

# Grace Will Lead Us Home PDF (Limited Copy)

Jennifer Berry Hawes



## GRACE WILL LEAD US HOME

The Hard, Inspiring Journey to Forgiveness  
After the Charleston Church Massacre

JENNIFER BERRY HAWES



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# **Grace Will Lead Us Home Summary**

Finding Hope and Healing in the Wake of Tragedy

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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## About the book

In "Grace Will Lead Us Home," Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jennifer Berry Hawes provides a deeply moving exploration of the aftermath of the tragic shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 17, 2015. This horrific event unfolded during a Bible study when a young white man opened fire, claiming the lives of nine innocent individuals. Driven by a misguided desire to incite racial violence, this act sent shockwaves across the nation and ignited discussions about race, violence, and forgiveness.

Hawes offers an intimate glimpse into the lives of those affected by the shooting, gaining unprecedented access to grieving families and key community figures. In the face of unimaginable loss, many family members turned toward forgiveness, embodying a profound act of grace that stood as a glimmer of hope amid deep sorrow. This sentiment of forgiveness not only became a powerful response to an act of hatred but also provided a foundation for healing within the community.

Through her narrative, Hawes delves into the complexities of grief and the arduous journey toward recovery. She highlights the internal and external struggles faced by the survivors and the families of the victims as they navigate their pain while also longing for justice. The book reflects on the broader implications of this tragedy, examining Charleston's historical

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context of racial conflict and resilience.

"Grace Will Lead Us Home" ultimately honors the nine victims while celebrating the strength and spirit of a community determined to rise from its painful history. It serves as an essential reflection on faith, the power of forgiveness, and the human capacity for healing in the face of profound tragedy. Hawes' poignant storytelling not only memorializes those lost but also illuminates the path towards understanding, reconciliation, and change in a society grappling with its enduring legacy of division.

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## About the author

In the chapters covered, Jennifer Berry Hawes delves into the intricate and often tumultuous relationship between religion, community, and individual conviction through her investigative lens. Focusing on various case studies, she reveals how faith can unite and divide individuals, communities, and even families.

Hawes introduces key characters representing diverse faith backgrounds, who each grapple with personal crises that challenge their beliefs. For instance, we meet Sarah, a devout churchgoer torn between her loyalty to her faith and the moral complexities surrounding a community scandal that has shaken her small town. Meanwhile, David, who has distanced himself from the church after a personal tragedy, represents the struggle many face when confronting the darker aspects of faith institutions.

Throughout the chapters, Hawes weaves background information pertinent to the titular events, shedding light on historical contexts that shape the characters' perspectives. This understanding aids in unpacking the intricacies of religious dogma and its real-world implications.

As the narrative unfolds, Hawes skillfully intertwines compelling anecdotes with broader societal commentary, illustrating how personal beliefs intersect with collective culture. The tension between tradition and modernity

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becomes palpable as characters confront their convictions, leading to dramatic turning points that challenge their sense of self and community allegiance.

Hawes' acute observations encourage readers to reflect on their own beliefs and the powerful role of faith in shaping personal identity and communal responsibilities. In doing so, she not only highlights individual stories but also provides a microcosm of the larger spiritual and ethical dilemmas that resonate across society. Each character's journey ultimately sparks a broader dialogue about the complexities of faith, accountability, and the human condition.

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# Summary Content List

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# Chapter 1 Summary: We Have Stared Evil in the Eye

## Summary of Chapter 1: Grace Will Lead Us Home

### Introduction

In this poignant opening chapter, we are introduced to Felicia Sanders, a devoted member of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston. On a warm June evening, she is preparing for a Bible study meeting, a regular and cherished gathering that connects her deeply with faith, family, and the church community. This chapter sets the stage not just for Felicia's personal story but also for the historical significance of the church, being the oldest AME congregation in the South and a vital part of African American heritage and civil rights history.

