**Outline**

***Introduction:***  This book will be about all of the details on how I survived a very traumatic up bringing. How I made it to 31 years of age when i barely made it past 15. From abandonment, domestic violence, sexual assault and so much more trauma to being a believer, a wife and a mother to three beautiful human beings. Im sharing my story unashamedly in hopes to strengthen comfort and encourage someone out there that might feel they are alone, confused, lost or even ashamed.

***First chapter:***

•                  Family history how it all began from my grate grandmother being left by a rock as a baby then adopted, to my uncles suicide from an overdose.

•                  My mother being abandoned to running away at a young age only to find herself in the same situation she ran away from.

•                  The day I was born and the generational curse carrying over to me.

•                  My father being a big time drug dealer and an immigrant from DR my mother his New York rican mistress along with many more in the US

•                  My only help my grandmother dying from ovarian cancer

***Second chapter:***

•                  Going back to living with my mother in her new relationship that was another type of abuse

•                  Not so nice step father and his kids

•                  Falling into deep depression having panic attacks manic episodes (such as very high highs and very low lows) Drugs and alcohol abuse, stripping, sleeping around.

•                  Being silenced

•                  My experience of being shipped back and forth from PuertoRico to New York. Going to three different elementary schools three different junior high schools and three different high schools. Due to instability and child neglect

•                  I Attempt to commit suicide then admitted to a mental institute and put on medications

***Third chapter:***

•                  A Caring loving social worker ask my mother permission to take me out to eat instead takes me to her church.

•                  This was all new for me but one undeniable feeling was that I felt something I never felt before it was like a whole new world for me.

•                  Outer body experience in the strip club never went back again

•                  A very close friend invites me to her church and explains the God thing to me a little deeper

•                  I say yes to Jesus and my whole life changed from there.

***Fourth chapter:***

•                  Learning this whole new world the cliche of saying yes to Jesus

•                   learning my true identity, emotional balance, forgiveness and helping the very ones that hurt me,  ministry for seven years

•                  Gods amazing grace ( being told by doctor I would never be able to conceive due to cyst in my ovaries) prophet prophesying a child and one year later after my wedding conceiving my first baby boy his name being given to husband in a dream

•                  Gods provision and protection over his plan over me and my family

•                  Closing the doors of the past (separating myself from people places and things intended to disrupt Gods plan in my life and walking through new ones )

•                  After years of being kept from seeing my biological father finding his wife and kids online finding out he’s in jail for attempted murder my journey on how I plan on going to minister to him

***Conclusion:***

When I look back I can’t believe that its me I’m talking about but im grateful because if it wasn’t for the bad how would I have ever known what good is or appreciate what is good. It made me stronger. Im glad I was able to make it out. Especially for the purpose of being able to bring others out as well then it makes it all worth it. Seeing my children having everything I didn’t makes it worth it. If it was to find salvation for my soul it was definitely worth it. It reminds me of the saying, those who have been forgiven more love more it comes from Luke 7: 36-50 or Psalm 119: 71 “ It is good for me that I was afflicted, so that I may learn your decrees. “ TLV

**My Introduction**

         I love to look up at the sky when I think of God it takes me away from the busyness here on earth. You ever look out a window and notice how busy the earth could be. Everyone working toward something like ants all working toward a goal or everyone in a race trying to get to the finish line. Everything is constantly moving time, people, seasons. Do you ever just take one minute to stop and look up at the sky where it's still. Quieting your mind of all thoughts you take a deep breath in, close your eyes as you slowly exhale in perfect peace. Despite whatever is out your window or around you, your mind and everything in you is fixed on one thing at that very moment in that one single minute you shut your self out and experience nothing but perfect peace. As soon as you open your eyes its back to this reality of what we call life on earth. Traffic lights from red to yellow than green and red again people moving cars honking people talking. All the noise comes rushing back in all at once. The sun goes up then down, the day begins then ends. For some people opening their eyes to their reality couldn't have come soon enough but what about the people who wish their reality was to stay with their eyes closed? Never to see, hear, feel or ever breath again because the thought of that reality seemed far better than the reality they lived in. How do you get a person in these shoes to come out of them if you’ve never walked a day in them. How do you go from being crushed beyond measure as an olive to being the finest olive oil. How do you go from experiencing the strongest unbearable heated pressure from the deepest depths within to the most beautiful diamond. From the most stomped, stepped on bruised grape to the best wine. The first thing that comes to my mind is an eagle. An eagle uses the pressure of a storm to rise higher than they normally fly to experience a soaring over the storm like never before using less effort than they normally would use. You see I was that person in the hospital after overdosing on every pill in my mothers medicine cabinet and had my brother not found me on my room floor foaming out of my mouth the doctors said five more minutes I would’ve been dead being rushed in an ambulance to have my stomach pumped and waking up the next day as soon as I opened my eyes I looked over to my mother and In such disappointment I said  dam im still alive. I was so upset that I did not achieve the reality of staying with my eyes closed but today I am that eagle who used my storm to soar higher.

