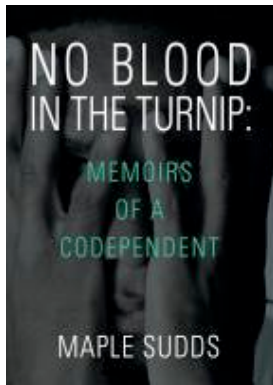




NO BLOOD
IN THE TURNIP:

MEMOIRS
OF A
CODEPENDENT

MAPLE SUDDS



No Blood in the Turnip is a creative nonfiction narrative depicting the emotional struggles of an African American family based on codependency. Maple's story describes a journey of codependency that followed her from childhood through adulthood, and she shares intimate details about how substance abuse and a dysfunctional home environment can affect families. The story is compelling with raw dialogue and it is a testament of faith for those going through trials and tribulations.

No Blood in the Turnip

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/8256.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

Your free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!

NO BLOOD IN THE TURNIP
Memoirs of a Codependent

Maple Sudds

Copyright © 2015 Maple Sudds

ISBN: 978-1-63490-618-0

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida, U.S.A.

This book is based on a true story and true events. Some names in the book have been changed in order to preserve the privacy of the individuals mentioned.

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2015

First Edition

Chapter 7

What's in you, gonna come out

Our little duplex apartment in Mooretown on a street called Lucille couldn't have been more perfect. Those freshly painted walls, the new linoleum covering on the floors, and brand new furniture for every room, were simply beautiful. Even the location was convenient, about a block up from my church which was on the corner of Hollywood and Lucille Street. As that saying goes, "A family that prays together, stays together." I had formed the image of Luke and me walking those few steps to church on Sunday mornings.

Luke was now working for a trucking company with good pay. I quit my job with the Linen service and put Beauty School on hold, to become a full time housewife. It took no extraordinary effort for me to rise out of bed on those early mornings to prepare Luke's breakfast and lunch. That same effort was given later in the evenings. I listened for Luke's car, with that loud muffler. The instant I heard it, the water for his bath was run. And Fridays were special...payday. Luke and I had a routine; together we went to the bank to cash his check, paid our bills, and off to the supermarket.

I didn't object when Luke went out on weekends. There were times I helped him dress; had his clothes laid on the bed for him; shined his shoes. I saw no problem with a man having worked hard all week, going out and unwinding with the guys on Friday and Saturday nights, as long as Luke had taken care of his financial responsibilities. In hindsight, I guess one could say I was like the characters in that Movie called, "The Stepford Wives" only I required the husband to bring his money home to me and I would manage it. I had worked out a durable regimen and all Luke had to do was follow the plan. I had thought Luke was in compliance with that arrangement, until one day Mama cautioned.

"Georgann," said Mama, "Luke says you take's all his money and jus' give him a nuff money to put gas in his car, and a few dollars extra."

Surprisingly I answered, "But Mama, that's all Luke needs," I replied. "Because I make sure all the bills are paid and buy his cigarettes when we go to the market. What more could he ask for?"

Mama shook her head and warned, "Georgann, you shouldn't take all the man's money."

I brushed it off, "Aah Mama." I said, "Luke doesn't need any more money."

But I did.

In March of 1965, I returned to beauty school to complete my course. Only forty hours were needed

for the Testing Board, and a payment balance of fifty dollars on my tuition. The Board was meeting within two months. With careful budgeting, I could save the fifty dollars.

Luke and I were a team. I made the rules and he was following them. And so far everything was going smoothly. But somewhere within that third month things changed; I became pregnant and Luke gradually started breaking the rules. Instead of Luke coming directly home to get me, he went to the bank alone, cashed his check and brought me the money and the check stub. I thought, *Okay, I could live with this*. However, several weeks later, the check stub didn't balance out with the money.

"Luke," I questioned. "What happened to the rest of the money?"

"Georgann, I got a speedin' ticket," said Luke. "And I had to pay it."

Luke's 1955 Chevy hot-rod was built for drag racing. But instead of racing it at the Drag Strip on weekends, Luke drag raced on the public streets, getting speeding tickets frequently. I was still doing my "Stepford Wife" routine, making it as comfortable and convenient for Luke as possible.

