



MY GREATEST DEBT WAS PAID!

Helena Brandao

“Oh God, help me!” was Helena Brandao’s cry in her moment of greatest despair. She found herself enslaved by alcohol and drugs. She no longer controlled her life. Instead, strange forces controlled her.

Helena tells us how she got free from alcohol addiction and drugs and how she found peace. She spent a small fortune for the services of the “high priestesses” of the occult with little or no results. Then she came to know who it was that had really made the ultimate sacrifice for her and who had paid her greatest debt.

Known as Darlene Gloria, she won Brazil’s most coveted awards offered by the movie industry. However, instead of enjoying her outstanding professional success, she felt a void and a deep restlessness. In reading her story, you’ll see how easy it was for her to be deceived by success and to become an alcoholic and a drug addict.

How can a person be liberated from such bondage? How can one find true freedom and happiness? This is the story of Helena Brandao’s struggle to regain control of her life. I believe her story will help you see how you can overcome similar problems and enjoy true happiness.

NOBODY HELPS ME!

“Hello, Mom!”

“Yes, who is this?” my mother asked.

“It’s Helena!” (I rarely called her anymore.)

“Oh! Hello, dear,” Mom replied, “God’s peace!”

“Peace nothing! I’m dying! I’ve got such a terrible headache I can’t stand it anymore. I just called to say good-bye because I’m going to die.”

You can see, dear reader, what a state I had come to. I want to tell you how it all happened. I don’t want you to go through the same kind of suffering that I did.

My name is Helena Brandao, ex-actress, Darlene Gloria. As an actress I earned lots of money and enjoyed nationwide popularity in Brazil. However, I wasn’t happy. I felt a strange void and restlessness.

I worked for several years in television and the theater and acted in many important roles in twenty-six films. I won awards for distinction in my profession.

However, stardom didn’t bring me real contentment. I walked the “dark corridors of death.” I lived under unbelievable stress and turned to alcohol and drugs for relief. Finally, the tension was so great I wanted to die, but I was afraid of dying.

I tried to solve my problems by looking to the supernatural, to occult powers, soothsayers, and mediums. I practiced sorcery and divination. I communicated with the dead. I consulted the “mother-of-saint,” the high priestess of the occult. I offered multiple sacrifices to the gods of spiritism and paid for offerings to the gods to escape the agony I was in. Sometimes I spent everything I earned.

Why? I thought that the supernatural would help solve my problems. Yes, at first it seemed they helped me in some things, but the end result was always negative. I lived under this deceit for a long time. None of this filled that void within me. Instead, as a result of my involvement in the occult, I began to suffer terrors night and day. At times I thought someone was trying to drive me out of my mind. My head felt hollow as though I was losing my sanity.

At times a great terror would possess me. When this happened, I had to drink. Sometimes, in a drunken haze, I’d get in my car and drive along Rio’s beaches like a crazy person. I’d shut the windows and beat my fists on the steering wheel and sob uncontrollably.

“Nobody helps me! Won’t anybody help me?” I cried out in utter hopelessness!



One day I got a splitting headache. I’d never had one that bad before. My head was exploding. By afternoon, I couldn’t take it anymore, and so I phoned my mother. I actually thought I was going to die.

At that time, I didn’t know that there was someone who could perform a miracle in my life. That’s what I needed, someone who knew how to help me!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

As strange as it may seem, money and fame didn’t bring Helena the happiness she longed for. She felt an immense void in her life.

She tried to escape through the supernatural. She paid for many sacrifices to the gods of the occult that had promised her relief. At the same time, she turned to alcohol and drugs for relief. However, her problems only got worse, and she didn’t have the strength to change. She felt that there was no one to help her.

No doubt, you too have felt alone at times, without anyone to help you. Let’s see where Helena’s search finally leads her.

THE BITTERNESS OF SUCCESS!

“Yes, Mom, I’m dying.” Those were my very words.

It was through a long, difficult journey that I reached that level of despair.

I began my acting career at 17 and worked for thirteen years in television in Rio. Later I went into the movies and acted in twenty-six films. Besides the cinema, I also worked in the theater, in comedy, revues, and musicals, in both comic and dramatic roles.

