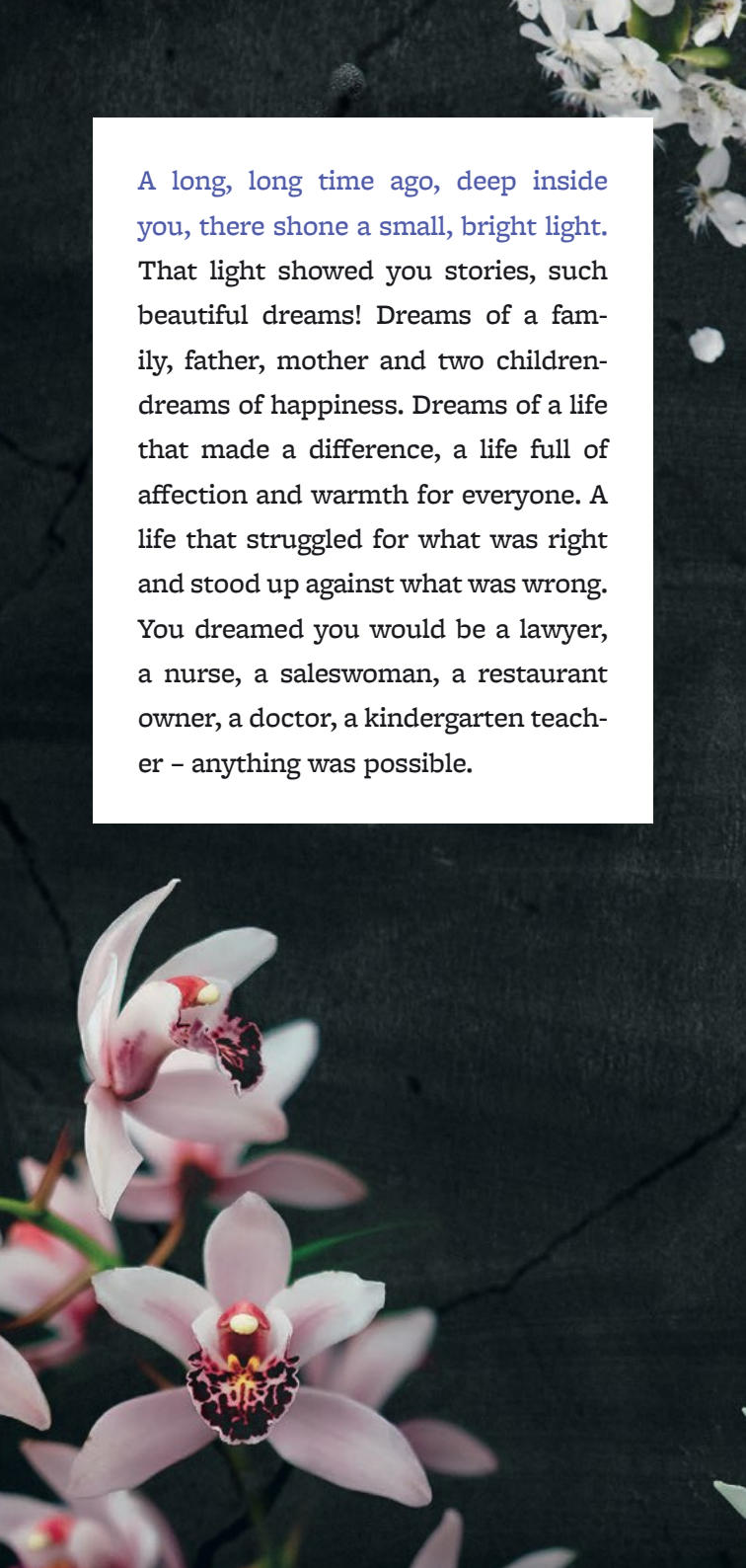




GRAVES

INTO

GARDENS

The background of the image is a dark, textured surface, possibly black or very dark grey. In the top right corner, there are small, delicate white flowers with green leaves. In the bottom left and center, there are several pink orchids with white centers and dark, patterned lips. The text is centered in a white rectangular box.

A long, long time ago, deep inside you, there shone a small, bright light. That light showed you stories, such beautiful dreams! Dreams of a family, father, mother and two children-dreams of happiness. Dreams of a life that made a difference, a life full of affection and warmth for everyone. A life that struggled for what was right and stood up against what was wrong. You dreamed you would be a lawyer, a nurse, a saleswoman, a restaurant owner, a doctor, a kindergarten teacher – anything was possible.

