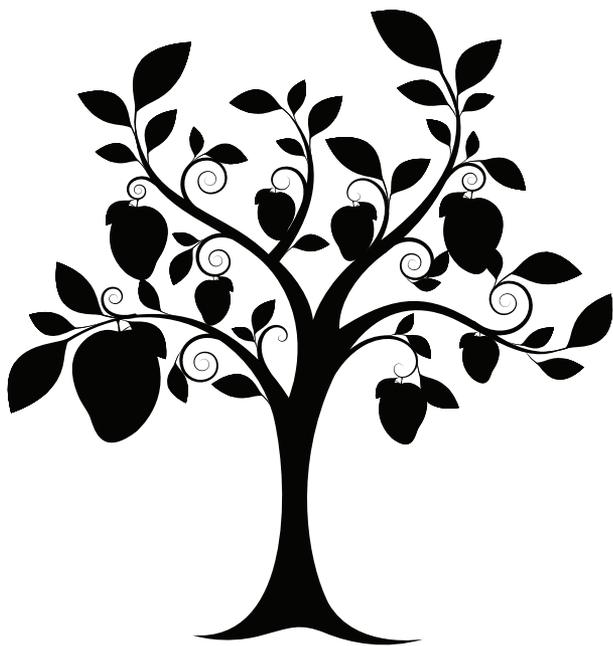


Maneeya



Kimberly Soesbee



MANEEYA

Copyright © 2015 Kimberly Soesbee

ISBN: 978-1-942508-27-4

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without prior written consent from the publisher.

Published by Touch Publishing
P.O. Box 180303
Arlington, Texas 76096 U.S.A.
www.TouchPublishingServices.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015918930

To contact the author visit:
www.KimberlySoesbee.com

Cover design by Touch Publishing
Photos taken by David Soesbee

Hand drawn interior illustrations designed
by Kacey Soesbee



for Kacey

Prologue

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake of 7.0 magnitude devastated the already poor country of Haiti. Following the initial quake, more than 50 aftershocks continued to wreak havoc, collapsing buildings and killing thousands. I recall sitting in my living room that day, crying for Haiti. My heart broke and then broke some more as stories and footage rolled across my television and were transmitted throughout the internet of a small country made even smaller through tragedy.

Within 10 hours of the earthquake, a friend and I began planning a benefit event called *Help for Haiti*. I was honored to emcee *Help for Haiti*, which raised \$32,000 toward relief efforts. I had never experienced the receipt of a seed of love planted in my heart for a place I'd never been and a people I did not know.

Haiti has been called the "land of a million orphans." In the months and now 5+ years following the quake, cholera and other diseases continue to steal precious lives from the Haitian landscape.

Just 18 months after the earthquake, I went to Haiti. In my mind, I was going there to help rebuild! They needed me! I could work hard and make Haiti a better place. What I found was a country of beautiful people who were content to live among the rubble and destruction because, really, they have no other choice.

I visited schools and orphanages. I watched teachers dish into small tin bowls the only meal most children would receive that day. I let children wear my sunglasses and see images of themselves on my digital camera. I showed pictures of my family and I let the small girls investigate my manicured nails. They posed for

selfies and let me help them make beaded bracelets; listening patiently while I shared the salvation story and told them, “Jezi remen ou.”

We worked on community land, clearing the grounds so a local Christian missions group could hold future church services there. We scrubbed toilets and pulled weeds. The men dug a well for clean water. My feet were filthy, my heart was full.

It was there that the idea for *Maneeya* was born. I had no idea (as most Westerners don’t) of what life in Haiti was truly like. I still can’t fully comprehend, but God gave me a peek behind the curtain. He gave me people who helped explain the challenges Haitians—and especially the orphans—face.

A few details and then we’ll begin: Haiti has two official languages: Haitian Creole and French. Haitian Creole (Kreyòl) is spoken by more than 90% of Haitian people. Kreyòl is a mash-up of 18th century French combined with influences courtesy of Spain and Portugal, with an extinct language called Taíno and a smattering of West African thrown in for good measure.

