks**

Writing this first book has been a lonely journey at times, but I have never been entirely alone. Behind every chapter, page, paragraph, sentence, and, above all, every word, there has been love and support, without which this story would never have been written.

Thank you, my dear wife. Thank you for taking the time to listen, even though my thoughts have wandered in the mazes of other worlds. Thank you for your patience and understanding, and for giving space to my dreams. You have been a beacon that has lit the way when words have seemed to disappear. Thank you for every word of encouragement and moment when you have believed in me, even when I have not felt it in myself.

Thank you also to my family, who have been my roots and keep me attached to what is authentic and meaningful. At the same time, you are also my winds, who encourage me to reach for new horizons. This work is a reflection of the stories that I have and have experienced.

This work is not only mine, but it is also yours.

Happy reading to everyone.

"Each of us carries stories inside us that have not yet been written into a book; feel free to grab a pen and tell your story on paper."

**- Jarren Haldrick -**



# Prologue

**Queens, June 20. 2023**

**An unforgettable evening**

More than forty years have passed since the events, and we have decided to tell the whole story together from the perspective of both of our own experiences. This is the story of a time in our lives when we found ourselves amid the worst turmoil we had ever experienced. And this is a story of will, struggle, friendship, and love. We begin this story with a date in June 1980.

The most important person in this story is my beloved husband, John Brandon Jones. John was a 29-year-old mechanical and metal engineer at the time, and he had worked until the beginning of the events his entire career in the same local machine and metal company,

working on new inventions and development. John had studied engineering alongside his work and loved his job.

My name is Maya Julia Jones, and I was still Smith. By the time of the incident, John and I had been together for eleven years, but we had known each other for twenty-five years. At the time, I was a young and vigorous 29-year-old maiden nurse working in the children's ward of a local hospital.

My husband John's family included his father, Jack Jones, who was then a 55-year-old bank manager, and his beloved wife, Birgit Jones, who was also a 53-year-old bank clerk. Jack and Birgit eventually worked for the same bank until retirement. John has two older sisters, Meridith Jackson, a 32-year-old energetic woman who ran her restaurant, which she co-owned with her husband, 33-year-old U.S. Marine Corps Captain Adrian Jackson. And then there's Lily Jones, a 27-year-old determined office secretary and John's younger sister.

My family at the time consisted of my father, Liam Smith, a 54-year-old general practitioner at a private hospital in New York, and my mother, Lauren Smith, a 53-year-old nurse at a New York General Hospital. I only had an older sister, Sarah Smith, who was 30. She was an exception to the rest of our family because of her profession, as she collaborated with John's father in a bank as a bank clerk.

Our families had been neighbors for as long as I can remember, and we had always gotten along well. Family barbecues were held weekly,

and the birthdays of all children and parents were always celebrated together.

Now let us go back to 1980 and the warm summer day when it was the sixth of June, and it was a sunny and warm June Friday evening. The city was slowly falling asleep, and John and I sat on the porch of what was then our lovely wooden house, close together in our new swing, contemplating our future together. We thought deeply about what we had to give to the world and what the world had to offer us. John and I had known each other since childhood and had fallen in love with each other when we were teenagers, and our actual courtship began at a school graduation dance in 1969. At that time, we were living in a time when both of us had finished our studies, and we had also found jobs we liked. Our lives stabilized anyway, so we started dreaming of a more prominent family and a future. I have always loved children, and my biggest dream has been to start as big a family as possible. Our situation was good anyway because we had found our first dream house together in a quiet neighborhood in Queens, New York, and John's parents had made it possible for us to buy a home. And even though they were well-to-do professionals working in the financial sector, they had raised their children so that they understood very well that nothing in this life came for free. However, with their help, we received a mortgage loan to buy our house.

We discussed our future dreams and what kind of family we would like. John had an unobstructed vision of a family that included three

children in addition to us, the two oldest of whom would have been boys, and the youngest would have been a girl. She had also dreamed of a career ready for her children, as her sons would have become hockey players and her daughter a doctor. At the time, I laughed at John's dreams and plans, but deep down, I shared his vision of a loving and successful family. Our shared dreams and aspirations were a testament to our unity and connection.

John snorted and realized the impossibility of his dreams, but announced decisively that three children would still be a respectable number. She knew I would have liked to have had at least five children, but I would prefer much more. In our conversations, I had told John about my dream of having many children many times, and I always knew that deep down, he thought I would decide the number of children. However, John knew that I was reasonable and calculated, and I always carefully considered things from different perspectives before deciding. At the same time, John was a person who lived by emotion. He always lived like the last day, and decisions were made without thinking, but despite everything, John and I complemented each other for many reasons, and this was just one of them. I never dared to live with emotion, and I also thought about my decisions for a long time, but John always helped me with that, while I tried to calm John down, and I certainly managed many times to prevent John's headless ideas from coming true.