### Felicia's Background

Felicia reflects on her family's history and the profound role that religion plays in her life. As she drives through the familiar streets of Charleston, her thoughts drift to her youngest child's involvement in church activities and the importance of Emanuel. The church symbolizes hope and resilience in the face of past and ongoing racial struggles, reinforcing Felicia's commitment to her faith and community.

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## **The Shooter's Perspective**

In a stark contrast, we are introduced to the perspective of a young white man whose mind is clouded by a toxic ideology of racial supremacy. His growing obsession with white nationalism fuels his intentions to attack Emanuel during the Bible study session, framing the narrative as a harrowing clash between hate and faith.

## **The Events Unfold**

As Felicia and other members gather for fellowship and spiritual support, their peaceful evening is violently disrupted. The shooter infiltrates the church, unleashing horror and chaos that reverberate through the congregation. Among the victims are Felicia's family members, intensifying her personal tragedy and highlighting her role as a beloved grandmother and community pillar.

## **Immediate Aftermath and Community Response**

In the wake of the attack, the chapter delves into the immediate aftermath—the shock and grief felt by survivors, community members, and law enforcement as they process the event. Despite the overwhelming pain, the narrative shifts to reveal the church's response, emphasizing a powerful

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message of forgiveness and resilience. Community members rally together, reflecting on their collective strength and commitment to healing in the face of profound loss and hatred.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter concludes with a haunting exploration of the intersection of faith, race, and community in America. As Felicia and her community confront their grief, the narrative foreshadows the lasting impact of this tragedy on Charleston and beyond, reinforcing themes of grace, unity, and the enduring human spirit in the battle against darkness and division.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: EPILOGUE

### Epilogue Summary

The sentencing of Dylann Roof in 2017 brought a pivotal moment for the families affected by the tragic shooting, but the journey of healing and justice continued long after. Following his sentencing, Roof's friend Joey Meek was also punished for his involvement, and former police officer Michael Slager pleaded guilty to civil rights offenses, resulting in a significant prison term.

In 2018, new challenges surfaced as Roof's family faced troubling incidents, notably his sister's arrest for threats involving gun violence. At the same time, the repercussions of the shooting resonated throughout Charleston, prompting critical conversations about gun control and racial justice within the community.

Despite these struggles, local leaders initiated healing efforts, including the establishment of memorial foundations for the victims. A landmark moment occurred when Charleston city council officially apologized for its historical role in slavery, although this move faced resistance from some council members.

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While progress was seen, issues of White supremacy and divisiveness persisted in national conversations, as evidenced by ongoing violent incidents targeting marginalized communities. Reverend Eric S.C. Manning played a vital role in addressing these issues through sermons that called for love, understanding, and a commitment to confronting hate.

## **Remarks by the President at Eulogy for Reverend Clementa Pinckney**

### **Summary**

In a heartfelt eulogy for Rev. Clementa Pinckney, President Obama celebrated Pinckney's enduring legacy of faith, service, and perseverance. He recognized Pinckney as a beacon of hope and an advocate for justice, reflecting on the challenges he faced in his commitment to community upliftment.

Highlighting the essential role of the church as a sanctuary for the African American experience and a catalyst for social justice, Obama emphasized that faith must inspire real societal change. He urged unity and moral courage in responding to adversity, underscoring grace as a vital theme in the narrative of forgiveness offered by the victims' families towards Roof.

The President's remarks included a call to action for the community to confront historical wrongs and to dismantle symbols of hate, specifically

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referencing the Confederate flag as a significant barrier to progress.

Additionally, Obama stressed the importance of recognizing our shared humanity and advocated for systemic reforms to combat gun violence and racial inequality, encouraging collective commitment to grace and justice as foundational elements in the pursuit of a more just society.

### **Acknowledgments Summary**

In the acknowledgments section, the author expresses profound gratitude to the victims' families and community members who shared their heartfelt stories and insights. This section highlights the importance of collaborative storytelling in capturing the deep human experiences connected to the tragedy. Special thanks are extended to journalists, editors, and publishing professionals whose contributions were vital in bringing this narrative to fruition, emphasizing the communal effort involved in addressing such profound and impactful events.

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