                                               **First Chapter**

In 1929 Yabucoa Puerto Rico my great grandmother Was born. She was abandoned by her mother who felt she was to young and did not want children. I grew up with my great grandmother telling me her story about her mother leaving her as a baby swaddled up by a rock. One of her aunts Whom did not have children hearing of this picked her up and raised her as her own. Later she met my great grandfather who had Just left a previous relationship with two kids. He was from Guayama one hour away from her hometown. In 1954 they had their first child which was my grandmother Miriam and after that six more kids. Together They had three girls and four boys. After the first two they decided to move to Brooklyn New York for a change. My great grandmother was abused by my great grandfather for many years she was a great housewife and he was the provider. At 65 when he retired he decided to marry her only so that she can have money from his pension. After the first four children there was a night remembered by one of her children so vivid. On this specific night they were driving home after visiting one of my great grandfather’s family members home there was an argument in the car he threw my great grandmother out of the car in the dark the next day when she arrives to their one bedroom apartment he would not open the door for her. The children began to cry for her and he took a belt and began to whip them to stop crying. This abuse continued, the older he got the worst it had become. My great-grandmother was an amazing house wife that is all she knew so that is all she had given herself to and she did it with her whole heart. She would wake up Every morning before the sun would come up with her rosary in hand to recite the our father prayer then off to begin her house wife duties. All her meals prepped cooked from scratch the house spic and span clean. She would Iron all of my great grandfathers clothes and had them ready and prepared. His clean socks and shoes prepped by the bed and ready for him to wake up. His towel and under clothes set out for his bath in the bathroom toothpaste on the toothbrush everything perfect before he woke up. His coffee hot and newspaper opened on his favorite side and chair of the dining table. Unfortunately not even this stoped him from cheating on her as he picked up to leave back to Puerto Rico for another women. Upon my grandmother hearing he had another women in Puerto Rico she decides to pick up and run after him. The children who where all old enough at the time stayed in New York where they each started a family of there own.

 Miriam the oldest daughter meets her first love Luis whom was also from Puerto Rico but lived in New York and at seventeen she has my mother whom they decided to name after my grandmother her name is Miriam as well. Unfortunately my grandfather was also a womanizer  always sleeping around with multiple women constantly lying he picks up and leaves to Puerto Rico my grandmother runs away to Puerto Rico after him in hopes that he will change and has her second child with him a boy whom they named after my grandfather my uncle Luis. My grandfather has a child with another women and upon my grandmother finding out forgiving him taking him back over and over again she sees he would not change she goes back to New York. Trying to mend her broken heart she goes out into the city that never sleeps with her sister Mercedes where they meet two brothers. The one was the club owner, he was married and had a child but claimed to be seperated from his wife. He sweeps her off her feet and she ends up pregnant. He did not want her to keep the baby but she chose to have it even if she had to do it on her own and so that is exactly what happened. She still loved Luis and he was still pursuing her to come back to Puerto Rico and being that she already had two kids with him she falls back again into his arms  to try to make it work yet again this time with a third addition to the family her younger son only to face the fact she had already known from the beginning that it would not work. This leads to the back and forth series once again her leaving to New York this time leaving her kids behind in Puerto Rico to get on her feet to eventually bring them back to New York with her. She had a lot of support from her parents in fact my great-grandparents helped her a lot by watching over the kids many times while she tried to piece her life together. Although things weren’t perfect within the family they knew how to get together for an occasion one big beautiful family all seven kids and their children. Sadly one of the brothers was suffering with deep depression and drug abuse he was found dead by the women he was with at the time from a drug over dose leaving his children behind. This really hurt the family everyone loved him deeply he was always so uplifting to everyone and loving. Miriam and Mercedes where very close sisters so close that my grandmother named my mother her only daughter after them both Miriam Mercedes. Mercedes actually ended up staying with the brother of the club owner his name hector and together they had a daughter. Due to this connection eventually Miriam and Eddie got back together he met his son for the first time and had them move in with him. My mother being the oldest at this time had already began to live her life on her own.

My father a Dominican immigrant trying to make a living in New York. An older man who had multiple illegal business in corner stores. What we call bodegas. My mother said she was tired of how strict my great grandmother was with her she was only allowed to look out the window and not allowed out to play with other kids. She said she was never pushed to have an education or any future dreams like collage or anything she felt depressed and closed in. When she finally was able to go out she was vulnerable to whatever came her way. She told me a friend introduced her to my dad and later on found out that my dad had offered her friend money to hook them up and the friend excepted the exchange. Having feelings of abandonment by both of her parents she fell into the arms of an older man where she felt safe and thought was better than living with a strict grandparent. My father showered her with anything and everything she wanted. She was very young and beautiful.