John and I sat close together and watched as the sun sank on the horizon, coloring the whole sky incredibly. The heat of the day gradually gave way to the coolness of the night, so I took a blanket beside me and placed it on John's and my shoulders. I will forever remember how John took me by the arm, squeezing me tightly close to him, and at the same time, I felt the immense love and warmth that has always existed between us. Our relationship was built on a foundation of deep love and understanding, and for a long time, we sat in complete silence, listening only to the muffling sounds of the city while night fell for our protection.

John corrected his posture, looked me deep in my eyes, and told me how much he loved me. He told me he was happy I was with him on this journey. My feelings were the same, and I could never have imagined anyone besides him. John suddenly got up and left me sitting on the swing alone; I initially ignored him because I was deep in my thoughts, thinking about the amount of happiness I felt. A single wall light on the terrace created truly romantic lighting around us, and at the same time, John descended quietly, kneeling in front of me. I woke up from my thoughts and sat in astonishment on the swing while John held me by my thigh and, with his other hand, dug out a small red heart-shaped velvet-covered box from his bag on the terrace. He removed one hand from my thigh to open the box and told me how important I was to her and how much she loved me. John said how much I meant to him and that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with me.

Finally, he asked if he would become his wife and, at the same time, his partner, to walk this path by his side until the end of our lives. A tear rolled down my cheek as I looked at John more lovingly than ever before, only to answer that I would be thrilled to marry him and be his companion on this path to the end of our lives.

I jumped on John's neck, and we fell on the wooden floor of the terrace, kissing each other passionately. He stayed under me and, at the same time, held on to me very tightly. I lifted my head slightly to see John's smiling face and looked him deep in the eyes, asking him why he always said he would never propose. John replied with a laugh, which was the only way to keep it a secret. I laughed, growled playfully, and continued kissing John passionately because I had been shocked. John put his hand on my back and moved my shirt up slightly so he could touch my bare back with his warm hands, and I will never forget that warm touch. I caressed her brown neck as John started to stand up, lifting me into his arms. We were undoubtedly happier than ever before, which is how it felt. John got up from the terrace floor, holding me tightly in his arms while we kissed passionately. When he was resurrected, John felt a lump in his chest for the first time, but he completely ignored it.

John carried me into our first home together and laid me out of his arms, for the collapse of his chest had felt for the second time, but a little worse than the earlier time. Still, John did not show me any sign of his pain, so I could not pay any attention to it. I held John's hand tightly,

and we started to climb the stairs. He followed me and caressed my back very gently with his warm hand.

When we got to the bedroom, John dumped me on our bed and pressed against me tightly. We kissed each other more passionately than ever, and he lifted my shirt while kissing my belly and moved awkwardly slowly upwards until he came back even more embarrassingly down. I took off his shirt at the same time and stroked my loved one's chest and back, almost scratching his skin. We surrendered entirely to each other, and simultaneously, the rest of the world disappeared around us. Our hours of enthusiastic lovemaking ended in a lapsed but happy feeling and infinite relaxation. John had felt a tightening and worsening throbbing in his chest again, and all he wanted to do was close his eyes and fall asleep. I then left the bed while stroking my loved one's side and went beside her to take our upstairs shower. I looked at John as I got out of bed; he was asleep by then.

While in the shower, I happily thought about Jon's proposal and how I had finally managed to find and get everything I had ever wanted. I knew then that the next step would be to start planning the wedding, and I am sure both families would be there to help. I thought John must want us to be ordained by Pastor Mike of the local church. At the time, I made a mental list of things I loved and should have taken care of first. Marriage licenses had to be obtained, contact with the pastor had to be made, and at the same time, a suitable and free time for the church would be found. I also knew we would have been married

in one of our parents' beautiful gardens if the Church had not been vacant. And it was also sure to me that the wedding would take place that summer. At the time, I laughed at my thoughts when I realized that we also needed to talk about things with my beloved future husband. But I knew John so well then that I knew he would not have wanted the wedding any later than he had to.

I closed the shower and grabbed a bushy, soft pink terry towel from the coat rack that John had given me earlier this Christmas. I dried myself thoroughly, wrapped my red hair in a towel, and left the bathroom. It was as if I were in a dream where everything was going well, and the happiness was endless, and nothing could break it.

While I had showered, John's condition had deteriorated, but he had not thought it was anything more serious. He had believed all along that it was all due to an extended period of secrecy and a release of tension. Her chest had tightened even harder, and she had curled up on her side to relieve herself. Eventually, his level of consciousness had dropped, and his strength had disappeared, and he was no longer able to ask me for help, even though he had tried to scream. It had been the moment when my loved one had fallen unconscious.

I went to the kitchen for a drink and, at the same time, turned off the tiny lights in the house that were still burning, then went up the stairs upstairs and walked straight to our bedroom door, where I stopped for a moment, and looked at my future husband lovingly. I felt inside

myself the greatest happiness I had ever felt in my life, and I also felt immense warmth and security. My sleep in the cloud castle continued, and I looked at my beloved, who was utterly silent and lying in a strange position on her side, but I did not think of it anymore at that moment. All I wanted to do was curl up behind John's back, hold on to my loved one, and wrap my arms around him.

