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Day 1 - An Unforgettable Friend -- A friend is someone who accepts you as you are, understands where you have been, accepts who you have become, and still, loves and is always there for you. My truest and most unforgettable friend came into my gloomy life like burst of sunshine and to this day, remains the same.

It was a Tuesday evening, 2005, our Orlando Library's Monthly Book Club had just ended the night's meeting where a Speaker in clothing of the time had given a Presentation, and served food from the time of the book, "A Land Remembered."

Most of the members were talking with the Presenter. One other member and I were busy clearing the tables and gathering the chairs to be placed in their storage closet. I was in a sad "Doom and Gloom" mood left over from an unpleasant experience I encountered that morning with a couple of the women in the Orangetree's water aerobics class.

"Wasn't that a wonderful presentation?" came this cheer filled vibrant voice from the other end of the table. I was taken back by this bright twinkling blue eyed person, with a smile that lite up the room. Her blond hair formed a sun lite glow surrounding her head, sort of like a halo.

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Perhaps my mental state needed that halo effect, but in my mind there it was and for years to come, it has remained.

"Oh, yes!" | replied. "I felt as if I were in this Orlando area in the 1890s, dressed in a long, faded blue cotton dress as she wore, and trying to survive."

Looking up, I was immediately drawn into this person's aura of energy, enthusiasm and openness. Her forward leaning open body language and endearing demeanor welcomed me into what I felt was her trustworthy world. I so needed a friend and prayed this was the person.

Without reservation she continued, "I'm Adajo Miller and I believe you are Jackie Raymond. Are you new to this area?"

As I poured out my heart, I related that I had been in Orlando since 1999 when my husband, Norman, and I had opened a business at Universal Orlando. My husband's death in 2002 left me with the businesses.

"I just bought a house in Orangetree, you know a short distance from the Library and need a social life and local friends." I responded. "Oh, yes, I know Orangetree. I have friends there."

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This lovely woman's trusting demeanor encouraged me to suddenly blurt out, "You don't by any chance have a Season ticket to Disney? My family just bought me an Annual Pass to Disney and I am looking for someone to go to the park with me." I further opened my heart to the bad experience I had that morning with the women in the pool and how they sort of ignored me, the new kid on the block and made their own plans excluding me.

Immediately and with a radiant smile, she replied, "I am retired from Disney and my husband and I go all the time. As a matter of fact, we are going Thursday, can you go with us?"

And thus began a lifetime friendship with a most precious person. Her husband, Arthur, Art to me, became my second-best friend.

Art was in advance stages of Alzheimer's and the three of us became an inseparable threesome.

My admiration increased for this human angel. Never did I ever see this God-loving person ever show anything but love and patience for her

childlike husband. Always the patience of a Saint. I gained so much strength from this beautiful, spirit-filled angel.

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Adajo favorite expression and one I adopted is "God is so good, isn't He." And Yes He is. Anytime when I call, I am always greeted by, "God is good, isn't He?"

P.S. Adajo called June 2020, deep into Covid lockdown. I was living in Atlanta. "Jackie, I am joining this writing Zoom group, join it with me."

"But Adajo, I can talk like "greased lightening, but my writing implements have a constipation problem."

Thanks to Patricia's unwavering patience, I'm still plugging away and here I am. LOL&LOL JackieR