Glimpse and pieces of memories that last for a minute but created a life time of pain. Busy streets sounds of endless chatter sirens subways and lots of traffic. Known to be an over populated place yet overly populated with endless opportunities. A place where many say they’ve found freedom while others desperately long for it. This was nothing knew to Miriam who was born and raised in the big apple known as New York City. She made her way through the crowed on the Brooklyn streets on her way to Brooklyn hospital after realizing her water just broke. With no one but herself and a child that had yet to see life she awaits. All alone in labor for four long painful days she awaits the birth of a child conceived out of wedlock, a bastard child conceived from a man who had a wife and kids of his own. A family that would soon find out an extended family member was born July 8 1990 in Brooklyn hospital.  He was a foreign man from the Dominican Republic island. An older man who happened to secretly pay a women in exchange for her to hook him up with her best friend. Mesmerized by her mature figure for her young age and her beautiful radiant face. He must of sensed her vulnerability her innocence or her desperation to leave from a very broken home. Miriam leaves her home and into the arms of Ramon in her eyes her savior. Anything was better than being with a very strict grandmother who would only let her look out the window while hearing all the sounds of children playing outside. Having feelings of abandonment by her mother. Her father a womanizer a master manipulator who after having multiple children never bothered fathering them let alone supporting them as if they didn’t even exist. Miriam the oldest of three her and her two younger brothers. Although Ramon was multiple years older than she, that of many flaws was the least on Miriams mind. Having a history of being a witness to women abuse rejection, neglect from a family of drug abuse depression suicide and alcoholism made Ramons defects pale in contrast.  It is said that when a women is raised fatherless they usually look for fatherly traits in a man which can allow a women to believe that possessiveness and control is a way of caring and that it's a normal way of showing love. Unfortunately this was Miriams situation. After providing Miriam with a home cars and many expensive gifts it wasn’t to long when Ramon began his possessive and controlling ways toward her. Was it guilt within him knowing that he had a family and wife awaiting him in another country believing that the only reason he had moved to the United States was to be able to provide a better way for his family who lived in poverty in the Dominican Republic. Was it his conscience eating him inside as he remembered the promises he made upon his departure as he left his family with hopes that he would be sending them money from his hard work and time spent in the U.S as that one day he would bring them over to enjoy all that he had accomplished.   It could have been the stress of the all the businesses he was running those legal and illegal or the hard drugs he was doing to keep himself going. Maybe the way he was raised. Whatever it was it surely wasn’t an excuse for every blow he gave Miriam when he felt things didn’t go his way. She held on despite every beating which in times practically almost left her dead. Some say she was blinded and addicted to the finer things in life he was providing as she always had a taste for expensive things. Full of fear of all that she had already witnessed she knew he would not be an easy person to walk away from, she was afraid for her life. She knew he was capable of anything being that she had already witnessed unspeakable things he had done to others for business matters. What was once a dream come true for her had know become a total nightmare. Dark circled eyes from sleepless nights Miriam would stay up crying and fearing for her life not knowing what to expect when Ramon walked through that door or if he would even come home at all. Days suffering from hunger because he had placed the door locks on the outside so that he was the only one with access in and out and she had no way out. She thought of plans on ways out such as running to a family members home but she feared they would end up dead because of her mistake because he had always threatened that if she said anything he would burn her familys homes down with them in it. Romance was no longer an intimate action but a force as of being raped. She tried her best to be on her best behavior to avoid being brutally beat most of the time that didn’t even matter. She was his prisoner and after a while it became normal for her. In her eyes this was his way of showing he cared about her. She looked at all that he provided for her and how she wouldn’t be able to do it on her own and was grateful for him. Her family took notice and tried to help her but she would just run right back to him so eventually they gave up on her. Finally the day had come when there would be another reality to her world. Ramons wife had come to the U.S. She had known of her and his children and that he was providing for them. There was a time we all went with him to Dominican Republic to meet his children but of course hiding and introduced as nothing but a friend because she was obviously nothing but a mistress. He had promised to one day tell his wife the truth and leave her but had never made that a reality. This day was different she had felt Ramon was hiding something by his strange behavior and after so many years she had began to gain those same characteristics of possessiveness and control he had imparted into her or maybe this was a learned behavior from her ancestors whom always ran after the man. She decided to pick up her brothers girlfriend at the time to go along with her and follow Ramon around . One car behind she slowly follows his car trying to figure out who it was sitting in the passengers side as she could only see the back of the head but as she got closer she noticed it was a woman. With the same possessive aggression she had received from him it aroused in her and with all her anger as she watched him park and come out of his his car with whom she had noticed was his wife beside him she parks right behind him and gets out of the car. Yelling and walking right up to his wife to hit her Ramon jumps in the middle to push Miriam off of his wife and does what he knows he can do and begins to hit Miriam in defense for his wife. Miriams brothers girlfriend who was with her at the time jumps in to defend her and now theres a scene. Before the cops are called Ramon and his wife drive off and Miriam and her friend go the opposite direction. You would’ve thought that this would be her last straw but unfortunately it was not. The abuse and possessiveness continued and became more and more over time with series of her running away or being in the hospital but still she always ran back. She had witnessed Ramons jealousy rampages time and time again one instance where he put his gun in her brothers mouth as he demanded for answers about speculations of Miriam cheating on him. He heard voices in his head or the witch doctor whom he regularly paid a visit to had told him these things. Miriam had been home the whole time she never understood these  voices in his head.It was as if he had a double personality one minute he was the sweetest thing and one second later would snap and loose control with a blank gaze in his eyes. Luis who was a little younger than Miriam was scared for his life and with sweat running down his face and tears in his eyes hoping that this would not be his last moment in life  he continuously answered  No! No! She’s all yours. With a sense of power and satisfaction Ramon releases him and before he lets him out of his presence he warns the both of them that if he ever suspected anything that is exactly how he would end Miriam and her familys life. In all this Miriam not only had her first child a little girl named Mariaelena but she also had a little boy named Anthony . My father had bought his wife and kids a house and had them well accommodated he had two familys he was supporting and two women he was giving himself to. I and my little brother where in the midst of all this abuse. In fact although I was just a little girl I still remember vividly a time my mother was hysterical on the ground knocked out unconscience and when she had woken she was so terrified that even the sight of me made her afraid and she dragged her self shivering across to the corner of the room floor to lay and cry. I remember the room being dark and only being able to see the little bit of light that was coming from the tv that was on. I was to little to understand what was happening I just have these memories being left alone in this dark room watching my mother in total despair. My mother told me a story that when she was pregnant with my brother, thrown on the floor being beat by my father he had thrown a mattress on top of her and began to jump on it with her and my brother underneath it. I have a glimpse of a scene that replayed in my head when I was younger of blood on a floor, we were in a party, there where people, my mother screaming, she was bleeding from her hand down her arm for years every time I saw a plastic party serving spoon and macaroni salad it was like a trigger and that memory would flash in my mind it would terrorize me. I also remember a time one of my mothers aunts had come to help us on a grand escape! I remember my mom tying a wire around the door knob of the room where my father had been sleeping in and while she was doing so trying our best to be as quiet as possible but fast as possible our aunt was taking our things out to the car as much as they can grab and then the final escape when we rushed to the car hoping and praying that my father wasn’t behind us. Finally my mother had decided she had enough and made the decision to move us to Puerto rico which is where our great grandparents had a house where we could stay clear of my father. Thankfully my great grandparents where willing to help us and my mothers mind was truly made up that she would never go back to my father again or so we thought. There was word that my father was looking for us and that he had people looking for us. He went to Eddies club demanding answers and threatened him so he gave us up but he didn’t know where in Puerto Rico we where. He also paid my aunt a visit and threatened to burn her building down as well. Family members where terrified of him because he had quite a track record they knew he was capable of doing it.