Luke also had the conveniences of what I soon discovered was not a recreational gambling habit; Country Shack was a street over...and Lord have

mercy! My carefully planned budget became non-existent, and the bills began to mount. I completed the hours necessary to get my Beautician's License. But I could save no money. We got a loan for \$150. That Friday evening when we arrived home with the money, Luke, calling me by the pet name he had given me, said, "Ann, let me keep the money 'til Monday, you don't need it until then."

Suspiciously, I asked, "Why do you want to keep it?"

"I just want to keep it." He said, "Don't you trust me?"

I looked into his eyes and felt guilty as I said within myself, "No I don't."

I hesitated, but then said, "Alright, you can keep it. But please don't gamble this money away!"

"Ann, do you think I'm *crazy*?" He said. "I know what we gotta do with this money, and I ain't gonna mess it up!"

Reluctantly, I gave Luke the \$150.

Three hours passed. I sat at the window watching for Luke like a hawk. One o'clock Saturday morning Luke came home.

"Georgann, I'm so sorry!" said a teary-eyed Luke. "Please forgive me!"

"Luke! What happened? You didn't lose the money?"

Luke shook his head, saying, “I lost all the money!”

My opened mouth froze.

However, love is supposed to conquer all. I gathered Luke in my arms. “Don’t cry...it’s gonna be alright.”

“But Ann,” he said sorrowfully. “Monday you s'posed to pay the money, and I done lost it!”

“I can take the test next year.” While trying to console Luke and thinking, *Lord, don't let this one incident cause me to give up on him. Help me to have love, patience and understanding.*

Meanwhile, putting that one gambling incident behind us, I was a contented pregnant wife, and everything seemed to be going great.

However, the “real” Luke could only play that part for so long. Luke’s coming home from work on Friday’s got later and later, and the money coming up shorter and shorter. It was gradually developing into a pattern, until the dreadful inevitable...he didn’t come home. That’s when the “shit hit the fan,” and I went ballistic.

It was a Friday evening. I was in my sixth month of pregnancy and had looked forward to showing off my prettiest maternity dress for Luke, but he didn’t show up.

I got undressed, went to bed and cried myself to sleep. Saturday morning Luke still had not come home. I began making telephone calls. No one had seen him. Finally, about one o'clock in the afternoon, Luke came home.

"Luke, where have you been?" I asked.

"I was just 'round to Country Shack."

"Country Shack," I repeated, "all night?!"

"Yeah, I got into a little gamblin' game," he explained. "I got another speedin' ticket and I wanted to win the money back that I had used to pay the ticket wit."

"Did you win it back?"

Luke hesitated then said, "Naw, I lost it all!"

I stared at him with utter disbelief. When suddenly, a pregnancy tantrum emerged and that dark side of me exposed itself. And those main ingredients that I prayed for ... love, patience and understanding, momentarily escaped my memory. I made teeth-prints in Luke's chest! I bit him...I hit him...and I tried to kick him!

Luke overpowered me and finally got me calmed down.

The thought of being homeless, or having to eat pinto beans and biscuits everyday, didn't set too well.

Sobbing, I asked, "What are we gonna do about our rent and food?"

“Don’t worry about it. I will get the money to buy food,” Luke said with confidence. “We’ll just have to pay the rent next week. Just let me handle it.”

Luke left home and returned hours later with a wad of one dollar bills. The appearance of that money was wrinkled and had the odor of cigarette smoke on it. It was obviously gambling money. I became very familiar with that offensive odor on those dollar bills and in his clothing, not fully realizing it came with the territory.

I felt that I was slowly being thrust into an unfamiliar life ... a whole new environment. I realized I had to grow up and be very responsible, if we were to have a good marriage. Because of his squandering ways it was going to be left totally on my shoulders to make it work, until the glorious day when Luke would magically change.

The J C Penney's lay-a-way paper showed a balance of \$10. That cold November Thursday afternoon, I was at the Big House showing Mama the slip of paper that named all the items I had on lay-a-way. Mama gasped, "Georgann! dat baby ain't gon' need all this stuff to start out wit!"

"But Mama", I said, "I want to have everything that's going to be needed now, so that I won't have to worry about it later. Besides, we can afford it, 'cause

Luke got a good payin' job wit that trucking company." I boasted, "He makes \$70 a week."

Mama's eyes widened, "\$70 a week!" Mama repeated. "Chile, dat's some *good* money. Now don't spend every penny. You need to save some for a rainy day."

