

Homeless House



Darius The Baby



Darius The Toddler



“Dari-Dude”



“Gramma” and “Pap-Pah Jordan”

*I prefer to step my homeless streets,
As so many times before,
Than step into and sleep inside
My Homeless House beyond that door.
Homeless House*

G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

This is not a children’s book. It is an adult book written about a child.

Unless otherwise specified, all opening chapter quotations are from G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

Unless otherwise specified, all biblical references are from *Scripture As I Hear It*, G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se. Included are suggested scriptural references that most closely reflect the application. Use your desired translations and concordances for reference.

Unless otherwise specified, all defined vocabulary is from *Diction As I Speak It*, G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se. Use your desired dictionary for reference.

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*Without Jesus’
foundation,
you build a
Homeless
House.*

Scripture As I Hear It
Scriptural Reference:
Psalm 127: 1

Introduction

To me, babies and children are like nuclear waste plants. They need to exist, serve some ultimate worthwhile purpose, but as the saying goes, “Not in my backyard!”
Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Three

From my recently published theo-political autobiography book trilogy, *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? (An Atheist’s Libertarian trek to Christ)*, readers commented that they enjoyed how the work consisted of numerous “stories-inside-the-story.”

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? presents my conversion from fifteen years of political anti-Christian, atheistic activism, then my 1998 conversion to Christ based on later research of His Resurrection. True, many stories under-gird the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* story. *Homeless House* is one of them, and a special one.

For twenty-four years, I have lived a secret. A secret not from shame, disgrace, or anything defaming. In fact, it is noble. Very few people in my life for twenty-four years learned of that episode of my life and its residual aftermath. “Dari-Dude” drew it out.

I have always claimed that I would share that 1989 story, but not in light, casual banter. I exposed it in *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two* because I prayed its exposure may prevent one more such incident. I am sharing it again in prayer that my agony of 1989 through today be used to benefit a certain community; babies and children.

I have excerpted the Dari chapters here in this monograph, *Homeless House*. You will likely find subject matter included that is unclear because you have not read the whole *Shiny Hats* story. However, such subject matter remains irrelevant to the Dari aspect of the excerpts. You have the option to purchase the whole story on .PDF e-Book:

jordanconvert.faithweb.com/blank_3.html \$8.99 via PayPal

Many acquaintances of mine over the last two-and-half decades have mistakenly perceived me as a baby and children hater, anti-babies and children. That simply has never been so: quite contraire. Read on.

I am not motivated by monetary gain. So, *Homeless House* is being produced for churches and other entities to reproduce and sell with copyright considerations waived, provided proceeds go to babies and children ministries.

If this story can generate a mere few dollars for a child, I feel rewarded. I will feel at least something good came from my 1989 victimization that Dari shed new light on in the mid 2000's.

This is not merely "based" or "inspired" by a true story. It is the actual true story; each laugh, each tear.

I ended the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Introduction* with
". . .through tears and laughter, I present *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? (An Atheist's Libertarian Trek to Christ)*."

Darius produced a bulk of the laughs and tears that I typed. He entered the *Shiny Hats* story at *Chapter 214* of *Volume Three*. Meet "Dari," "Pap-Pah Jordan's" "Daffodil."

*There are no bad or illegitimate babies and children.
There are only bad and illegitimate parents.*

Old Witticism

Chapter excerpts begin with my wife's request:

214 No One like You, Dari-Dude

*I know a man who is old now.
As his life wraps up its ends,
He recalls that's it's claimed by friends,
"Life starts at fifty."*

*But as life nears its end, he furthers,
"We've been lied to, My Friends;
Kids are when life just begins.
That's when life begins. . ."*

*. . .He fathered progeny
He'd never have a chance to know.
A child growing never knowing him,
Him never seeing his baby grow.
Now, they'll never get to know. . .*