As I pressed against John, I noticed he was in a cold sweat, and I whispered in his ear gently, trying to wake him up. He did not budge, and I was so frightened that I wanted to shake him awake gently. John did not seem to react to anything, so I got up with the alarm and started shaking harder, really scared. It felt awful when my loved one was still lying and still not reacting to anything. I panicked immensely and burst into inconsolable tears while rushing downstairs to call an ambulance. Instantly, I fell out of the cotton cloud castle and woke up in terror.

I felt as if the phone was ringing for several minutes until the emergency services answered, and I almost panicked and told them what had happened. The emergency response center operator who answered the call tried to calm me down and said to me that the ambulance was on its way, but resuscitation had to be continued at once. I hung up the phone, ran upstairs, and started acting on the instructions I was given.

I tried my best to follow the instructions, and I started pressing John's chest. It took a hopelessly long time for the ambulance to arrive, and it felt like I was in some fog. I had managed to pull John to the floor

and started pressing my chest, counting loudly. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, after which I pressed my lips tightly against John's and blew hard. I moved back to pushing and again counting loudly. One, two, three, four ... and I repeated the same pattern. I experienced a prolonged period of effort, and assistance was not forthcoming. Those minutes felt like the longest of my life, and I thought I must have opened the front door after the call to the emergency services, just as I had been instructed. I was unsure about it, but there was no way I could leave John, and I just had to hope I did. I remember the moment when, after what seemed like an eternity, the ambulance finally arrived, and I heard that long-awaited scream, shouting that the ambulance was there and asking where the patient was. I shouted in response that they would come upstairs quickly. And when I saw the paramedics at our bedroom door and heard them announce continuing CPR, that moment was exhaustive. The turmoil of my emotions in my mind was chaotic as I went from cloud castle to nightmare and floated into nothingness.

I felt like I had disappeared from reality and could no longer hear what was happening around me. Everything was like a slow-motion silent movie, interrupted by the occasionally sharply said "Disconnect" command. I do not know how long it lasted, but eventually, the paramedics picked John up at the bar and started carrying him towards the ambulance. I had asked them to go with me, and the driver told me to sit in the front seat of the ambulance. The driver, the paramedic, turned

on the alarm sirens and flashed the flashers, then accelerated the ambulance to high speed, and we moved amazingly fast towards the hospital. The paramedic behind him treated John and occasionally shouted information about the situation to the driver. Luckily, it was night, the city had fallen asleep, and there was no congestion, so that we could take the most direct route to the hospital's emergency room.

On duty, John was rushed to the examination room, escorted by the nurses and the doctor, and I watched it all from the sidelines, unable to do anything. I worked in the children's ward at the same hospital then and trusted that the doctors and nurses would care for John.

I was told to stay outside the room and wait, and a young nurse, unknown to me, escorted me to sit in the waiting room. The waiting room was empty and quiet at the time, and it made me very anxious. I did not want to sit there alone, and the worst thing about that moment was that I did not know what was going on in the examination room. Two nurses were seated behind the counter; otherwise, the hospital felt utterly deserted. At the time, I was still so shocked that I did not know if I could believe anything I saw or heard, and everything still felt like it was in slow motion. I just pressed my face into my hands and cried.

Deep down, I knew that the hospital's professional emergency department was treating John, and he would undoubtedly receive the best possible care. Again, I had found myself in a situation where I just had to wait and could do nothing about it. I remember how time passed

exceptionally slowly then, and I remember staring at the clock in the waiting room, the hands of which hardly moved at all.

The silence in my ears was agonizing, and I finally woke up to a hysterical woman whose daughter had been involved in a car accident. The woman was hysterical, even though the nurse assured her everything was fine. In my mind, I thanked that woman for bringing me back to reality. I got up and nervously started walking around the room.

Finally, I went to the nurses behind the counter to ask about John's situation. Another nurse replied in a friendly voice that John was now well cared for, apologizing for not having more details yet. The nurse asked if she could ask me for information, and I answered. I agreed and thought I would get something else to think about and do simultaneously. The nurse took the writing pad from the table, retrieved a form from the logger that needed to be filled in, and started asking for information. I tried to answer as accurately as possible because I knew it would help the hospital. Finally, when asked about my marital status, I went quiet and thought I would say John was my husband. Ultimately, I could not answer anything, and I burst into tears.

I explained to the nurse that John had proposed to me earlier, and the nurse listened to me calmly and congratulated me. At the same time, he entered the information on the form and did not ask any further questions. A doctor dressed in a white coat arrived in the waiting room, looking at the waiting room as if he were looking for something.



IT IS A STORY OF WILL, STRUGGLE, FRIENDSHIP,  
AND LOVE

The story begins in June 1980, when John and Maya plan their future together. The happy evening ends dramatically when John has a serious seizure. It is a story about how life can change direction quickly, and extreme happiness turns into fear and sadness. A battle begins that requires will and hope. John and Maya are assisted in the fight by their friends Oliver and Jennifer.

During his journey, John meets his childhood friend Oliver, and Maya is supported by their friend Jennifer. The foursome from their childhood are back together, fighting for their future.

This is my first book, and it is also the first part of a three-part series called Timeless Journey.

