



THE AMAZING
ADVENTURES OF
B.L. ZEBUB

ABE THE BARTENDER GETS MARRIED

J.L. ROBB

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PREFACE

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.”

Isaiah 45:7 KJV

Park Place Café
Dunwoody, Georgia

“**W**hat’s your name, baby?”
The music was not loud for a bar, and the news shown on every TV screen in the place.

Ignoring the comment, she thought there was way too much news but watched the screens anyway, scanning and listening. The news seemed like a movie that never ended.

E-Vape filled the air with a hint of marijuana. Debbie glanced around the quaint café to see who made the comment, wondering if it was directed toward her.

She observed the man, dressed in a black suit and a black, felt derby with a red feather and a plaid band at the end of the bar; but he was paying no attention to her. She liked the black hat, but the strange man had an odd but unidentifiable odor about him that she could smell from twelve feet away. The man smelled like a great, big, smoky fart. He seemed enthralled with a news bulletin, and she turned back to the screen to read the streaming news alert.

Abe the Bartender adjusted the sound so the bar-crowd could hear about the latest war, earthquake, or some other kind of conflagration. Calamity, the way of the world, Debbie knew that for sure.

Debbie considered herself to be a cosmopolitan woman and had traveled much of the world. She had always been a head-turner and hoped to turn a few tonight. Jet-black hair and olive skin donning her well-toned figure, were gifts from Jesus she figured. She never worked out, and she loved her dark-chocolate truffles, a part of her daily routine. Abe turned the volume up.

Hamas fired more than nine-hundred missiles into Israel today, accidentally killing thirteen Christian children at a private school in Nablus, fifty kilometers north of Jerusalem. Several Muslim children attending a nearby school were also killed. The range of these rockets were unexpected and will present new obstacles for the Israeli Defense Force.

Debbie enjoyed the news but found it often depressing. The world was probably coming to an end, and it looked like she would see it. That was especially depressing. She had counted on being raptured but being a prostitute probably didn't help. She was certain Jesus would not forgive *that* sin. The news droned on, never-ending.

"... Chinese professors from Tsinghua University in Beijing have been arrested by American authorities while visiting a Bioweapons Prevention Seminar at Cleveland Clinic. The latest contagion..."

"What is your name, Madame?"

The man in black sat on the seat next to her, and she hadn't even noticed. She must be getting old or something she figured. She usually was well-aware of her surroundings.

"Deborah," she answered politely, trying to ignore the odor.

The man was tall and smelled like a smoker too; and that made her long for a cigarette. Though she had dropped that nasty habit five years earlier, the smell still made her salivate for a smoke.

“Deborah,” the man said, smiling, a one-sided smile like she loved; and his steel-blue eyes pierced her just as sure as her Momma pierced her ears when she was three. “Deborah was a prophet you know. One of the few female prophets mentioned in the Good Book.”

“Really?”

Deborah was well-aware of her namesake in the *Bible* because her Aunt Stephanie read her the story many times as a child, always telling her she was special to Jesus.

“Yes ma’am,” the man in black said. “She was also the fourth Judge of the Israelites, the only female Judge mentioned in the Good Book.”

She already liked him, which was unusual. Who trusted men? Maybe she could become accustomed of the nauseous, smoky smell.

“Prophetess,” she said, smiling as demurely as a goddess could smile. “Men are prophets.”

“Well,” he said, adjusting the black hat and turning on the barstool. “Á Bible scholar.”

Strange he would say that, Debbie thought, her brain spinning, assessing. She was far from a Bible scholar, and she trusted good-looking men about as much as she trusted the IRS agent that was always visiting Aunt Steph, late at night. As many infections as she had, the kids referred to her as Aunt Staph.

“I am not a scholar, more of a student,” she said smiling. “I read it. The whole book. I believe it.”

The man sipped his dirty martini, glancing at the screen. The news was depressing and dark, but that was why he loved the news. A dark play that never ended.

“Then why are you a hooker?” he asked.

Stunned, Deborah blushed and hoped he didn’t notice. She felt like a strawberry. Oh no. Had she met him before?

“Well,” she said. “You do have a way with introductions.”

Her hand slipped into her small, faux-alligator, hand purse. The derringer was there. She clicked the safety.

“No reason to fear my dear,” the man said. “My name is BL”

He extended his hand and she took it with a cautious smile.

“How do you spell that?”

“Just BL,” he said with a grin. “Did not mean to offend you but just wondered how one could be a Bible-believer and still be a prostitute. It is against the rules, you know.”