When Life Begins
G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

. . . "Are you ready to eat?"
"Eat what?"
"I'll throw something together."
"Yeah, that's fine. I'm pretty hungry. Let me check my e-mail to see what apologetics work I've missed."
"Babe, do you really have to tonight?"
"Yes, I do. That's what I do. Remember?"
"But why so much so often?"
"Because that's how much it takes. I vowed to

devote my life to the Lord. This is the manner He chose for me to serve Him. He blessed me with an ability to write and debate. These debates are affecting many fence-sitters' thinking. You knew from the beginning that I'm a Christian fundamentalist apologist who devotes his available time to proclaiming the name of the Lord. It's been months since I put the ball in Locks' court demanding he offer his explanation of what the disciples actually saw when purporting visions of Jesus after His death. I expect he has no answer. So far, he's failed every challenge, even after his voluminous pages of verbiage."

By the way, he never did respond. He extricated himself from the debate, claiming I had too closed of a mind for a serious debate. You be the judge. The pages remain available at jordanconvert.faithweb.com, *My Debates*, Steve Locks.

"I know. I know."

"Don't give me that frustrated patronage."

"I'm not, Babe."

"Yes, you are. Now, I've already effectively handled Professor Cavin. I'm glad I'm the one on my side of that debate. The e-mails I've received regarding him are very encouraging. Melinda, I simply am not going to allow a woman to divert me from my work, especially a frisky one."

"Well, why not? We still have the evening."

"No, we don't. I have this to do. I took time away so you could visit your ailing mother. I spent time with your family. It's time, now, for me to get back to Jesus."

"You're just a phony, Jordan. Drink another."

"Don't mind if I do. Mind grabbing me one?"

... The evening wrapped up with Melinda dropping the bombshell as we settled in bed."

"Babe, I really need to talk to you about something important."

"Oh, no, I'm afraid of this."

"No, Babe, really, it's not as bad as you think."

"Yes, it is, probably worse."

"Tunishia's having some problems."

"No doubt. Gratefully, they're hers, not mine."

"No, Babe, listen."

"What?"

"It's baby Darius."

"Darius? What about him?"

"She needs somewhere for him to stay a few days, maybe a week while she relocates."

"So, 'y'all' expect him to come here? I remind you, I don't like children. I certainly can't stand babies. He's not my problem. I don't care!"

I spoke the truth. I truly did not care.

"Babe, he's my grandbaby. I'd want to spend time with him anyway. This is an appropriate time."

"There is no appropriate time for anything with you. You habitually abuse any and all blessings God bestows on you. If you could behave like a healthy parent or grandparent, that would be one thing. This will turn into a nightmare just like your pizza deliveries and Monika's stay."

"Jordan, Tunishia won't be anywhere near LaGrange."

“She’s in Georgia. That’s frightening enough. It’s too close for comfort. If her bodily excretion, i.e., a baby, is here, it opens me up to unannounced visits and a host of other annoyances and potential expenses.”

“See? Everything is money to you.”

“That’s because I don’t have any. I’m not eager to walk myself into needing even more of something I already don’t have. I don’t need anymore liabilities, especially liabilities for which I’m not responsible. I’ve never been willing to assume the expense of time, effort, and money for a child. Therefore, I responsibly never produced one.”

My memory flashed back to Julie’s belly.

That’s not the same, not my baby, anyway. I have the papers to prove it. I made my mistake, then, distanced myself from more.

“Money, to you, is not an issue. However, I can’t seem to get you to go earn any.”

“Babe, I have a right to my grandchild.”

“Great point, wrong address. You have no rights, here. You’re not my wife or other family member. You’re not a roommate. You contribute nothing to this household’s responsibilities. You’re a guest. Guests don’t invite guests.”

“You are so cold.”

“Notice, here, how your daughter is too flaky and irresponsible to care for her fatherless child. Somehow, however, I’m the bad guy! How the hell did that happen? I didn’t do her. One of her two boyfriends did. How about ‘y’all’ figure out which one, then send Darius to him?”

“Why do you hate babies so much?”

