



Beauty In The Beast

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A 7-DAY TESTIMONY DEVOTIONAL ON DEALING WITH SUDDEN RARE ILLNESS.
**THESE SCARRED HANDS WERE USED TO WRITE
ABOUT THE BEAUTY OF HIS HEALING POWER.**

Beauty In The Beast

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Cover by Kanayo Dike-Oduah



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We are told to reject suffering and pain, but what do you do when you are confronted with the prospect of death?

This devotional draws you into Kanayo's testimony of battling a 'one in a million' serious illness called Stevens-Johnson Syndrome.

We journey with her suffering, healing, finding beauty in the beast of pain and ultimately learn how to suffer 'well'.

This devotional is available on the YouVersion Bible app, on her site, doctorkanayo.com and as a PDF download.

Hard copies may be available on request.

DAY 1

SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT

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Scriptures to read: James 5:13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

We don't talk about suffering unless we are. We don't desire to share our suffering, but I want you all to see the process and never just the highlights. I want you to see the fire and the gold.

Suffering strips away this false sense of all togetherness and makes you realise that every breath depends on God.

They say things come in threes...

The third prayer point on my prayer requests for my 26th birthday was concerning my health. It read: "All ailments, known and unknown, must bow to the name of Jesus". I prayed this on August 22nd and asked others wishing me a happy birthday to lift this prayer point, along with five others. The post is still on my Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp for evidence.

The day after my birthday (23rd August), my Fitbit showed that my heart rate was abnormally high, even at rest. I dismissed it, thinking that my Fitbit was out of order and that perhaps I was just overly excited to be at the theatre as a birthday treat. The second day after my birthday (24th August) I had planned to go to the beach with my family. I woke up with a swollen right eye...but that didn't stop me...the sunglasses came out and stayed out.

Three days after my birthday (25th August) I had what I thought was a mild anaphylactic reaction (mild because thanks be to God my throat did not completely close). I woke up with a puffy face. I took the antihistamines that I had on me and headed to church with my sunglasses on throughout the service. Thank God I'm not the first Nigerian to wear sunglasses in church!

During the church service, my eyes started stinging. I went to the toilet with the support of my younger brother who saw me struggling. There was mucus-like discharge coming out from my eyes and by this point, my eyes were bright red. I went to the closest Accident and Emergency (A&E) Hospital and was given antihistamines, two sets of antibiotics and steroids. I was told that my body was in shock and decided to not only fight the supposed 'food allergic reaction' with the mild symptoms of anaphylaxis but also by severe tonsillitis (throat ailment) and conjunctivitis (eye ailment).

So here I was with three 'known' ailments all at the same time.

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Watch the video for Day 1 on doctorkanayo.com

DAY 2

'SOMETIMES IT GETS WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER'

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Scriptures to read: Psalm 109:25-27 and Job 19

"I also have become a reproach and an object of taunting to others; When they see me, they shake their heads [in derision]. - Psalm 109:25

It turned out that this sickness wasn't just 'three'. There was an unknown illness, such that over the following days I saw my face disintegrating before my eyes. Blemishes popped up all over my body. The palms and the soles of my feet had red blotches and were painful to touch. I could barely walk without pain. My vision was blurred. Eventually, I could no longer talk at length or swallow...even liquids.

By this time, I had set up a camp at my mum's house since Sunday 25th August. She was on a night shift on Wednesday 28th August, so my aunt came to pick me up and look after me for the night at her house about 10 miles away.

In the middle of the night, my aunt called the paramedics because my breathing was all over the place and my whole body was in agony. The paramedics came, saw my face in all its horror, pus oozing from my lips, red blotches on my palms, rashes all over my body and gave me a mere two tablets of paracetamol to swallow instead of rushing me to the nearest hospital. As Job 19:17 says, I felt that my breath was offensive to those around me. I couldn't brush my teeth without my mouth feeling and looking like it was falling apart. My throat, in fact, my whole mouth couldn't take anything. The paramedics' words to me were, that with allergic reactions 'sometimes it gets worse before it gets better'.