I reached the peak of my career with “All Nudity Will Be Punished,” for which I received the “Golden Bear” award in Brazil. In this film, through a character called “Geni,” I bared my soul as I tried to depict my own hopelessness. After this resounding success, I was invited to act in films in the United States and Italy.

In spite of all the success I attained, I felt too tired to enjoy all the glory and applause I was receiving. I was possessed by a constant unrest. Success bored and frightened me. My career consumed all my strength. I felt worn out, weak, and sick.

My life was heading down a dead-end street. I was an alcoholic and a drug addict. Besides that, I smoked three packs of cigarettes a day. What a contradiction! Success brought me more bitterness than happiness!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Helena worked hard to achieve success, but happiness always escaped her. She turned to drink and drugs, trying to forget her problems. She herself talks about the contradiction of having success and fame yet not feeling content or happy. What does this show?

I think it teaches us that there is more to life than material things or “success.” Men and women need to discover what God has to say about life, and how to live according to His will. Jesus said:

“Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?’ Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:31-33).

Have you ever seriously put spiritual things first in your life? Did you know that true happiness can result from “seeking first God’s

Kingdom,” which is His will for your life? I pray He will continue to speak to you through Helena’s experience.

In the next section, we will see how fear came to dominate Helena’s every waking hour. How can a person live with constant fear and still survive? Helena did! Let’s see how she did it.

LIVING UNDER FEAR!

It all started when I was still a teenager. My uncle was the head of a spiritist center, a “terreiro,” in Rio. I was afraid of him, because years earlier, I remembered how he had fallen into a trance, groaning and screaming. It left me in a trauma for a long time.

Then we had moved to Madureira, a suburb of Rio. Our place was surrounded by witches’ covens. I lived in terror. I tried to find an excuse to be away from home when the covens were in session.

But after a few years, some friends, who knew about my drinking and drug problems, advised me, “You need a spirit guide like the rest of us. You’ll feel secure. Everyone has a spirit guide.”

Even my own uncle said, “I work magic for so many people, why not for you too? You’re my own flesh and blood.”

So occasionally, I visited occult worship centers, trying to find help. However, little changed in my life and I thought the “spirit guides” were very demanding. I decided to quit seeking help in spiritism and so avoided the occult for several years.

Then one day, after quite some time, a friend told me, “I know a medium who says someone is jealous of you and has cast a spell against you. Do you want her to undo the spell for you?”

“Of course I do,” I responded.

I was terrified. I went to see the medium. She instructed me to go to a certain cemetery at midnight. There, with six other women (there had to be seven), we carried out certain occult ceremonies. There were so many candles lit in the cemetery that it seemed like noonday. I heard horrifying screams that scared me to death, but I did what I was told. Afterwards I decided, "I'm quitting all this." And I did, but only for a while.

Eventually, I got more and more involved in occult practices. I ended up accepting an invitation to visit a "mixed" center of Candomble and Umbanda. Friends had assured me, "You'll like it." The following day I went to the same center to offer a sacrifice to my "saint" (my spirit-guide). The high priest gave me a long list of things I had to buy for the "sacrifice."

Then he said, "You're a daughter of Yemanja, goddess of the sea."

Later, I returned to the center with everything that was on the list. We went through the rituals, but when we finished, I felt more wretched and fearful than before. I thought, "God is so far away from me! I don't know why! I've paid tribute to my spirit guides. I've spent a lot of time and money. I've paid all my obligations. I don't understand. Why am I still so depressed? Why am I so afraid? Is there no way out of this for me?"

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Helena had not yet discovered the secret of true happiness and contentment. She sought out and experienced contact with "spirit powers." She got involved in occult practices and had spells cast to counter a hex that was put on her. None of this took away her fear and depression, and she still turned to drugs and alcohol. The spells and counter-spells, the rituals and sacrifices just ended up costing her a lot of money, and she continued to live with fear.

You know, the opposite of "fear" is "love." Here's what the Scriptures say about these things:

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).

What Helena needed was to be filled with this kind of love. Perhaps this is your need too. Continue studying and you'll see what Helena went through before she came to experience peace and love.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ABYSS!