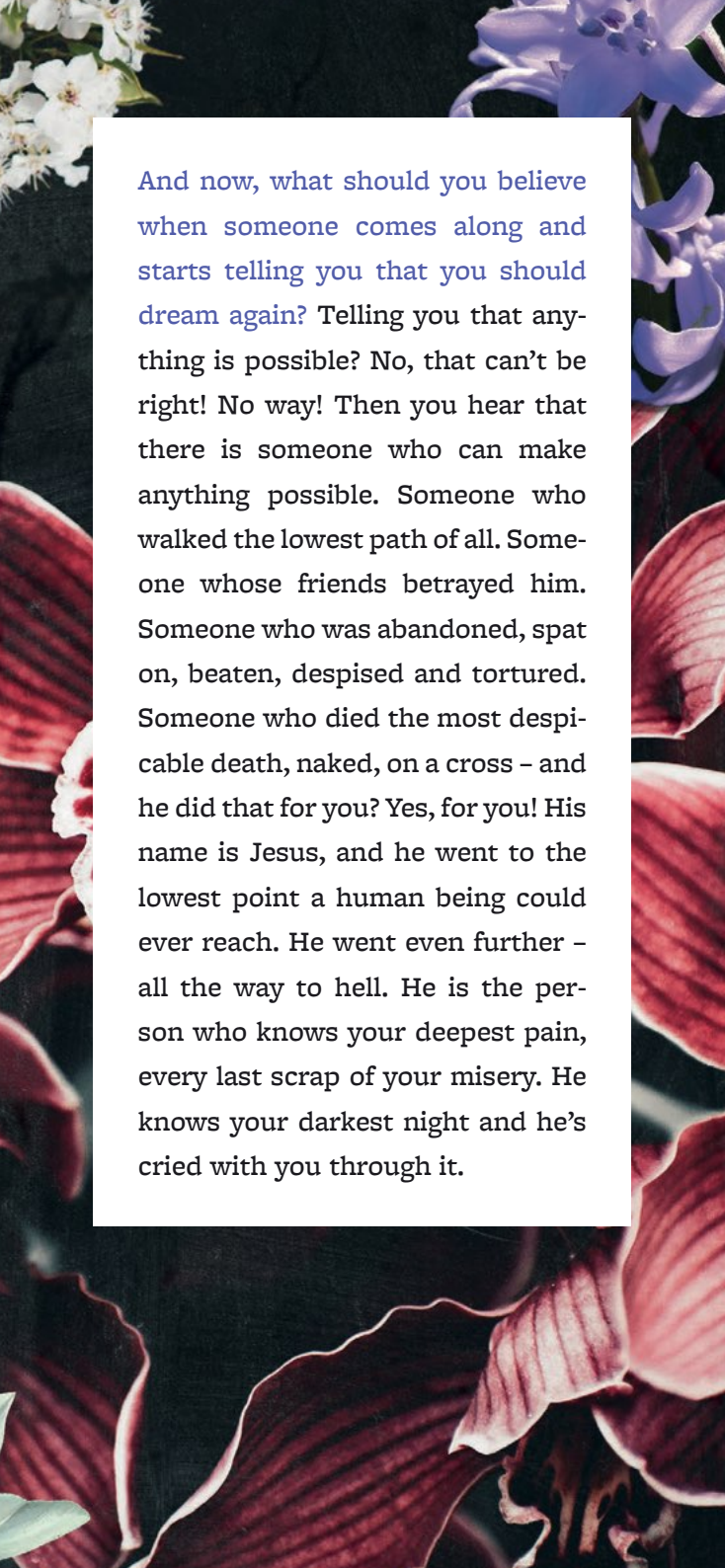


But then something happened. Perhaps it was all the yelling in your family, the fighting, your mother's tears? Or was it your father, who when he was drunk still managed to find his way to your bed, even though you were a child, and did things to you no father should do? Perhaps it was the beatings? Maybe it was words that pierced your heart? "You can't do a thing right! You'll never manage that! You're useless! You're worthless!" Or was it those feelings that never went away, - loneliness, abandonment, hopelessness, shame?