On Thursday 29th, I asked my little sister to go to my flat and pick up some of my belongings as I had not driven since Sunday due to the state of my eyes. I also asked her to pop into any pharmacy and show a picture of my face to see what medication they could suggest to calm the 'reaction'. The words of the pharmacist to my sister were 'get her (me) to a hospital urgently'.

My sister returned with a small case of my belongings, stood at the door of my aunts and with all authority, commanded me to get in the car to go to the nearest hospital. My little sister turned into my big sister and her actions that day saved my life.

We arrived at the closest Accident & Emergency Hospital, my sister dropped my goddaughter and I off at the entrance and went to look for parking. We entered the hospital, stood in the queue to register and I collapsed.

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DAY 3

BRING THE UNKNOWN BEFORE GOD IN PRAYER

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Scriptures to read: Job 19:20, 1st Thessalonians 5:17, Romans 8:26-27, Psalm 91:11

I found myself under resuscitation. My life slipped away.

After leaving the resuscitation unit, I was put in isolation because they could not immediately identify the source of the blemishes all over my body. To let you know how extreme it was; initially, people visiting me at the hospital were instructed to wear masks, gloves and aprons.

After several tests, including a skin biopsy and observations, I was finally diagnosed with a rare critical condition called Stevens-Johnson syndrome which affects one in a million people each year. My body was violently reacting to medication which was prescribed for persistent facial neuralgia (facial nerve pain) following a tooth extraction.

I had been taking this medication for 3 weeks (5th to 24th August) without any known issues.

This syndrome was to be a silent killer. It was destroying the mucous membrane (lining) of my entire body, from my eyes, lips, mouth, tongue, nose, face, skin, scalp and internal organs. This syndrome is deadly and for a number that survive, they do so with the most horrific complications such as blindness and sepsis.

There was a case of a young lady in the UK who after using over-the-counter eye drops for just one day, found herself in a medically induced coma for ONE MONTH with her body disintegrating under the same syndrome. I was prescribed a three-month course of this medication and had been taking it for THREE weeks, without any reaction.

If God did not cause my body to react after my birthday...remember the prayer point... "All ailments, known and unknown, must bow to the name of Jesus"...The story would have been Kanayo went to sleep and didn't wake up at age 26. But God!

I believe God saw my heart and heard all the prayers said over me when I shared six simple prayer points for my birthday. I do not know what caused me to include the word 'unknown' in that prayer point other than the Holy Spirit. I truly believe that including the word 'unknown' triggered the heavens!

In my hospital bed, when I was desperately trying to make sense of what was going on. I vividly pictured heaven's armies assembling and saying "Kanayo has previously prayed about known sicknesses but this time she said, 'all unknown ailments must bow to the Name of Jesus'...let's go!"

This part of my testimony is where I implore you to realise the power of prayer.

Pray at all times, in every circumstance. Pray for the things that you can see. Pray for the things that you cannot see. Bring the known and the unknown before the God who is all-knowing.

Pray: Lord, I bring before you the things I know, the things I think I know and the things I do not know. May everything in my life surrender to Your will and Your authority.

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DAY 4

"ALL AILMENTS, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, MUST BOW TO THE NAME OF JESUS"

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Scriptures to read: Psalm 140:7, Psalm 5:11-12, Deuteronomy 31:6,

Psalm 143:10, Luke 4:10

As I reflect on this prayer point that I lifted up to the Lord in prayer on my birthday, I am reminded that
our prayers are not just for today, they are for tomorrow.

Little did I know that this simple 'unimaginative' prayer point would dismantle what the enemy meant for
harm!

The enemy wanted a legitimate way to clear me off the face of the earth. No foul play, no accident, no
physical violence. Just a case of she went to bed and didn't wake up at age 26.

Little did I know that this prayer was charging the heavens and assembling His angels to protect me from
what was sent to kill me.

Since I stopped taking the medication for facial neuralgia, I have not experienced the facial nerve pain
that drove my GP (General Practitioner – doctor) to prescribe this drug without stressing on the possible
complications or even testing to see whether such a powerful drug was suitable for me.