“Helena, your sister Elzira won't live long.” My mother had phoned me with this disturbing news. How could this be? Besides mother, Elzira was the only one in our family who had been serving the Lord!

Desperate, my mother prayed and called some believers to pray for Elzira. Nevertheless, my sister died, but she died trusting in Christ!

And me? Despondent over my sister's death, I plunged deeper and deeper into a haze of alcohol and drugs. It's interesting to note that my “spirit guides” forbade me to drink, smoke, and do drugs, but they did nothing to help me quit these vices. They didn't give me the strength to resist any of them.

Some time later, I went with a neighbor to another Candomble center. Again I was told, “Oh, yes, you're a daughter of Yemanja. Your father is Ogum (an African god). You are super-protected.”

“That's a lie,” I responded. “I'm not super-protected. My problems have increased even though I've been obedient. I've done everything I was supposed to do. I've gone to the forest, the beach, and crossroads. I've offered sacrifices at the rock-quarries and waterfalls. Everywhere I've been told to offer sacrifices. My situation hasn't improved. I'm still depressed and fearful. I'm not super-protected.”

Though I wasn't married, I had two children. Then I took up with a man much older than me. He made my life a living hell. He dominated me in every way he could. When I had to go to Sao Paulo to work in another film, he became furious.

One morning, in the hotel in Sao Paulo, someone knocked on my door. Still half asleep, I opened the door to see who it was. There was the man I lived with, accompanied by two men dressed in white. He shouted,

“That’s her, that’s my wife. Take her along.”



They forced me to take an enormous injection and took me to a hospital for the mentally ill. I had been drinking the night before, and the injection made me deathly sick. I was literally dying, but as I was losing consciousness, I prayed, “Oh Lord, don’t let me die! I want so much to work for you!”

I woke up with the doctor shaking his head, “Helena, you died and came back!”

“I know why I didn’t die,” I said to the doctor. “The Lord heard my prayer and raised me from the dead.”

I spent several days recuperating and was released. Then one day in Sao Paulo, I accepted an invitation to visit another medium. She told me that my high priestess in Rio had put a hex on me again. This high priestess in Rio had been charging me exorbitant sums of money for her services and didn’t want to

lose her income. Afraid of losing me, she cast a spell to try to make me stay faithful to her.

After returning to Rio, I suffered terrors night and day. I felt like someone was trying to drive me out of my mind. That was when I had such a horrible headache that I told my mother I thought I was dying.

“Mom, I am dying, I feel like my head is going to burst.”

“Shut your eyes, Helena,” she said. “I’m going to pray for you.”

I closed my eyes. Mother prayed and finished by saying, “In the name of Jesus Christ, you headache, spirit of infirmity, evil oppression, come out of my daughter!”

The pain left immediately, and I breathed a sigh of relief.

“Mom,” I shouted, “I didn’t know Jesus had this kind of power!”

“He has even more power than this! You need to know Him,” she answered.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Did you notice how many times and in how many places Helena tried in vain to find the answer to her problems? She spent so much money on offerings to the occultic gods that she was having financial problems. Then, when she was in the hospital, she prayed to Jesus and a simple, believing prayer saved her life. Later, she was amazed at God’s power when her mother prayed and her headache disappeared. She found out that Jesus has power to heal!

Another important thing to remember is how much patience the Lord had with Helena. He wanted her to change her mind about the kind of life she was living. He wanted her to repent of what she was doing. Note the following verse:

“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

The Lord doesn’t want any of us to perish. He is patient with us. He wants all of us to come to know Him and experience His power!

Continue your study. In the next section you’ll see who paid Helena’s greatest debt.

SOMEONE PAID MY BIGGEST DEBT!

That healing really impressed me! My mother prayed and the pain left instantly! New hope was born within me.

Occasionally my mother stopped by my home. On one of her visits she broke my jug of herbal mixture that I had used for occult rituals. I had hidden it behind the refrigerator. A high priestess advised me that, if it was broken, something terrible would happen. When I found out mother had broken it and nothing bad happened, I was deeply impressed.



I started to suspect that my mother's faith was much stronger than the influence of the "spirits."

"Come with me to a meeting at church, my dear," she urged me.

"I don't want anything to do with any church. I just want relief," I answered.

