The Adventures of Rooney Cruz

Hannah
The Belle of Prayer

written by Erin Weidemann
Welcome, Little Belle.

Your superhero journey begins right now...
“Hey, Rooney. You look super cute today.” Kylie, one of the “cool” kids, rolled her eyes and giggled. The other girls nodded, but Rooney could tell they were joking.

She looked down and took a big breath. She liked the outfit she was wearing.

“Uh, thanks? My mom and I went shopping last week and . . . Hello?”

The girls were already walking away.
Rooney shrugged her shoulders and began to walk toward the field.

All of a sudden her foot slid across a thick patch of mud and down she went.

The puddle made a terrific spludge as her body flew forward into the murky mess.

*Come on!* she thought. *Yuck!*

Her pants were smeared with mud, and her shoes felt kind of gooey.

She looked up to see the girls whip around in a hurry. *That* got their attention.
“Awkward!”

“Ewwwww!”  “So gross!”

As Rooney wiped off the mess and stood up, she saw that the tallest girl, Maddie, was rolling around a small, gray object in her hand. Then Maddie closed her fist and reached into the air. “Please don’t——” Rooney started to say.

Kylie and her friends were pointing, and then they were laughing. This made Rooney’s heart ache.
It was a direct hit. Rooney rubbed the red spot on her shoulder. She reached down and picked up the smooth, shiny rock. She squeezed it. Hard. As hard as she could.

“Leave me alone!” she growled at the girls.
The tall tree had long branches full of leaves that swayed gently in the cool breeze. This was her tree, and when she sat underneath it, she felt safe.

She found her favorite root. It was twisty and thick. Her fingers followed the path it took up the tree, snaking its way to the center of the trunk. She danced her fingers along its windy, wriggly edge.

“Why are they so mean?” she whispered. “I don’t get it.”
Rrrrrring!
Is that the school bell? Rooney thought. It sure doesn’t sound like it.

Ring-a-ding DING!
“What is that?”

She looked all around. Where was that sound coming from? Then something moved in the tree, and it wasn’t the leaves.

Sitting on the lowest branch was a small creature with two wings. The creature lifted off the branch, twirled in the air, and landed gently on Rooney’s knee. Then it spoke.

“Hey! What’s up?”
Rooney could feel her eyes get huge. For a second, she didn’t know what to do or think. “Um, are you talking? That’s just weird.”

“Oh, come on. Angels can do lots of weird stuff.”

Rooney shook her head. “You’re an angel?”

“My name is Mari, and yes, I’m an angel.”

“Aren’t you kind of small? Angels are big and have huge wings and—”

Mari held up her tiny hand. “Hey, I may not be that big, but I am an angel for sure. See . . . robe, marvelous wings, halo . . .” Mari spun around slowly, gently flapping her wings and tilting down so Rooney could see the small gold circle around her head.

“I’m not just any angel either. I’m your angel!”
Rooney blinked a few times. *This cannot be happening*, she thought. “Right. I’m sorry, but there is no way you’re a real angel. I must have hit my head when I fell down.”

Mari scrunched up her face.

Rooney felt bad. “All right, that was rude. I believe you. It’s just pretty funny that you’re here. But since you are, maybe you can help me. Those girls are so mean. It’s like this every day. I don’t know why they’re making fun of me.”
Mari sat down on Rooney’s knee and crossed her legs. “I hear you. You know, this kind of thing has been happening forever. This reminds me exactly of Hannah.”

“Hannah?” Rooney didn’t know any girls with that name.

“She’s one of the Bible Belles!” Mari nudged her. “She’s a superhero.”

“What’s a Bible Belle?” Rooney asked. “I’m not sure how you don’t already know this, but superheroes aren’t real. They’re comic book characters. They’re all made up.”

“Well,” Mari said, “Hannah was a real live human with powers and everything. Come on. I’ll show you.”
Mari fluttered her wings and lifted off Rooney's knee. She sailed up to Rooney's hand and lightly tapped on her fingers. “Open up.”