Debbie did know, but her addiction to money, men and romance was stronger than her addiction to nicotine had been. She had prayed about it, from time-to-time; but it had done no good. She knew her lifestyle was sinful but also hoped that God would forgive her. She had a good heart. She looked down, embarrassed.

“I know you are right, but prostitution is not mentioned in the Ten Commandments; and those are the only rules Christians have to follow, you know. Adultery is mentioned though. My Aunt Stephanie had an adulterous affair for years, but she still claimed to believe in Jesus. And she did.”

She looked to the right to get Abe’s attention and mouthed, *Bring me another dirty martini, extra olives.*

Waiting for a response, she turned to BL. He was nowhere to be seen, and the smoky smell had disappeared from the air. He had simply vanished.

CHAPTER ONE

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.

Paul- Ephesians 4:32

“**H**elp me, help me... *Please.*”
Jonah couldn't believe his ears at first, a voice from the wild in the middle of an Arizona night?

He depressed the window-down button of the Suburban, head cocked and ear pointed outward like a microphone seeking any offered sounds and hit the stop button, silencing the engine. He hoped it would restart.

Jonah had pulled to the side of the rural road; because the headlights were flickering, thinking he might have a short of some kind. Crickets chirped in the night air; and the breeze was nil, unusual for June in Arizona. The full moon should help in a search, he figured.

“*Hellllp,*” the woman screamed, at least it sounded like a woman.

Deborah Peterson had been a bad girl, again. She knew she had too much to drink and should have never made the late-night journey; but drunks were not rational people. Blood dripped from her chin but went unnoticed. She had been thinking of the man in black and the strange encounter, then... she never saw the deer in the road until the last minute

Jonah searched. It was definitely a woman's voice, Jonah was sure of that; and he quickly opened the heavy door and exited. He waited at the front by the bright-white LED headlights,

listening for a direction in which to search. His flashlight shown as he swept the side of the road to the left.

“Pleassse. Dear God, won’t somebody help me?”

Debbie screamed as loud as she could, wondering if anyone would find her before a wild animal did. She was certain she saw a flash of light in the distance.

Jonah aimed the light behind his SUV and walked toward the sound. The sky was clear and cool; and stars sparkled like diamonds, cold diamonds he thought and longed for global warming to return. He pulled his coat tight around his neck, glad there was no wind chill to add to the 36-degree misery. The woman sounded weak, and he scurried as best he could with the foot injury, more of a scurry-limp.

Stopping again after a hundred feet, he listened carefully. The voice was getting fainter, and Jonah’s pulse quickened. Then he saw the tracks, veering off the shoulder to the right and down into a growth of small pine trees. One small pine lay toppled over, now across the back of the Mercedes.

“I’m coming,” he shouted and limped faster.

Crawling from the rear of the car, under the fallen tree and toward the driver’s door, he heard the sound of quickly running rapids, and his foot sank deep into water and mud. The front of the Mercedes lay fully submerged, in what Jonah thought must be a river; but surely a river wouldn’t flow this close to a highway. *Would it?*

The water was freezing, but Jonah fought his way to the driver’s door, only to see that she had been thrown to the opposite side of the car. *You should always wear your seatbelt*, he said silently and waded to the other side.

On the third attempt, the door opened. An empty vodka bottle washed into the muddy water below, bobbing up and down as it flowed away from the highway and toward a small field of cacti.

Reaching into the sinking car, he was thankful she was small, possibly Asian; and he lifted her easily.

Jonah was not a particularly strong man, though he was the county champion at Two-Man Tug of War, or at least had been three years in a row. Now he was too old for that non-sense. Fresh out of college, he had plans to plan and things to do.

I cain't b'lieve Jonah found God, thank ya Lord Jesus.

Carrying the small, whimpering woman, he remembered his mom's comment from a few years earlier, seemed more like a hundred at times, and perfectly understood but wondered why that thought appeared in his mind.

He *had* been a hellion. A hell of a hellion would be more like it, and he was sure he had embarrassed his mom more than once. He had a dad, he was sure of that; but he had never met him. Not yet at least, but that was on his things-to-do list. He would surprise him one day.

The woman hung limp as limp could be and still be alive, and Jonah got her to a small elevation as the dark sedan edged closer to the rapids. *Where is that water coming from?* he wondered. He lay her softly on the dry ground, looking up and down the highway for headlights. None.

"My baby," the woman whimpered softly, blocked by the din of the rushing water. Jonah leaned closer.

"You're gonna be alright, honey. I have a blanket in my truck, don't wanna try to get you up the hill."

"My baby," she woman with now soaked, jet-black hair repeated. "My son is in the car." She lost consciousness.