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I reading

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opening extract from

Nelson Mandela's Long Walk to Freedom

written by

Nelson Mandela

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I tried to stay hopeful but it wasn't easy. At first we were allowed only two visitors a year, and just two letters. Before we were given them, the letters were read by a prison guard who blacked out anything he thought we shouldn't know about.

Twice I received bad news from home. First, I was told my mother had died. Then my eldest son, Thembekile, was killed in a car crash. When I got that news I spent the whole day in my cell thinking about him and the rest of my family. It was one of the saddest days of my life.





On 11th February 1990 I walked out of prison. Twenty-seven years of my life had passed since I was first taken to Robben Island. But the long walk to freedom was almost over.

It was wonderful to hold my lovely wife Winnie in my arms, to see my four beautiful children — now grown up, and to hear my grandchildren laugh and call me Granddad!

Every day our Soweto home was filled with laughter and tears of joy as friends I hadn't seen in twenty-seven years came to welcome me home.