Being in Puerto Rico was truly an experience words cannot express. There where beautiful green mountains and pastures with animal going up and down the sound of the roosters crowing early in the morning. The smell of grandmothers fresh pot of coffee waking me up and the beautiful sun shining bright illuminating the whole house.  In the mountains of Puerto Rico my grandmothers home at the very top of a mountain in her back yard where we picked cilantro and pea beans together or when we would check on the chickens and see if they had any eggs laid for us to gather up. Iguanas up and down the walls. I still remember those hot mornings having to walk down a mountain with a steep path way of laid down rocks to school hoping a snake didn’t slither over our feet I still look back and can’t believe my very old aged great grandmother would take me up and down those flights every morning and then again after school I remember her motivating me to do good in school by buying me this little book of doll pictures that u could dress with stickers and if I behaved that day and Brought home a good report she would buy me a pack of stickers for the book on our journey back. At this point it was just my brother and I at our great grandparents my mother had returned back New York city she said she wanted to work save money to then move us back when she got on her feet. It didn’t make a difference in Puerto Rico she was always gone with her cousin to the clubs I guess trying to make up for lost time of all of her suffering days with my father. I learned alot from my great grandmother she was very strict she was what u would call the perfect image of an old school house wife. I learned how to scrub behind my ears and different parts of my body with a rag specifically because if not I wasn’t clean enough and would be sent to do it over again. How to clean my under wear by hand. How to wash dishes, how to clean rice and to always wear sandals around the house. As u can imagine the house was perfect at all times and clean. If me and my brother where to move an end table 1 inch from its place she would notice. We where to behave or just as her old school house teaching we would be discipline the old school way as well she would hit us with an iron wire a hanger a Puerto Rican sandal whatever was at hand to make sure she got her point across. My grate-grandfather had the same routine everyday and would sit on the same chair at the end of the dining table to watch tv with a beer can in one hand and a cigarette in another. Every evening he would lay down for a nap and after eating my grandmothers dinner he would yell to call the ambulance in Spanish because the food was so bad but this was his exaggerated expression that the food was actually really good his way of saying thank you to the women who slaved away everyday for him. My mother while in New York had ended up in the hospital I guess my father found out her where about had hid in her dark hall way as she opened the door to her New York apartment and made his way in to her new place beating her till she had to go to the hospital. She came back to Puerto Rico with a new plan to use some of the money she had saved up to build an extension home right next to my grandparents home. I still remember the cement on the floor and the non finished pink tiles they began on the walls. My great grandmother would wake up early before the day to do her Hail Marys and I could hear her everyday day as she turned on her candle to recite the our father. She never taught it to me or my brother or even talked about God. Besides being baptized when I was small I wasn’t raised in church or taught anything about it we didn’t even do our first communion so I can’t even say we were catholic. As a child I always dreamt of things and always felt presences even tho I didn’t know what it was for some reason I could never forget any of these things. One dream in particular that i had multiple times I was just a little girl and in my dream I was in a red room with my hands and feet tied to the poles of what I believe to be a canopy bed I was laid right in the center as my hands and feet where tied to the pole of each corner of the bed the poles where tall in height and the room light was dim an older man would come on top of me and have his way with me and then I would wake up. We had a cousin in Puerto Rico she was much older than me and my brother and she had a younger brother she was in charge of watching us when our grandparents where out in the market place. Well she would have my brother go in the closet with her and have him do sexual things to her everything but penetration. I would open the closet to interrupt and ask my brother to come out but she would slam the closet door on me her brother would then throw me on the bed to do the same things to me and I would push him off before anything went any further. Every evening when my grandfather would go for his nap he would offer me candy to come lay with him on the bed he always wanted me to lay in the spooning me position and hug me really close to him as he rubbed his hand on my non developed breast. My grandmother would always pass by the room and stare in with a face as if this wasn’t new to her but as the submissive she just walked away as if to not know anything. It wasn’t until he had took it to far with the cousin that was sexual abusing my brother and she had come out with it that my mother had asked me if anything like this had happened to me since I was also in the household. After I told her  that I did feel uncomfortable at times when I would have to lay with him She was very upset and in dis belief kept asking me if I were sure that this happened. I felt afraid of what might happen next my great grandparents where all me and my brother had helping us at the time and the pressure of not wanting to give my mother another thing to have to worry about I changed my answer to not feeling sure although deep down I clearly was and she was happier with that answer and backed off we never spoke about it again and life in grandparents house went on as usual except grandpa stop asking me he became distant due to my cousin exposing him. Grate Grandmother had put me in extra after school activities such as soccer and dance and I remember receiving metals for them all and also for being an honor roll student in fact I still have them till this day I remember dancing to one of my all time favorite artist at the time Selena I would dance in my room and practiced all the words to her songs my grandmother loved dressing me up and I remember all the teachers loved me and I had lots of friends. At this point Spanish had become my first language. Our relationship with our mother was like having an older sister me and my brother were like baggage to her and she couldn’t stand hugs or kisses from us she would say she didn’t like our breath on her and was bothered by even the touch of us on her skin.  Although our great grandmother had her military characteristics thankfully she stepped in so that we were able to have such memories in school. I did first and second grade in PuertoRico.