Rooney unfolded her hand. She was still holding that rock. Mari flew down and picked it up. It was about the size of her head. Then she soared down and placed the rock on top of Rooney's root.

Suddenly the rock began to wobble. Then it wiggled. And then it shot quick as lightning up the trunk, hit the center, and ... **BOOM!** The trunk split open and out bounced a window.
“Pretty cool, huh?” Mari said.

Rooney glanced down. “Hey, my clothes! Mari, where’d all the mud go?”

Mari laughed. “I thought you should have clean clothes for our journey.”

She flew to the corner of the window and waved her hand for Rooney to join her. “Take a look.”

“See down there,” Mari whispered. “Hannah’s with her husband and, um, his other wife.”

Rooney wasn’t sure she had heard Mari correctly. “What? He has two wives? No way.”

“*Weird, right?*”
“Okay,” Mari continued, “so Hannah, her husband, and this other wife, Peninnah, live together as a family. But Hannah’s husband isn’t always around, and well...listen.”

Rooney leaned in. She could see a woman sitting at a small table, mixing something in a large wooden bowl. Another woman was bustling around the room with her hands on her hips.

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Rooney got a sour look on her face. “Wow. What’s her problem?”

“She’s not very nice, is she?” Mari said. “Peninnah is super jealous because her husband loves Hannah more than he loves her.”

Rooney was quiet. “That must feel pretty bad, but that’s no reason for her to be so mean.”

Rooney could hear Hannah whispering to herself. “Just ignore her,” she said. “God loves me, I know He does. Don’t listen to her.”

“Why doesn’t she do something?” Rooney asked Mari.

Mari nodded her head. “I know, right? This went on for years.”
“Every year Hannah and her family take this trip to celebrate and worship God,” Mari explained.

Rooney was confused. “She looks like she’s having the worst time ever.”

“Enough is enough,” Hannah said. “I’ve got to get out of here.”
Rooney watched as Hannah walked quickly away from the party and sat down in a quiet corner near a large stone building.

“What’s she doing?” Rooney asked. “I can barely hear her.”

“Rooney, watch this,” Mari said. “It’s my favorite part.”

Rooney leaned farther into the window, and she heard Hannah’s voice.

“God, why is this happening to me? I am so sad,” Hannah cried. “I faithfully serve You, and I love You. I know that You love me. Please don’t forget me, Lord. I know You have a special plan for my life. I can feel it, and I trust You.”

Hannah was quiet for a moment, and then she spoke again. “Please give me a son. I will raise him to love You too, just like I do. When he is old enough, I promise to bring him back here and he’ll follow You faithfully for his whole life.”
Just then, Rooney saw a man walking over to Hannah. She heard him say, “Excuse me, but you’re acting a little funny. I think you should leave.”

“Mari,” Rooney asked, “who’s this guy?”

Mari put her hand on Rooney’s shoulder. “That’s Eli. He’s the priest, the man in charge.”

Hannah looked up, and Eli moved a little closer. “What are you doing here?” he asked.

“I’m talking to God.” Hannah tilted up her head. “I’m telling Him what’s in my heart. Please don’t send me away. I’ve held my feelings inside for so long. Now I’m here to tell God the truth and ask for help.”

Eli nodded. “You know, that’s very brave. May God bless you and your prayer. Go in peace.”
Suddenly Mari’s window shook again. Rooney could see Hannah, and she was holding something tiny in her arms.

“Hold on!” Rooney shouted. “I thought Hannah couldn’t have a baby.”

Mari smiled. “But she did! A little baby boy, and she named him Samuel.”

Rooney was so excited. “Wow! Wait, why?”


“Awesome!” Rooney couldn’t believe it. She leaned in to get a closer look.

“For this child I prayed,” Hannah said, “and God listened to the true desire in my heart.”
Rooney jumped up. “Hold on! She talked to God, and He heard her? God hears her? No way. She really does have superpowers!”

Mari did a flip in the air. “I know! Pretty cool, right?”