I love hearing Kreyòl spoken, and I pray that one day I can speak it with enough skill to carry on a moderate conversation. In my mind, the dialogue in *Maneeya* occurs in Kreyòl. As such, I have peppered the conversations with Kreyòl words to remind you, dear reader, of this fact.

You will come away from this story with a few Kreyòl words tucked in your language toolbox.

Jezi = Jesus

Jezi remen ou = Jesus loves you

Bondye = God
Pa enkyete = Do not worry
Pa pè = Do not be afraid
Bonjou / Alo = Greetings / Hello
Bonswa / Orevwa = Good evening / Goodbye
Blanc = slang term referring to white people
Gourdes = Haitian currency
Houngan / Mambo = Haitian Vodou priests/priestess
Hounfo = The region of a houngan or mambo's influence
Lwa = Spirits that interact with people on earth
Anvwa Mo = Ceremony to free a person from a Mo
(tormenting spirit)
Peristyle = The grounds where the ceremony happens
Wanga = a spell or curse drawn up by a houngan or mambo
Pronounce Maneeya: / *ma-nee-ya* /

As you scan this list, you no doubt will notice I have included words that refer to Haitian Vodou. Vodou (Voodoo) is the dominant religion of Haiti. In this story, you will read about some of the Vodou practices. This is not meant to scare you or glorify Vodou in any way, but to educate you on very real struggles the Haitian people face. My knowledge of Vodou is certainly not expert-status, but comes from what I experienced while in Haiti, from interviewing people who have seen Vodou ceremonies first-hand, and from the research I conducted. Some information comes directly from Vodou houngan (priest) reports. Those who practice Vodou do not think of it as mere superstitions, they are as serious about their beliefs as I am about my faith in Jesus. Most do not see spirit communication through Vodou as “devil worship”—they believe they are doing a good thing.

Bondye is the Kreyòl word for “God” and it means “Good God.” They believe they need the spirits to help them live a good, healthy life here on earth. They believe they will see Bondye for judgment once they die and He will decide their eternal fate. Spirits can help gain favor or plead their case with Bondye.

Evangelical Christians strive to make inroads with the Haitian people; yet Protestant Christian Haitians are definitely a minority (less than 17%). Poorer Haitians will welcome the evangelicals with open arms because of the medical help and practical nutritional needs evangelical missions groups meet for Haitians. The Haitian people are loving and appreciative. They likely will profess to give their faith to Jesus when it is offered. But they will often not stop their Vodou practices. They do not see a conflict between true Christianity and Vodou. This is a challenge for the evangelists sent to Haiti.

Speaking of evangelists...My husband, David, and I have a vision to open a school and orphanage in Haiti. We picture a place that is solid and safe, and where Haitians can thrive; not merely survive. If you wish to donate to this endeavor, our ministry website (WhatJesusDid.org) has all the details about how you can help.

The seed of love in my heart grows for the Haitian people, and I pray that through the story of Maneeya, God may plant the seed of love in your heart, too.

Jezi remen ou.

1



The small girl pulled against the grip that tightened around her arm. Hands she once trusted now dug into her flesh and worked quickly to maneuver the rope around her wrists and through the handle of the iron door. She kicked—but only once—and a light slap across the face discouraged further struggle.

It wasn't so much that she wanted to be free to get away from *him*, she was afraid to be left outside. The dogs were crazy. They were bolder at night—less afraid of people. And they were all hungry. Why couldn't he do this during daylight?

The knot was secure. The man leaned in, his face now close to hers. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "Here, you will have a chance. With me, there is no life."

He kissed the top of her head. "I will remove the tape. Do not yell until I am gone."

She couldn't even see his eyes. She closed hers. When she opened them again, he was not there. Across the path, a larger, darker figure leaned against a house. Her skin tingled as the shape moved. It drew closer and every inch of her body wanted to run, but the rope was firm and her legs were stiff.

As the shadow nearly enveloped her she found her breath and a dry scream, louder than any of the night dogs could howl, escaped from within.