 We ended up moving back to New York that extension to my great grandparents was never built. Due to not knowing English very well I had to repeat the second grade again. When we moved back to new york we lived with my mothers mother my grandmother. She lived her life for a man who fully controlled her and although he didn’t physically abuse her he did psychologically and emotionally. He owned a corner building in New York with a night club at the bottom he offered stability a home with bills paid in return she offered her life with every last breath. He lived the night life she made sure the home was at tip top shape creating a warm home environment as she was taught. She cooked everything from scratch made with love the house with a comforting aroma always clean. (her body as well) Personality very loving soft spoken so sweet and gentle as a delicate flower. Very submissive an amazing servant. I remember before his shift she would shave his face an have all of his clothes perfectly ironed dry cleaned, shoes polished ready for him to go into his night shift. She would be up early in the morning as the club was closing with his foldable personal table by his favorite recliner chair prepped with his famous t bone steak freshly made with fully loaded baked potatoes and steamed broccoli and wiz cheese on top. His specific coffee properly made the way he loved it. As he stumbled through the door ignoring the scent of women all over him and the lipsticks stains all on his colar she would greet him with a warm kiss. She then would take his shoes off as he sat on his recliner and he began to eat while watching tv. After he was fully fed and satisfied she would message his feet till he went to sleep. Then off to taking his clothes to the dry cleaners, at times finding numbers, love notes in his pockets she would just place them a side for him as if where not her buisness. Heading back home she would then get all her cleaning supplies buckets broom mops ect. and head down to the club to clean and have it in its best shape for the next shift. I remember being on my hands and knees I was her little helper scrapping gum off the dance floors to then have them waxed and shiny clean. I remember all of her hard work getting rid of the cigarette smell moping the floors and wiping each table and chair with her whole heart and such love everything she did she did with love. His office was in the basement I remember as she cleaned finding women clothing and her just picking it up and cleaning the mess everyday without a question or fuss. In fact she cleaned the hall ways and steps of the whole building too. Out for groceries a lunch break and then back upstairs to start dinner repeating this process over and over again. The perfect house wife. Holidays you could only imagine she had the best holiday spirit decorating the whole building with appropriate scents according to the seasons and she would cook a buffet everything from scratch the best cooking the long dinning room with never ending food cooked from the heart u could literally feel the love in the air. she always made sure to get the whole family together it was remarkable to see everyone in one room under one roof although it was just on holidays it was worth it. Christmas was my favorite the tree full of my favorite gifts the smell of pine and the song she never turned off “ El burrito de belen” A fresh coquito batch made till this day no one has been able to do it the way she did. She made all of my birthdays very special with lots of decorations and many many gifts. My mother with both me and my brother stayed in a small extra room my grand mother had Eddie build in the back of her apartment by the dinning room. My mother worked in eddies club as a bartender. I spent my days with my grandmother my mother said my grandmother would say she could only handle having one of us and would always take me and leave my little brother behind with my mother. I remember going to an art class my grandmother was in college and she was amazing at painting she would take me with her and at her place she would give me a little space with water paint and paper sticky notes and color pencils. Just as she would do at home with the old school aluminum lap folding table on the floor she would give me crayons and sticky notes with water paint and put blues clues for me to watch and I would draw the clues while she would get dressed . Soon my mother moved to one of the apartments on the second floor of the building but my grandmother loved to keep me with her upstairs i remember sleeping in her bed when grandfather was gone and we would watch movies together at night and have her favorite apple pie with a cup of milk and ice never forget the ice it was a must. My first time watching titanic was with her on our 90s vcr. She started a bad habit of scratching my back till i fell to sleep and boy was that like heaven on earth if grandfather came in early then she would pick me up to put me in the next room. I dreaded being left with my mother she always found a reason to take out her frustration on me anytime with her felt like misery. Combing my hair before school if i even moved one inch she would bang my head and tug on my hair in a jult when i would cry she would yell and threaten me and smack me in the face to shut up. I would tell my grandmother and my grandmother would call her attention and that would make it worse because then she was really angry and i remember one time she was going to beat me with a hanger I ran upstairs for refuge and my grandmother stoped her and took the hanger from her but when my grandmother wasn't around she used that time to prove a point. It was as if she was a big sister and my grandmother was my mother. I remember being slapped in the mouth and having a bloody mouth was a common thing as a child.