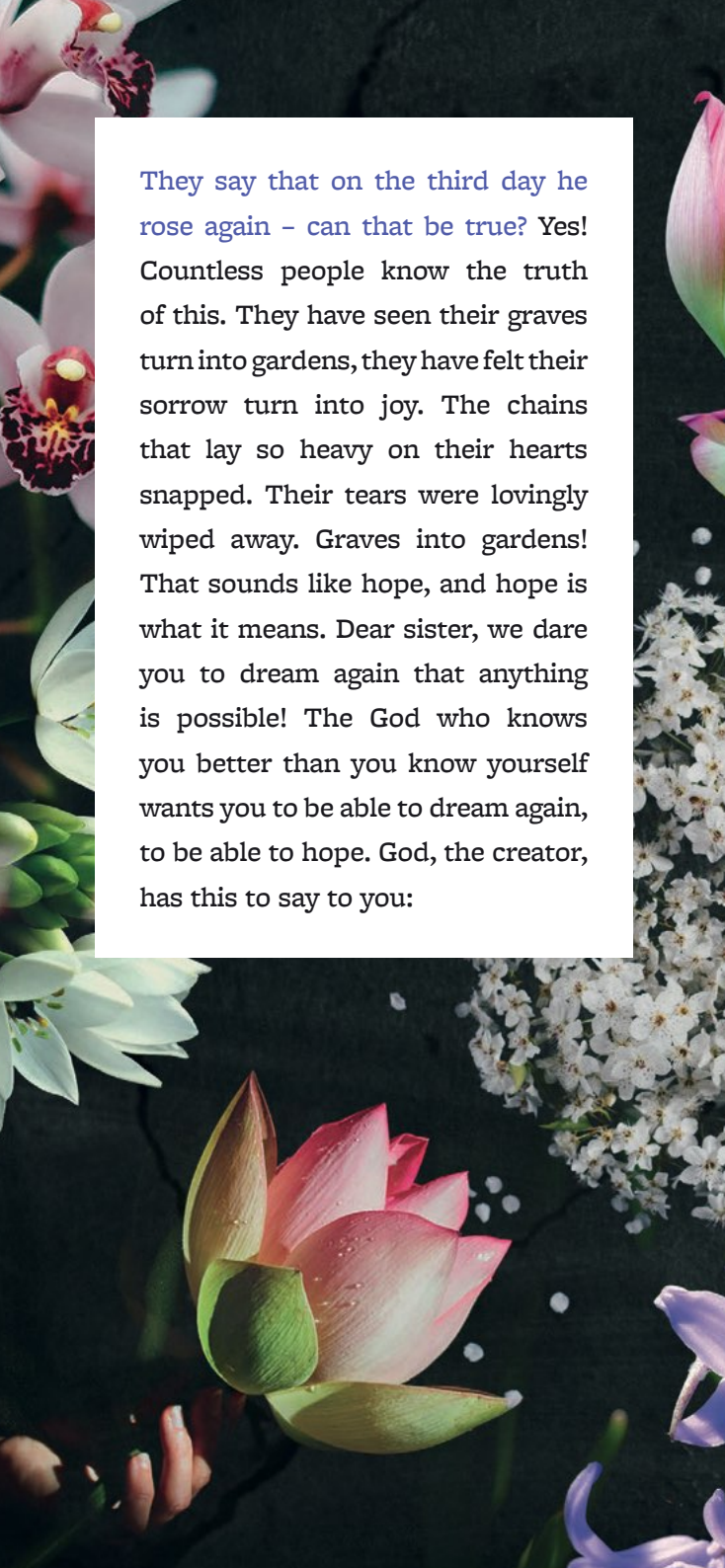


And so your dreams died.





And now, what should you believe when someone comes along and starts telling you that you should dream again? Telling you that anything is possible? No, that can't be right! No way! Then you hear that there is someone who can make anything possible. Someone who walked the lowest path of all. Someone whose friends betrayed him. Someone who was abandoned, spat on, beaten, despised and tortured. Someone who died the most despicable death, naked, on a cross – and he did that for you? Yes, for you! His name is Jesus, and he went to the lowest point a human being could ever reach. He went even further – all the way to hell. He is the person who knows your deepest pain, every last scrap of your misery. He knows your darkest night and he's cried with you through it.



They say that on the third day he rose again – can that be true? Yes! Countless people know the truth of this. They have seen their graves turn into gardens, they have felt their sorrow turn into joy. The chains that lay so heavy on their hearts snapped. Their tears were lovingly wiped away. Graves into gardens! That sounds like hope, and hope is what it means. Dear sister, we dare you to dream again that anything is possible! The God who knows you better than you know yourself wants you to be able to dream again, to be able to hope. God, the creator, has this to say to you:



*"For surely I know the plans
I have for you," says the
Lord, "plans for your welfare
and not for harm, to give
you a future with hope."*

Dear sister, this is our hope for you
and what we pray for!