“I don’t hate babies. I would never do one any harm. Not only would I help feed one, I have put my money where my mouth is in the past. I’ve donated money over the years to the *Feed The Children* programs. I remind you that I came from a mother who struggled to feed us. I’ve been fed by many a person not responsible for my being here. I do, Little Girl, pass that on in my adulthood. To me, babies and children are like nuclear waste plants. They need to exist, serve some ultimate worthwhile purpose, but as the saying goes, ‘Not in my backyard!’”

The argument finally ended with, “Melinda, give it three days. This way, you can visit with him in a grandmotherly fashion. I do not want to hear that thing crying while I’m working. I don’t want to smell diapers in the household trash. I don’t want to be interrupted to go see him smiling or otherwise being cute. I don’t care. Also, don’t even think of me spoon feeding him a single bite or touching a diaper. Do not even think of leaving it alone with me for even a minute. If you have to go somewhere, it goes with you.”

The list marched on.

Upon delivery of the package, I offered little to no comment. I focused on my station work of bills, apologetics, Shiny Hats, etc. Actually, I never really worked my manuscript. I mostly merely glanced it.

“Thank you, Jordan,” Tunishia offered.

“I’m not the one to thank. It’s your mother’s burden.”

“Aren’t you going to come see him? Look, he’s

being so sweet.”

“No. I’ll be okay. As you know, I’m not a baby person. It’ll be safe. I’m no harm to it.”

I continued my work as a vision of Julie’s 1989 ultrasound flashed through my memory.

I really don’t need this.

Three days turned into a week. The week eventually turned into more weeks, months, and years.

“Melinda,” I eventually asked from my desk.

“Yeah, Babe?”

“Can you come talk a minute?”

“Yeah. What?”

She settled.

“It’s been a while.”

“What?”

“Darius.”

Sigh, “I know, Babe. Really, though, I’ve worked hard to keep him from bothering you. . .”

“No, Melinda, Sweetheart,” I softly interrupted.

Man, what a misnomer if ever there existed one.

“That’s not where I’m going. Much to my surprise, you’ve done extremely well on that.”

“What’s the matter?”

“What’s up with her?”

Sigh, “Babe, I really don’t know.”

“Looks like it’s going to be here a while. I really don’t need to hear about any of your conversations with her, anyway, because the net result remains; it’s still here. I had that concern from the start. I knew that once it arrived, I risked it never leaving. I have a serious concern you need to share.”

“What, Babe?”

“It seems the organism would require some follow-up care. Is it on Medi-what-the-hell-ever-something-care-aide?”

“Yeah.”

“Shouldn’t it be seeing doctors? What if it takes sick?”

“He’s not a ‘It’ or an ‘Organism.’ He’s a He!”

“Yeah, sure, great, anyway, if it, ah, he, is going to be here longer, you need to get his paperwork and get his care down here.”

“I know. I thought you’d get mad.”

“I am mad. I’m not going to holler. I know he’s just a baby, but conflict will remain stored in his subconscious if we fight around him. I much appreciate how you’ve managed to contain yourself since he’s been here.

Maybe you’re a responsible grandmother as opposed to. . .well, whatever. I’m not happy about it, but the responsible thing at this point is to get his paperwork in order so you can maintain his care.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, really. Just because I’m repulsed by babies doesn’t mean I’m not aware of his innocence and the fact he needs responsible care until I can rid myself of the creature, well, ‘Baby,’ ‘He,’ whatever.”

“You could say hi back to him.”

“Huh?”

“Look at him. He’s looking right at you and smiling.”

“Well, he can just keep right on smiling. At least he’s not crying.”

“Jordan, Babe, really, just look at him. Isn’t he cute?”

“No. Nor is he ugly. He just looks like a baby.”

“You can’t see how he looks like. . .”

“No, Melinda, I can’t. They all look alike to me.”

“How can you be so cold?”

“It’s easy. Do I appear challenged at my being so cold?”

“He’s still smiling at you.”

“You see, Melinda? That’s why I shouldn’t get involved. I merely expressed a responsible concern for his health. Don’t make it something it isn’t. Next thing I know, you’ll be trying to get me to hold him, burp him, all sorts of gross acts. He’ll be peeing and farting on me, drooling and sneezing on me, and whining.”