Some would say that the nerve pain was an agent of Satan. The nerve pain drove my GP to prescribe a
drug (which I paid £9 for) that the enemy wanted to use to silently kill me off. So much so that at one stage,
my GP advised that I double the dose when I complained that I was still feeling the nerve pain.

Little did I know that every day I swallowed that tablet, my life was slipping away, but God in his mercy
was protecting me.

I don't know how but HE did it!

Pray for yourself and those around you:

"All ailments, known and unknown, must bow to the name of Jesus"

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DAY 5 I FELT...

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Scriptures to read: Job 23:8-12, Job 23: 16-17, Job 42:1-6, Romans 4:20-21, Jeremiah 30:17

Going through this illness, I have never felt so hopeless, I have never felt so useless and for the sake of being frank and shallow...I had never felt so ugly.

I remember seeing my doctor, whose words to me were, 'your throat looks like a war zone'.

I laughed painfully and after crying, lamenting and feeling hopeless, I knew that this was a word for me. My throat, my mouthpiece, the very breath that God gave me to exalt Him and make Him known is at war.

My life is a threat to the enemy and as I entered into a new age and a new season in terms of starting my doctorate, the enemy wanted to silence this mouth that stirs hope, this mouth that encourages, this mouth that teaches, this mouth that prays, this mouth that worships and this mouth that speaks God's word.

"But I am not silenced by the darkness...which covers my face." - JOB 23:16-17

During this season my Daily Audio Bible was covering the book of Job. I had never connected with the story of Job (concerning his physical illness and emotional despair) like I do now.

I had many periods where I felt abandoned. I felt left to rot. I felt like my pain was the end. I... felt.

"But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him..." - JOB 23:8

My feelings were legitimate.

"...But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread". - Job 23:8-12

In my hopelessness, I was surrounded by hope. In my weakness, I was surrounded by strength. In my confusion, I soaked myself in the clarity that His word brings. In my perceived loneliness, I was surrounded by a loving praying community. In my perceived ugliness, I was surrounded by the beauty of The One who calls me His beloved, His masterpiece, fearfully and wonderfully made.

"Job answered GOD: **"I'm convinced: You can do anything and everything.** Nothing and no one can upset your plans. You asked, 'Who is this muddying the water, ignorantly confusing the issue, second-guessing my purposes?' I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk about wonders way over my head. You told me, 'Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.' I admit I once lived by rumours of you; now I have it all first-hand—from my own eyes and ears! I'm sorry—forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise! I'll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumour." - **Job 42:1-6 (The Message)**

I have experienced God's healing first hand. I don't need someone to tell me that God heals. I don't need to hear rumours of healing. I have seen it with the eyes that He saved from blindness. I am FULLY PERSUADED that He not only heals, He restores.

"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." - **Romans 4:20-21**

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DAY 6

WORSHIP THROUGH HEALING. HEALING THROUGH WORSHIP.

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Scriptures to read: Jeremiah 17:14, Hebrews 13:15, Psalm 51:16-17, Romans 5:3-5

On one of the days during my time in the hospital, You Version Bible app's verse of the day was

**Jeremiah 17:14 —Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed, save me and I will be saved,
for You are the one I praise.**

While my face transformed before my eyes due to this rare syndrome, one thing remained...my voice. As my lips gradually healed, the urge to praise God while in hospital was ever-present. Hospitals and sickness were foreign to me. I had to find familiar ground in this strange situation.

That ground was worship.

I knew my worship would confuse the enemy. For what He intended to destroy my faith and my physical being, God had turned around to strengthen my faith.

I knew my worship would magnify God far above my present situation and so I chose to worship despite feeling hopeless. I chose to see God as bigger than this rare syndrome. I chose to worship the God of miracles, signs and wonders. I chose to glory in my suffering.