Besides all my other problems, I was suffering with a heart ailment. My doctors said I might die at any time. I couldn't sleep without taking pills and I knew I shouldn't mix pills and alcohol. Yet here I was, deathly ill, in need of medicine, and prohibited to drink any alcohol by my doctor. Still I couldn't resist drinking.

It was then that I began to feel an intense desire to go to a meeting at the church to seek healing and deliverance. However, something always seemed to happen to prevent me from going. One day I decided, "This is it, I'm going. Nothing will stop me!" I didn't touch alcohol all day long.

The auditorium was a plain structure, full of ordinary appearing people. I was accustomed to being noticed and admired at all times, but no one noticed me when I came in. I felt uneasy and wanted to leave, but the words of the hymns caught my attention and I stayed.

I thought to myself, "I have a covenant with my 'spirit guides.' If I become a believer, they'll punish me." I didn't understand what was meant by the statement that Jesus had paid man's biggest debt. I didn't know that Jesus died and rose again from the dead and had all power in heaven and earth. I didn't realize that He had more than enough power to protect me from the persecution of my "spirit guides."

I don't know how long the battle went on inside of me but I really agonized. On one hand, I had faith in Jesus that I could have a hope for happiness and salvation. On the other hand, I had unbelief and an aversion that I felt towards Christianity.

I remembered what I had been taught in my childhood days when I had gone to Sunday school. I was finally convinced. Without even the strength to get up out of my seat or to talk out loud, I prayed silently to God in my heart:

"Jesus, if you love me and really have the power, set me free now. I give my life to you. Forgive my sins. Have mercy on me!"

As soon as I finished praying, I felt that something evil had gone out of my body. I jumped up from my chair and ran to the front. I threw my arms around another lady in the church and wept tears of joy! I was bursting with happiness! I felt wonderful!

I repeated within myself, “Lord, don’t ever leave me! Don’t ever let this joy disappear that I feel inside of me!”

And He never has left my side! Today Christ lives in me. I am a new person. I was saved and healed of my heart ailment. Never again has Satan had power over me. Gone are the sleeping pills, the alcohol, and the drugs. The “spirit guides” that held me in bondage through sacrifices to the occultic gods, the threats, and the fear are all gone. Jesus is greater than all of them. He is the One who guides my life now.



I’m married to a pastor, and we work together, telling everyone about this peace and liberty that only Christ can give. I have adopted a theme for my life: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall lack nothing.”

I want you to know, dear reader, that Jesus paid your debt of sin, the penalty for your wrongdoing. It’s useless for you to run here

and there, offering sacrifices to the “saints.” Jesus has already freed you from all these kinds of “obligations”! All you have to do is acknowledge Him and accept Him as your Savior! He can make you truly happy.

What you simply need to do now is to give your life over into the Lord’s hands like I did. He can help you overcome all your problems. He can give you a new life.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Helena searched everywhere, looking for a solution to her problems. When she entered an evangelical church, she immediately received a wonderful answer! It was so easy! She believed, prayed, and the Lord answered. No more witchcraft, “lists” of things to sacrifice, “offerings,” or black magic, but only a simple prayer to Jesus.

Jesus alone paid her biggest debt, and not only for Helena, but for you and me, and for everyone. Jesus will not enslave you with a heavy burden of “obligations,” or sacrifices to make, or debts to pay.

Jesus promised not to reject anyone who comes to Him. When we trust in Him, He will never leave us, never! So talk to Him now. You can tell Him about any problem you may have. You will receive the same peace and happiness that Helena did. Repeat this prayer and add your own words to it as you wish.

“Lord Jesus, I know that I can never offer a sacrifice big enough or expensive enough to merit Your blessing, Your salvation, and Your deliverance. However, I do believe now that the sacrifice You made, when You gave Your life for me, is all sufficient. I accept Your sacrifice now. I’m depending on You. Make me a new person. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God! Amen!”

Now you will read about the experiences of Terezinha Muller, a former high priestess of the occult. Her outstanding testimony of divine healing in spirit and body will cause you to marvel at God’s power. I pray that her story will help you to trust in the Lord for all of your needs.

My Greatest Debt Was Paid!

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