Turning to Darius, “C’mon, Darius. Come with Gramma,” she advised as she lifted him.

“Don’t listen to him. He doesn’t mean it, Dari.”

“Yes, he does,” I assured.

More days passed until. . .

“Babe?”

“Yeah, Melinda?”

“I have him settled so he won’t bother you. I need a quick nap in the other room.”

“And. . .?”

“I don’t want to move him.”

“You propose to leave him here? With me? We’ve already been over this.”

“Babe, it’s just a few minutes. If I wake him, it’ll take forever to get him back to sleep.”

“What if he coughs or chokes or something? That

could prove catastrophic.”

“Jordan, just holler for me. He’ll be safe.”

“I’m not talking about his safety. I’m talking about him breaking my concentration.”

About to angrily respond to my coldness, she noticed by the grin on my face, that I merely teased.

“No, Melinda, that’ll be fine. Take your nap. I’ll holler if anything happens.”

Something did happen. Something happened that I had been told by many for years happens. It defies all rationale. Babies are loud, dirty, expensive, demanding, and the list marches on. I failed to see how they could offer anything to recommend themselves. God’s Word tells us that children are a blessing from God. I could never grasp that concept. It remained one of the mysteries of God’s Word.

Darius shifted in an odd way, different from any I had witnessed. *Oh, no, is he going to crap? No, I don’t think so. He seems adamant about something. He’s not making any noise. He seems so focused. What could he possibly be doing?*

The wonder commanded my undivided attention.

An insight surfaced.

This really isn’t about Darius or babies, is it, Jordan? It’s about your lifelong Wondering Evenings. You were deprived yours. You looked forward to and welcomed diapers, drool, and cries. She, or he, is a teenager now, practically an adult.

My memory tearfully flashed back to scenes from 1988-89. . .

*"There's the baby's head, there. You see the arms?"
the technician pointed.*

*"Yeah," I confirmed as I marveled at the image inside
the dark spots on the screen.*

"It seems to be a girl," she informed.

"Seems?"

"Yes, the legs are closed. We can't be sure."

"Yes! See, Julie? She's a girl!"

"Huh?"

*"If this were a boy, he'd be like me, legs wide open and
playing with himself!*

*No, no daughter of mine would spread her legs in front
of an audience. She's a lady, already!"*

My memory traveled on. . .

*"You always have recourse to her actions. I appreciate
your concern as to the affect on the child. It's rare that a client
truly considers that. You are correct. The child is the one who
suffers. You will not be the father that you dreamed. She will
not have the father she deserves. The mother wins at both
your expense. That's just something to think about before you
contest. Sure, you could make her life miserable. What about
the baby?"*

*"Well, you've affirmed my legal grounds and my moral
concerns."*

*"Mr. Jordan, unfortunately, the court cannot provide the
ideal. It cannot change a heart; it can only divide a child."*

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

And on. . .

*"Well, Matt, I'm dropping it," I informed in response to
his query as we smoked on our office balcony.*

"That's smart. You're gonna save a fortune."

"That's not the issue, Matt. It's the baby."

*"Yeah, right, well, whatever. At least you were smart
enough to get out of it while you could."*

*"You know, Matt? There's an 1800's Agnostic who in
his writings and orations presented that he'd rather be
absolutely honest and have the whole world believe in his
dishonesty than to be dishonest and have the whole world
believe in his honesty.*

*"There's the old King Solomon story of him calling for a
sword to divide a baby in half to give two woman claiming him.
He gave the baby to the one who pleaded not to harm him. He
decreed her the true mother.*

*"Perhaps I'm the parent who loves that baby. Perhaps
love can mean living the hurt of the absence. I'd rather the
whole world think I've dropped it so I could enjoy financial gain
and shirk my responsibilities, while I know the agony and
sacrifice I underwent and probably continue through to death
in this decision, than to do the reverse for my pride, legal
rights, and sporting my balls while everyone would think I did it
for the baby. It would be so much easier to fight this than
leave it. Most people will think me a flake and copout, while
I'll be believing there may be a Pharaoh at the end of my
baby's Julie-built River Nile."*

*As my *Wondering Evenings* ending lyric
reverberated my mind another countless time. . .*

. . .Please, don't be lonely, oh, no, please,

Don't be lonely, down 'n' blue.