Then all of a sudden things seemed different with grandma I noticed she had less energy to play with me. We where taking new york taxi to frequent hospital visits where she gifted me a walkman headset to wear on our journeys together. I remember the waiting rooms and the hospital smell as we walked down the halls and into the doctors offices. I would listen to the tape and flip to listen again I would put my finger in the little whole with ridges to attempt rewinding it and listening to it all over again and again it was the Fugees “ Killing me softly with his song” with ms. Lauryn hill that she had given to me in attempt to distract me from the conversations taking place in the doctors office. I remember her taking me with her to a quick stop into the catholic church that was around the corner of our home. Soon my grandma had no hair and as I normally followed her into the bathroom I noticed she had a bag that was attached to her that needed to be frequently changed. At times it was as if she where hiding it from me and other times she would just include me as her little helper with such gentleness her love still consistent toward me. Her sister Mercedes whom my mother made my God mother would always come by to help her and soon my grate grandmother was visiting from Puerto Rico as well. I loved being with them as we did things together like never before. At this time my mother was living in the second floor apartment where she was sharing apartments with her brother and his at the time girlfriend named Vanessa she had fallen in love with Vanessas cousin Javier. As my grandmothers condition worsened I remember my mother sitting both me and my brother down for an important talk. She had told us that she had been seeing Javier for some  time and wanted to see what our thoughts where on them getting married. I remember we had said we didn’t like the idea of that I think at that age we where coming from a place where we just wanted the love of our mother since we had barely just got out of so much trauma with our dad but she did it anyway. The meeting wasn’t so much of getting our approval it was basically just telling us what she was going to do. In the back of my mind I remember not caring because I thought well i'll be upstairs with my grandmother anyways so it didn’t matter. We started seeing him around more often and I noticed my grandmother getting a little distant. My aunt Mercedes was picking her up and taking her often. Looking back I wish the focus of my mothers meeting was to inform me about my grandmothers condition which I found out was Cancer and to prepare me instead of her roller coaster love life which would turn out to be her next biggest mistake but then again that was her focus not her dying mother. Neither one of them not Miriam nor Luis where there for their mother they where to busy with lives of there own. Eric being the youngest did what teenagers do tried his best to block the pain out. Eddie would stay in the club longer and would do everything to avoid coming upstairs to see her even tho sick and all she still did all of her duties for him and would beg to see him. Thankfully she had an amazing sister by her side that took over and helped every step of the way. We all took a trip to Puerto Rico she wanted to go so we did and I remember going down the front steps that led to the street in front of my grate grandparents house I raced behind her and as she was getting into the car I asked where she was going if I could go with her and gracefully she looked back with a smile and told me she would be back not to worry that she loved me and to go back in I said please grandma I want to go with you and again she said where im going I can not take u with me I love you please go inside. Saddened I said ok I love you too and made my way back up the stairs. That was the last time we ever spoke again.

I remember waking up to people crying in the living room as I walked in one eye closed the other half opened and my aunt and cousins whispering to one another looking at each other and then at me and my cousin puts me on her lap with tears running down her face trying to compose herself through her choking voice begins to explain to me that my grandmother had went to a better place and that everything was going to be ok. I immediately began to cry I didn’t understand I was so confused I was so lost. Gone where? What better place? Why would she just leave me without telling me? Did I do something wrong? Please just come back im so sorry if I did please just come back where the only thoughts I had that night. These questions where long before being answered as my mother never comforted me about it it was as if it never happened or as if it had just happened to her and who was I to feel anything.