My response to this sudden illness was to offer a sacrifice of praise. Yes, a sacrifice, because I was not in the usual 'place of worship'. I didn't have a band, altar, lights or the common 'atmosphere' for worship. I didn't necessarily feel like worshipping. This worship cost me something. This worship caused me to surrender my idea of what healing should look like. This worship was the start of my healing.

I heard God calling me to trust Him in the wilderness and I chose to answer through my worship.

Call to action: Watch the video and worship God with me. Choose to worship God in your wilderness season. Worship is the start of your healing.

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Watch the video for day 6 on doctorkanayo.com

DAY 7

**PRAY FERVENTLY AND ACCURATELY.
YOU ARE A SIGN AND A WONDER.**

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Scriptures to read: Acts 2:19, Psalm 41:1-3, Romans 4:20-21, Job 33:25, Job 42:12, Psalm 139:14, Ephesians 2:10

When I was diagnosed with this rare serious syndrome called Stevens-Johnson, I quickly did my research. I read on how it affects the body and its related diseases and decided that simply praying 'Lord heal me' was not going to cut it this time. I knew that accurate and fervent prayer was key.

I listed out 16 prayer points and asked my community to pray alongside me. I reviewed these prayer points every day after meeting with my consultants. The doctors got used to my journal being out with all my questions and I always asked them 'do you have any concerns, so I know how to pray?'. After each meeting, I would take my journal and lift up their concerns to the Lord, knowing that the God who designed this beautiful body, is able to heal and restore. I shared my prayer points with my community who loved me with prayer.

Call to action: Watch the video to see me pray through these 16 prayer points which ensured that my healing and recovery was in God's miraculous time and not man's predicted recovery time. **Create your own list of prayer points,** be as accurate as possible and remember to lift the 'unknown' to God.

I was told that I would have to spend at least 3 weeks in hospital, followed by 6 to 8 weeks of recovery at home. Miraculously, I was discharged from hospital on the 8th day. The consultants, dermatologists, nurses and health care assistants all marvelled at my transformation in such a short period of time and said I was the fastest recovery they had witnessed from this rare syndrome. On the day of my discharge, I held my consultant dermatologist's hands and said: "God bless you, thank you and your entire team for saying yes to your purpose, thank you for being agents of healing".

You are a sign and a wonder!

The sentence I kept on saying to people when they visited me or asked how I was doing was "God is faithful to His promise". I trusted God, no matter what the healing process looked like. I was fully persuaded that my God is faithful to His promise. I thank God that this sickness happened to me. I thank God for making me a threat to the enemy. Through this sickness, my faith and the faith those around me was strengthened. This testimony devotional would not exist without this trying experience. I would not be able to counsel or connect on an experiential level with those going through sickness, if not for this season. So I say again, thank God that this happened to me.

I am a sign and a wonder.

Heaven's army battled for me and the earth has witnessed the manifestation of victory which was already secured through the blood of Jesus. My latter is already greater.

Thank you for journeying with me on this testimony devotional and seeing the beauty in the beast. Lord, teach us to suffer 'well'. May we not lose hope in our suffering, but may we cling onto You even tighter. May we encounter you like never before and know that nothing takes You by surprise. I pray that God's mercy, comfort and love will meet us and overwhelm us in every circumstance. I pray that this testimony ignites your faith like never before, transforms your prayer life and reminds you that

YOU ARE A SIGN AND A WONDER! YOUR LATTER IS ALREADY GREATER!

Shout out to my sister-queen Philipa B, who midway through conversation during her visit at the hospital came up with the name for this devotional 'Beauty IN THE Beast'!

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BONUS DAY

THANK YOU! (1)

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Scriptures to read: Psalm 41:1-3, Psalm 133, Proverbs 17:17

I cannot begin to thank those who stood with me in prayer, visited me and endured what quite literally was a sight for sore eyes.

I had **95+** visitors during the 8 days of my stay in hospital and a **countless** number of visitors as I recovered at home. The staff

said that I was the celebrity of the hospital ward

I want to especially praise God for my **family** and **all** those who supported me.