Tell your mom I'll forgive her true if you're not blue.

No, don't be blue like your father, on another,

Wondering Evening all about you.

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

I remained in memory of years-long suppressed thoughts about the year I planned on fatherhood. Thoughts that I tucked deeply hidden away in my memories for a decade and a half; planning to never revisit; vowing to never look back. Now, Baby-Dari sailed me back to my then wife-to-be, Julie, broaching . . .

“Honey?”

“What-ey?”

She rolled over as I placed my reading material down to listen. Her tone suggested something of importance.

“I want to have a baby.”

“A baby? Like a human?”

“Yeah, I really do.”

“Oh.”

I had to let that digest.

“And. . .?”

“Let’s have one. Really, I’ve wanted to for a long time.”

“Well, ah, Julie, ah. . .hmm, ah. . .”

“What’s the matter? Don’t you want a baby, someday?”

“Yeah, ah, I guess, someday. Ah, well, I haven’t thought about it.”

“Honey, I’m not getting any younger. We’ll both be thirty soon.”

“Ah, yeah, I know. Julie, really, I’ve never felt secure enough in life to have a child. In fact, I spent so many years high that I never had to think about it. Granted, it helps that I’m totally in-love with you.”

“I love you, George. I’d really be happy to have a

child who looks like you. I really would.”

“Ah, ah, yeah, well, ah, it obviously matters a lot to you. Julie, My Heartthrob, I really want you to be happy.”

“Give me a baby, then, a little Georgey.”

“Trust me, Julie, one George has been enough on this planet. If we go that far, let’s hope for a girl. Besides, there have been too many males in my family line. Julie, I don’t see myself stable enough. I mean with my drug history, and I’ve had no real family life as a guide. Hell, Julie, I’m a telemarketer.”

“Yeah, and you’re very intelligent, a hard worker. When you’re not working, you’re here with me every night. I never wonder where you are or what you’re doing. You have a relationship with your mother I respect. You take care of Bear-Dog as well I do Charlotte. You care for Marjorie who’s not even a relative. I think you’d be a wonderful father.”

“I wish I shared your positive view of my character, thank you. As for me, I don’t trust me. Look, Julie, I’m not an old-fashioned person. I’m all for free love, shacking up and the like. But, man, Julie, children, well, that changes things. I’d have to be married if I were to knowingly and intentionally impregnate someone. I simply don’t have the material offerings and social stature to propose marrying me.”

“So, you would marry me?”

“Hell, yes, if I thought you’d go for it.”

Smile, “Really? You would?”

“Yeah, I’d be crazy not to. There are a few things I’d change if I were married, but you’ll need to understand that there are a few things that I won’t.”

"Like what?"

"I'll never return to the travel industry and I'll always drink beer."

"I love you, Honey," hand on my thigh.

"I love you, too, Sweetheart. So, you want to have a baby, you say?" turning my head, "Bear-Dog? Charlotte? Get in here and close the door behind you!"

As I looked down below, I furthered, "So, you want to have a baby, Baby? Well, it seems you're off to a good start. Don't even think of turning off that light. I plan to enjoy this."

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

The memory remained all too alive again. . .

. . . We arrived home to find the house empty. Fran and Freddie were both at work, which allowed us an opportunity to talk while we prepared a snack.

"Julie, you know where to find a Justice of the Peace? It shouldn't be too difficult."

"I don't know."

"So, I guess we set an appointment, go in, sign the papers and we're out?"

"Well, actually, George, Mom really wants a small wedding."

"A wedding? Is she crazy? There's no way we can afford that."

"She said she'd pay for it."

"Julie, I really think a lot of Fran. I know she means well, but, it's too expensive to let her attempt it. I'm not going to feel right about her paying for it."