I thought to myself, *Mama don't realize that every week can become a rainy day with Luke!*

Two weeks later, on that Friday evening, our little apartment was sparkling clean, as I awaited Luke's arrival from work. Seven o'clock I was still waiting for Luke. Eight o'clock...I was still waiting for Luke. By 9 p.m., every car with a loud muffler coming down Lucille Street, I tried to *will* those cars to be Luke's car. Around 10 p.m., seven months pregnant and waddling like a duck on that chilly Friday night, I stood at the door on the outside of Country Shack, embarrassed, and on the verge of tears, asking anybody and everybody to summon my husband. I considered myself a nice respectable Christian, and going into a place of that sort was beneath me. But it was more befitting to stand on the outside and acted like the beggar! Finally, some good "Samaritan" made contact.

"Georgann, what you doin' here?" asked Luke.

"I'm here because you didn't come home. And I hope you haven't messed up the money!"

Luke was hyped. His eyes were dancing around in his head, and he was talking fast. "Naw Ann, I ain't lost the money. I'm on a winnin' streak!"

"Luke," I begged. "Please don't lose the money, 'cause you promised that we would get the baby's things out of lay-a-way, tomorrow!"

"Ann, we've got plenty of time before the lay-a-way hafta be out." Then Luke, in his cunning ways grabbed my arms, kissed my cheek for reassurance and said, "Now, you go on back home and I'll be on as soon as I hit this big win!" Luke came home about five o'clock Saturday morning, with barely enough money for groceries.

It became apparent that Luke's word meant zero! I was getting a rude awakening. My fantasy of the "hard working man" who takes care of his family didn't quite represent Luke. Work presented no problem for Luke. But he had problems being responsible with money! Not only that, I got another eye-opener...Luke's ability to read was very limited. But, that was not going to be an obstacle to my plan. Mama's wedding gift...she had said I was going to need it. She didn't lie! ... Luke and I had Bible Study.

On January 25, 1966 Jeff was born. Three months later Mama babysat Jeff, while I returned to Beauty School. Six weeks later, I finally got my license and

started working at a beauty parlor within walking distance from the house.

For several months it seemed that things were going well. Luke was home on weekends more, did well with his financial obligations. I saw a glimmer of hope!

But soon, Luke made me realize that I had had no business trying to impersonate the “potter,” because he certainly wasn’t going to continue imitating the “clay.” One Friday Luke went to work and didn't return. I had enough of Luke! Six o'clock Saturday evening, Daddy helped me load Jeff's baby bed with all our belongings. Before the crack of dawn Sunday morning, a longing and tugging at my heart for Luke and our little three-room apartment found me tiptoeing to the telephone.

"Hello!" Luke answered in a drowsy voice.

"Luke," I whispered into the telephone. "I wanna come home!"

"OK Ann. Gimme time to get my clothes on and I'll be there."

Shamed-faced, I couldn't look Mama in her eyes. "Mama," I said, "Luke is comin' to get me."

"*What?*" Mama yelled. "Chile, giv'da boy a nuff time to *miss* you!" she continued, "He jus' might *straighten-up and fly right!*"

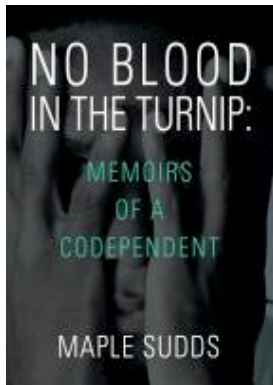
Looking down, I said, "I wanna go back home to Luke."

Mama shrugged her shoulders, shook her head and said, "Georgann, it ain't no sense in you bein' *dat* bigga fool!"

"Girl!" said Daddy, "you had me borrowed a car, took that baby's crib apart, loaded all that stuff, and now you talkin' about going *back!*" said an angry Daddy, "well don't expect me to help you anymore!"

Nannie puffed on her cigarette, and strangled. Her eyes stretched the size of two fifty cent coins as they rolled to the ceiling. "Gurl!" she gasped, "you love dat boy's *dirty* drawers!"

After all was said, it didn't have any measure over my love. Luke came and got Jeff and me. And we were back in our castle!



No Blood in the Turnip is a creative nonfiction narrative depicting the emotional struggles of an African American family based on codependency. Maple's story describes a journey of codependency that followed her from childhood through adulthood, and she shares intimate details about how substance abuse and a dysfunctional home environment can affect families. The story is compelling with raw dialogue and it is a testament of faith for those going through trials and tribulations.

No Blood in the Turnip

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/8256.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**