         As u could imagine I had to get use to being full time with my mother and her new husband after this. I also hardly ever saw the man I called grandfather as well as it was said he had already moved on to a new relationship, that’s no surprise since he didn’t even bother showing to my grandmothers funeral. He was know just a landlord to my mother or the father of my uncle Eric. We where given the upstairs apartment that belonged to my grandmother after she died as long as my mother took over the responsibility of watching over her youngest brother Eric in which my grandmother wrote in her will. So we moved in all three of us I my mother brother uncle Eric and a plus one, Javier.

         My grandmothers passing was around the very holidays where her spirit was the most alive and full of life now leaving us dormant and empty . Though at that time of year the lights shine the brightest they where the darkest times for us.  At first my mother thought it best to have us spend it with her new husbands family and after a while she decided to try and replicate what my grandmother would do. Locking herself in the bathroom for hours my step father having to drag her out and when she would finally come out with swollen eyes and a red nose it was clear she was crying in there and that getting through the holiday wasn’t easy but she never said anything about it was as if it never happened we never visited the grave. Life went on as usual my mother emerging herself into the hands of Javier and his family disowning her own. They remodeled my grandmothers apartment what use to be my grandmothers room was now my mothers and Javiers. My uncles room was transformed into a room for me and my brother Anthony to share and the little room in the back were we use to sleep was my uncle Erics. I remember my uncle Eric playin games with me like putting me in a blanket closing me in and spinning it over his head till I cried to let me down. It felt like having an older brother. He had the upper hand being that his father owned the whole building and the club but his father took pride in his own success having served in the military and owning everything he had he put a lot of pressure on Eric his only son.