Mum: This queen's calm stance, strength and fortitude kept me grounded in faith; she bathed me, creamed me and was with me every day. It was particularly poignant when she bathed me on the Saturday for the first time since I was admitted. As she removed the resuscitation tabs from my torso, I could only imagine what was going through her mind! She admitted me into her hospital (her house) and looked after me with the best food, care and company in the world.

Dad: Who was ready to fly from Nigeria on seeing my illness through pictures, checked on me every day and bombarded my mum and chairman with calls. Your love, intentional care and prayers gave me strength.

Nneka my little big **sister**, who God used to save my life. Her tears and rapid action revealed her genuine heart for me.

Obi my **brother**, who kept me joyful with threats to get me back when I get better! Cheeky lol.

My **chairman**, whose love for me was ever so clear throughout this experience. When your babes looks like someone used her face for special effects for a horror film and you still remind her of her beauty within. He told me countless times that he was proud of me which gave me such strength to go on. He prayed for me, honoured me and **protected** me. This is a man who directly called the hospital on multiple occasions to speak to the nurses and doctors to chase up on tests and my medication. A man who found ways to make me smile in my darkest days and was by my side through it all. What a man, what a protector

My **aunty Amaka** who stopped at nothing to quickly pick me up from my mum's house and looked after me. Distance, time and money were secondary to my health! She took me to my specialist appointments when mum couldn't be there. She brought me food, took me out for fresh air because we all know that hospital food doesn't quite cut it!

My **grandma** who at one point rubbed palm oil on my face and scalp . She was more distressed than me. Your love is unforgettable.

My entire **family**, aunts, uncles, my chairman's family, my **goddaughter** Abbey, my **friends**, my Pastor, my **church**, work **colleagues** and my **students**. They soaked me with love and stirred up resilience in me to push through and not give up.

I thank God for the **staff** (consultants, expert dermatologists, expert optometrists, doctors, pharmacists, nurses, HCAs, Porters, everyone really) at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital. One of my Instagram followers who is a pharmacist at QE was the first pharmacist to see me!

Thank you all for saying yes to your **purpose**, thank you for being agents of healing. Your expertise and reassurance instilled a calmness in me.

Thank you, Lord, for making me a sign and a wonder!

BONUS DAY THANK YOU! (2)

YOU ARE ALL INVITED TO MY THANKSGIVING AND EP LAUNCH

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My **thanksgiving service** will be synonymous with my
EP launch worship night!

Look out for it because it is going to be big and everyone
is invited!

Watch the video for the 'bonus day' on doctorkanayo.com

In the video you'll hear the raw un-mixed version of two
songs which I wrote and recorded for my EP.

One is titled: '**Like a flood**'. "When the enemy comes
in like a flood, YET You surround me"

The other is '**Hymn of assurance: Keep me**' "And I
know that You are with me through it all. When I rise and
even when I fall. Jesus, You have been there every step
of the way. I know, You will keep me going on.

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PRAYER

GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST - REAFFIRM YOUR FAITH.

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Scriptures to read: Romans 10:9-10, Luke 9:23, 1 John 1:9

Let us pray:

Jesus, this testimony points to you. Your **finished** work on the **cross** made this testimony possible.

I **believe** that you are the Son of God, that you died on the cross to rescue me from sin and death and to restore me to **Our Father**.

I **believe** that you died and rose for me to have an abundant life. A life that is not necessarily free from challenges, but a life that delights in your wise plan and perfect will for me.

Thank you that you make **all things** work out for my good.

I **choose** now to turn from my sins, my self-centeredness, and every part of my life that does not please you.

I **choose** you. I give myself to you. I **receive** your **forgiveness** and ask you to take your rightful place in my life as my **Saviour** and **Lord**.

Come reign in my heart, fill me with your love and your life. May my most passionate desire be, to become a **grand display** of the fruit of the Spirit, your personality and your character Lord.

May my life always point to you in every circumstance.