"She said she could keep it small and affordable."

"Do you believe that?"

"I don't know."

"Julie, we can afford the move in for the apartment. It's serious money, though. I've got a feeling that, in the end, it's going to cost us."

"Honey, how many times are we going to marry?"

"I like thinking just once."

"Let's do it right, then. Make it something to remember."

"I'm not going to ruin this for you. If it means that much to you two to have discussed it already, I'm not going to disappoint you. It's against my better judgment, though."

"It'll be all right. I promise."

"I don't know," I commented as I kissed her forehead, "I'll have to trust you on that. How's your period?"

Smiling, "Funny you ask. What period?"

"Aren't you about due?"

Smiling harder, "Past due."

"Really?" I began to smile with her.

"You think maybe, ah, well, you know, you might not have one for a while?"

"I think maybe."

"Like, maybe, oh, say, about nine months?"

"I think maybe."

"Hmm, get outta here. You mean I might have actually had a few live ammos in there?"

"I think maybe."

"When will we know for sure?"

"I don't know."

"Well, ah, that's almost scary."

"Scary? Why?"

"Well, it's so final. No more thinking about it. Of course, we don't know that for certain. You've been late before, I'm sure."

"Yeah, could be nothing."

"We can get an early pregnancy test kit."

"That's what I'm gonna do, next time I go out."

"Great, as for me, I need to hit the bookstore at Christown Mall."

"For what?"

"A Name Change packet."

"You're really gonna do it?"

"Of course, I am. I'm not a Medeiros. I'm not the same person I used to be. I've already thought this through in detail, Julie. You know that. It's time I do it in time for the marriage. Otherwise, all three names have to be changed."

"You're really serious?"

"You bet I am. I'm serious about everything I do."

There's no way I'd give Antone Medeiros his last chance at a grandbaby named Medeiros. I wouldn't do it just to spite him, but I don't want his name and I certainly wouldn't curse a new living being with it. Besides, Julia Ann Jordan has a far better ring than Julia Ann Medeiros."

"Well, I agree. I do like the sound of it."

Julie's legal office secretarial skills made the packet an easy filing. My big day came when I stepped onto Washington Avenue formally, properly, officially,

legally named George Zeineldé Jordan. The name readied itself that 1989 January day for the upcoming wedding the following month. My co-workers greeted me the next day, one announcing my arrival, "Here comes Mr. Jordan."

One marveled and commented, "That's so cool. You actually just went and changed your name. I'd like to do that. I can't stand my name. I didn't even know you could that. I thought you had to get married, or adopted, or something."

"I can honestly say, that though a male, I changed my name when I married."

With the laughter shared, another commented. "Man, you can do that? Really? It's legal?"

"Yeah, oddly enough, there remains a semblance in remnants of our former free society here in America. Give it time, soon enough, our government will begin naming babies themselves, mostly with numbers."

"Okay, there he goes on that political stuff. I'm outta here," he continued in laughing manner, "Good day, Mr. Jordan."

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

So, the date with Julie went well. Everything went well with Julie; well, up until the marriage. The Julie saga served as yet another "story-inside-of-a-story."

As Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume One presented, I lived Junior High and High School on pills, beer, and school-skipping. Then, young adulthood consisted of meth addiction. Julie served as my first actual romantic heartthrob.

In time for the 1989 marriage, I did formally, legally,

change my name in the Maricopa County Courthouse. As I stepped down the courthouse steps, I read, reread, and reread the Court's decree. I dreamed back to California that 1987 weekend of my "Unexplained Phenomenon," "Divine Intervention" experience;¹ the day of my deliverance from Crystal-Meth, the day that set me on this new path.

¹ Alcoholics Anonymous' *Big Book*, page 27, presents psychiatrist Dr. Jung's advising a patient of the extremely rare yet real Vital Spiritual Experience. Science considers it an unexplained scientific phenomenon. Theists (i.e., believers in a god or gods) consider it Divine Intervention.