Early wake ups to get ready for school in which was the second of the elementary schools out of the three I would attend. At that time I remember my mother or other people she had do the favor for her, picking us up from school. Home for homework my mother always said since she dropped out early she couldn’t help us with any homework so Javier would take the role as the helper which also helped him score some step daddy points with my mother. It was obvious it was only for my mothers attention because half the time you could tell he was one second away from loosing it. My little brother had a stuttering problem and jokes where consistently made in attempt to “help him”. Javier was younger and didn’t have any children of his own. At first it was showering of gifts and money he must of sensed my mothers taste for expensive things and low self-esteem. They were in honeymoon stage and me and my brother spent a lot of time together. With there door always closed me and my brother had lots of alone time. His family became our new family my mother made us spend every holiday and social event with them and soon we hardly saw any of her family.There was minimal interaction with my mother and javier unless we needed help with homework or to eat. There was this attitude of dominance Javier carried toward us. He would always give us a hard stare look to intimidate us. He wanted to show he was the man of the house now. I guess poor kids they have been through a lot didn’t cross his mind?. My brother was use to it just being him and my mom since I was upstairs with my grandmother mostly, this was all new for him but Javier made sure we knew our place now that he was in the picture. He didn’t like us going into there room interrupting there alone time he didn’t like us being with them at all. It was as if it were their world and we were an inconvenience. Anything that had to do with school my mother had handed over all responsibility to him because she said she didn’t have the education or the patience to deal with us. He would sit us on a kitchen table after school as we unpacked our work out on the table he would be standing over us with a mean stare rushing us as if we were in a military boot camp and he was the Sargent. He would read any notes or grades we had gotten for the day by the teacher and God forbid we had anything negative said or a bad grade we would get the famous question are you stupid? and called different names this is where he practiced dominance over us and u could tell it made him feel good. He laughed at my brother anytime he mis pronounced a word due to his stuttering or would mock him and then try to correct him to make it seem as if he Was just trying to help. I was the oldest so I just tried my best to hurry up and do my work as quickly and effectively to not have to be at the table with him long. My little brother had a harder time with school work there where times he was at the table for hours I would here Javier frustrated and annoyed by my brother yelling at him he felt my brother was doing it on purpose as sign of disrespect toward him and as a punishment he would leave him at the table for hours alone to figure it out sometimes until he fell asleep with his head laid on the table drooling over his work. He would threaten that if it were not done the right way by the time he came back there would be consequences. My brother would be in tears scared trying to explain that he really didn’t understand the work and that he needed help. At first I was happy at least there was someone who cared enough to help us but that thought crumbled very quickly there wasn’t any explaining or breakdown of the work it was just like ok this is the assignment now do what the teacher taught u ill stand here and watch. Anytime we asked for help you could here the annoyance in the tone of his voice and as he read the instructions he yelled it out as if we might of missed something when we read it ourselves after that if we still didn’t understand he would tell us the answer in a way that made you feel really bad about not getting it. Since I had to pass through the kitchen to get to the bathroom I would sometimes sneak to see the work and help my brother to avoid him getting in bigger trouble. My brother struggled with different things growing up this was before javier came into the picture. My brother would hide in places for hours where no one could find him such as the dryer he would hear us yelling scared looking for him and would never come out it wasn’t until my mother would threaten to call the cops to report him missing one time that he had come out of hiding. The one time he stood on the window ledge of a third floor, he said he wanted to fly as a bird. He once lit up the arm of a toy on fire he got scared and tried to throw it out the closest window which was in the kitchen nearly burning half of my grandmother kitchen down and said the toy told him to do it. He had an attachment with his toys he always talked to them and said they would tell him things. I would hear him up late at night just conversating with them and I would ask him who are you talking to and he would say his toys. He was very aggressive and always liked to play fight but he always went from playing to serious very quickly and would really use his force to hurt me. I remember a time in Puerto Rico where he punched me with all of his might in my chest leaving me breathless and gasping for air and then hid behind my grate grandparents tv where he could see me from a distance and with his thumb sliding across his neck demonstrating to me that if I said anything he was going to cut my throat. He always took his anger out on me but since I was the oldest I was always the one to blame after defending myself. My mother said she feared in disciplining him it would make matters worse so she never did. She said his behavior always reminded her of my dad and she feared what he was capable of. I guess that left me to be the only punching bag for my mother to release all her frustration. This was just the beginning of our nightmare step dad. He was very into himself he would look in the mirror with his gelled slick back hair as he flexed his muscles and turning his head side to side he would kiss his muscles and say yea baby! Whos the man?. He would then turn to us and ask again while still flexing we would have to answer you are. He always spoke with a serious authoritative voice in a form of demanding us and would pull and twist our ear in times he felt we didn’t listen. His family didn’t like my mother since there was history with his cousin Vanessa running away to be with my uncle Luis my mothers brother at a young age. In his family javier was a God to them they worshiped the very ground he walked on. He was the only male out of his sisters and his mom, they depended on him to take care of them and when his father passed away they made him the man of the house. His mother was extremely attached to him to the point they would kiss in the lips as a way of saying hi and bye to each other. He had one nephew and since the father wasn’t around the nephew looked at Javier as a father figure. They hated when my mother came into the picture and since they hated her they hated the baggage she came with which was me and my brother. Just when we thought we had it bad there was nothing like the torture we experienced by his family. The nephew and his mother one of Javier sisters were jealous and concerned that Javier would replace the connection he had with his nephew with us so they would purposely do things to make Javier yell at us. One time for instance his nephew cut the cords on brand new video game remote control and began to hysterically cry and blamed me and my brother for doing it. This was just one of many of the evil plans. Javiers mother always said we were rude or said we said things we never said and then we looked worse if we defended ourselves because we offended them more when we said it was a lie. My mother knew they didn’t like her because she was experiencing the same treatment and even worse by them but desperately longing to fit in with them she would always make it seem as if we embarrassed her and would chose them over us. Desperate to keep javier by her side we had become doormats constantly stepped on by them. Every time before going in to any of there houses she would give us a long lecture in the car. She was always worried about what people said and us making her look good. We were told to keep our mouths shut unless spoken to. To sit both hands by our sides not to touch or even look or breath the wrong way. Every time we went anywhere me and my brother with nervous feeling in our belly hoping to get lucky enough to not get in trouble this one time like kids attached from hip to hip we would walk in side by side together with our heads down quietly and just sit in silence wherever they would put us until it was time to go back home. Hours of us just sitting waiting in silence while his family ignored we were there as orphans on the side lines. Then his family complained we were to quiet something was wrong with us we thought we were to good because we didn’t say hi. The other sister he had was a little nicer to us maybe she sensed something wrong but she always said hi to us and would try a little small talk but fear of being judged by her family it was only for a moment and then she would stop. Being the oldest I had characteristics of a care taker and being exposed to all that I was exposed to I was very mature for my age. Despite all of this I was an honor roll student in school I always brought home good reports.

**(Plug this in)**

Luis my mothers other brother stayed in the second floor apartment with his girlfriend Vanessa and they had their first child together. They where together at a very young age she had ran away from home to be with my uncle Luis her cousin Javier and my uncle were best friends since school so both our families new each other very well. In fact my uncles girlfriend Vanessa would take me with her to her cousins Javiers house days she was in charge of watching me and  I remember him giving me lollipops every time I went over. Excited to have gotten a treat and how he let me play with his dog I would always ask if I could go back again. This is where I obtained the nick name big mouth from my mother because what I didn’t know as a little girl was that he had a big crush on my mother and that my father had speculations of my mother cheating on him with Javier so there where times when my father would interrogate me to see my mothers where abouts and I would excitingly talk about going to Javiers home and playing with my favorite dog at the time and eating lollipops my mother would then get beat which then would become a beating for me from her when he wasn’t around.

**(Plug in)**

Living here only lasted a short time when Eric had a disagreement with my mother and now step father and kicked us all out. His father never really liked any one from my mothers family being that he felt he was constantly having to help them he felt they never did anything for themselves after Some of our cousins set his father up and robbed the club his dad was certain about his feelings toward our family and did not want anything to do with anyone. Through out that time Eric would have moments of completely disappearing  no one would know where he was, what he was doing no contact and then out of no where come by again. I loved my uncle like an older brother and those times he was away I always hoped he was ok. One time I had a dream and all I saw was Eric standing in a dark cemented room with a spot light on him and on the floor around both his feet was a pool of blood. A week later my mother said Eric would be staying with us for a little while because he had been shot in his leg.