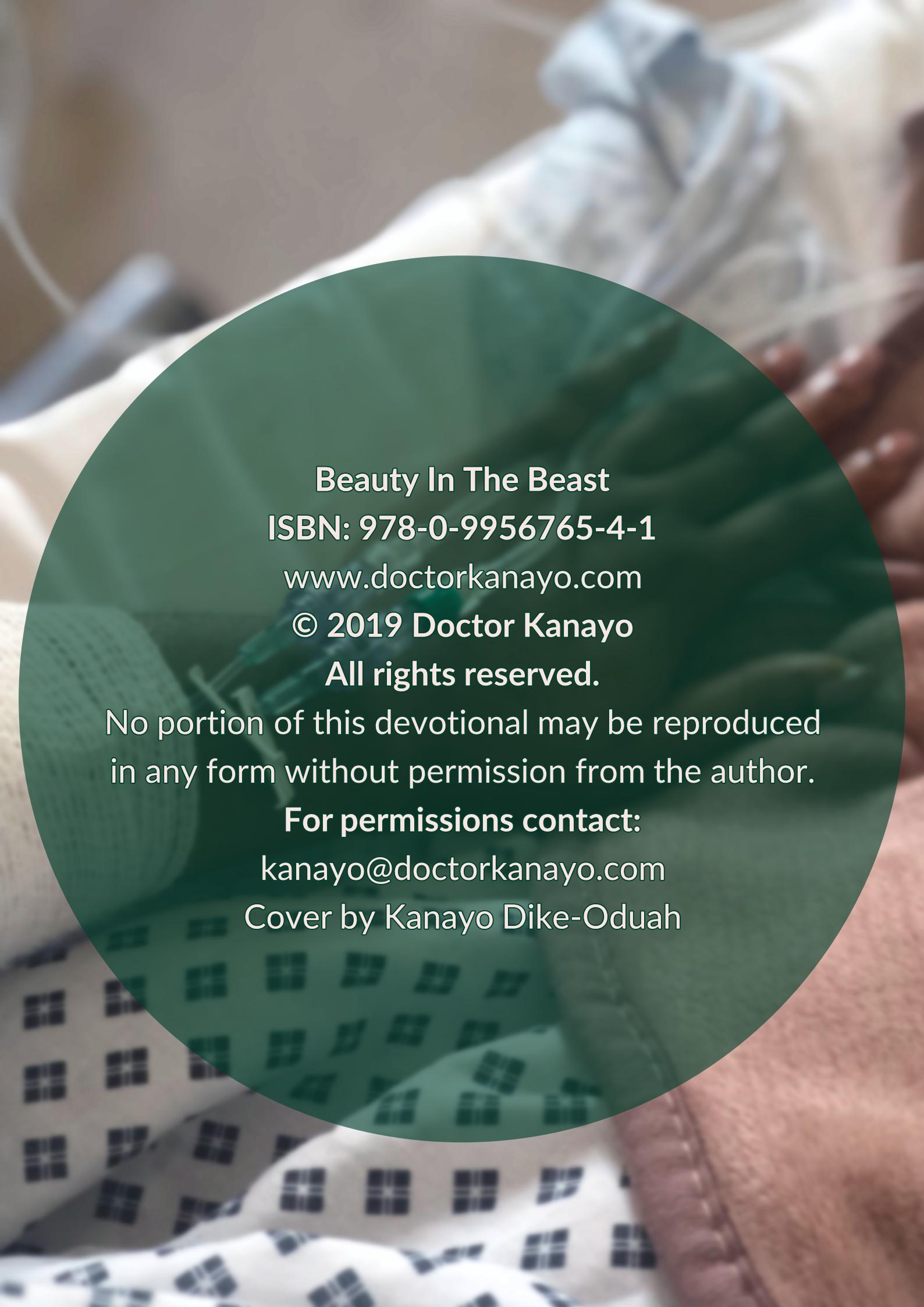
Break me and make me like you. Restore me, Jesus. Live in me. Love through me.

In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.

If you prayed this prayer for the first time please ensure that you take practical steps to affirm your faith. Join a church, share the start of your journey with a Christian leader or friend and root yourself in God's word.

Check out doctorkanayo.com for resources.



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