



NOT THIS TIME

A Novel

VICKI
HINZE

Author of *Forget Me Not* and *Deadly Ties*

CROSSROADS CRISIS CENTER, BOOK THREE

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READERS GUIDE

1. Beth was betrayed by Max and sees herself as too ordinary for a man like Joe to be genuinely interested in her.¹ Have you experienced things that changed the way you see yourself? The way you see others?
2. Joe had a rough childhood that drove him to church so he could find someone to go home with to get a meal. While there, he found God.² How did you find God?
3. Most would consider Joe's youth, caring for his brothers, a horrific burden, and yet it prepared him for his future. He acquired needed skills and knowledge.³ Have you experienced a hard time or challenge that proved later to be beneficial to you?
4. Sara was deemed fragile, and she stayed with that path because it was comfortable and expected. Yet there came a time and a situation when

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1. To see what the Bible says about these things, you can begin by reading the following scriptures from the New International Version: "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1:4).
 2. "She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me'" (Genesis 16:13).
 3. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

she couldn't take the easy way anymore.⁴ Have you experienced that—where you wanted to change and knew you had to change, but were torn because you didn't want to leave what was comfortable or expected and step into the unknown? How did you cope? How did it work out?

5. NINA will do anything to anyone for money. What are your thoughts on that? Have you ever been tempted to bend your principles to get what you wanted?⁵
6. Beth feels torn about helping Sara when the beneficiary is a man she considers evil.⁶ Have you experienced torn loyalties? How did you work through them?
7. Darla has committed terrible acts, but through her own choices, she makes an effort to be a better person. And through grace she is redeemed.⁷ Do you believe that no one is beyond redemption? That everyone can be redeemed? Why or why not?

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4. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35–39).
 5. "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).
 6. "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:20).
 7. "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5).

8. Beth has always protected Sara. Now Sara and she are at deep odds, and Sara distances herself from Beth and won't explain why.⁸ Have you been in this position? Have you trusted the judgment of the one distancing and been bruised and hurt because of it? Did you accept the distance decision in the absence of a reason? How did you resolve it? Did it resolve?
9. At one point, Beth feels lost and afraid and forced to step into the lions' den.⁹ Have you ever felt that way? What gave you the strength to do what needed doing? Was it as bad as you expected? How did you cope?
10. Joe doesn't like to talk about his past. He's ashamed of it. After he does discuss it, he would naturally perceive slights that just aren't there—the result of his feelings about himself. The remnants of that shame he'd carried with him growing up.¹⁰ What remnants of your past are you carrying with you? Are they constructive or destructive? What must be reconciled to put them to rest in the past?
11. People who know Beth well regard her with suspicion when Robert disappears. When a similar situation arises with another, Beth refuses to suspect and considers that person innocent only to later discover

8. "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

10. "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

that person was guilty.¹¹ Have you been a victim of misplaced suspicion or misplaced your trust in another? How did it impact you and your other relationships?

12. One of God's promises is to turn what evil is intended to harm us into good.¹² Beth and Joe experience this in several ways. Have you had an experience where someone did something intending it be harmful to you, but it was turned and used for good?

11. "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

12. "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.' And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them" (Genesis 50:20–21).