“Wait a second.” Rooney thought hard. “Mari, do you think God will hear me if I talk to Him?”

Mari nudged her gently. “Try it.”
Rooney took a deep breath. She put her head down and closed her eyes.

“Okay, God, here we go. This is the first time I have ever talked to You. I might mess it up, but I’ll try my hardest. I just want to say that it is awesome that Hannah could talk to You. She really loved You, didn’t she? Hey, is that why You could hear her? Anyway, what You did was a miracle. I’m having some problems at school. I’m not sure what to do. Can You help me like You helped Hannah? I hope so. I hope You can hear me.”

Rooney opened one eye, then the other. “How was that?”
Mari threw her hands in the air. “You did it! That was great.”

Mari put her arm around Rooney’s neck. “You know, God can hear you anytime you want to talk to Him. It doesn’t matter where you are or what you’re doing. You can talk to Him as much as you want, and He will always help you.”

Rooney thought for a moment. “Do you think He can really help me with the girls at school?”

Mari held Rooney’s hand. “One thing I know is that God can do amazing things. He’s got a special plan in mind for you. Just keep talking to Him, and be ready for Him to show you.”
“I’m so proud of you!” Mari squeezed Rooney’s hand. “And now, check this out.”

Mari’s hands spun around quickly, and a bright shining bell appeared above her head.

“This is the Bell of Prayer. It will remind you of the power you have to talk to God and tell Him the truth, just like Hannah. And remember, God can hear you, and He is always listening.”

Rooney reached out to touch the golden bell. It felt warm. “Is this for me?”

“Yes,” Mari said. “Bells are the symbols of the Bible Belles. Each bell represents a real superpower. Once you learn how to use it, it’s yours . . . forever.”
Rooney held out her hands, and the bell floated down, landing softly in her palm. As soon as it touched her hands, the sparkling bell began to glow.
“Really? Thank you, Mari.”

“It’s God’s gift to you,” Mari replied with a wink. “I’m just the messenger.”

“I’ll take really good care of it,” Rooney whispered.
“I promise.”
“Hey, Rooney!”

Rooney looked across the playground and saw that Kylie and Maddie were walking toward her.

“Come here,” Maddie called. “We want to show you something.” She said something to Kylie, and both of them started giggling.

Rooney thought for a second. She looked at Mari. Then she closed her eyes and put her head down.
“Hey, God, it’s me again, Rooney.

Before today, I didn’t know I had the power to talk to You or that You could actually hear me. This changes everything. Now that I know You’re listening, I feel different somehow. I’m not scared or angry anymore. Look what happened to Hannah. She trusted You, and You watched over her. You protected her. Will You do the same for me?

I think I am going to need Your help, like, right now. Please help me know how to talk to Kylie and Maddie. Please help me know what to say and what to do when I get over there. And no matter what happens, now I know that You’ll be with me, just like You were always with Hannah. Thanks, God!”
Rooney looked at Mari and smiled. She took the glowing bell and tucked it safely in her pocket. She could feel the warmth of the bell inside as she started to walk toward the girls. She smiled again.

*She was beginning to understand.*
I will give you hidden treasures,
riches stored in secret places,
so that you may know that I am the LORD,
the God of Israel, who calls you by name.

— Isaiah 45:3

For more information, visit biblebelles.com.
The Adventures of Rooney Cruz

Hannah
The Belle of Prayer

Meet Rooney Cruz. In Book One of the Bible Belles series, she isn't exactly having a great day. Facing the girls on the playground is never easy and, oh, that mud puddle! Just when she begins to think things are hopeless, an angel appears and reveals a shocking truth: superheroes are real, and Rooney's one of them! Through the story of Hannah, Rooney begins a journey that will change her life forever as she uncovers her first secret superpower: the Power of Prayer. Travel with Rooney on the first of many exciting and meaningful adventures that will teach her about God's love and transform her into the greatest superhero of all: a Bible Belle!

For more information, visit biblebelles.com

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