I approached the PSA ticket counter.
"George Medeiros, a pre-paid to Phoenix."
I had enough cash and cigarettes to enjoy a beer before boarding. I stared at the ticket, grateful to Rick. My name shot out at me,
M-E-D-E-I-R-O-S, G-E-O-R-G-E.
I softly, privately commented as I exhaled my smoke and sipped my beer, *Something tells me you're history. Everything you've been, everything you are, ended back there. . .*
Perhaps I'm deluded, I furthered, but whomever I'm to be, better or worse, you, George Medeiros, are not included.

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume One

The name change reflected the death and burial of my former life, **George Medeiros**, and the birth of the new man, **George Zeineldé Jordan**. As the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* story continued on, "Jordan" became my nickname, and George relegated to merely initial G. My Se. (Self-Educated) suffix would surface a decade later.

All of these years-long suppressed memories flashed as Darius squirmed. . .

68 A Baby?

*Children, softness from a womb, stone blocks?
Yes! In His hands, building a home's new rooms!
His precision's fine as flowers blooming heirlooms.*

Scripture As I Hear It
Scriptural Reference: Psalms 127: 3, 4

Freshly showered and desirous of a snack, I entered the family living area. Asking across the kitchen counter, I prepared a snack, "What ya watchin', Sweetheart?"

"I don't know, Honey. I've never seen it before. It's really cute. Come watch it with me."

"I heard the music credit and narration from the kitchen. It sounds a bit unusual."

I trailed into the family room with Julie sprawled about the floor and Fran on the couch. As I entered, I marveled at Julie's pulchritude. Rarely, could I view her in any state without her beauty nearly taking my breath away. I settled on the floor with her.

"That's me, there, Kevin Arnold. . ."

The show rolled on.

"Julie, how'd you find this?"

"I didn't. It just happened to be on."

"I really don't care much for TV shows. If it's not news, documentaries, or somehow nonfiction informative, I'm bored. Interesting, I feel like I'm watching my California suburbs teen years, well, the more wholesome, innocent side."

"I think it's cute."

"It has its charm, Sweetheart. Hey, hold it, realize what I just said, 'news, nonfiction,' in the same sentence? Hell, I have to laugh. 'Nonfiction News' is an oxymoron if ever there existed one."

"Honey, c'mon, let's watch the show."

"I agree."

I consented with a hand rub to the knee then the shoulder and peck on her cheek. I consumed my snack

as I watched ABC's *The Wonder Years* opening episode.

I liked having a T.V. show I could actually enjoy. I often commented to Julie how much I appreciated catching it and encouraging me to watch it with her. I think she sometimes thought I only watched with her to appease, but in the end, I'd watch it regularly over the years. Finally, a decade or so later, it took some expense and effort but I managed to purchase the complete series on DVD from England. However, our evenings presented other wondering issues. For one, I eagerly wondered,

"Julie, c'mon, you gonna do it or what? I wanna know," I asked as the TV broadcasted unneeded political news. Bush Sr. had already secured the White House. She knew what I meant, but opted to play me on.

"Do what?"

"The EPT. You gonna do the test or what?"

"Honey, it's an 'early' pregnancy test. I'm gonna get up 'early' tomorrow."

"C'mon, now, you know early means the stage. C'mon, go do it."

"Honey, no, I'm gonna do it in the morning. Really, it'll be fun."

"All right, well, wake me up. Okay?"

"I will."

Then in a seductive pose, she furthered, "Hey, Honey, maybe it didn't really take."

With a mischievous grin, "You want to try it again?"

"Well, if it'll make you happy, I'll sacrifice, yet, again."

Morning made its way with, "Honey? Okay, it's early. I'm gonna do it."

"Hey, I need coffee. Okay, you can pee?"

"I'm pretty sure. You wanna come see?"

"Ah, oddly enough, yes, I do."

"Julie, Babe, really, hold that as if it matters."

"George, I'm doing my best. You try sitting here holding this, coffee, cigarette and piss."

"Well, hell, give it to me. I'll hold it."

"Never mind. I think I got it."

"Damn, Julie, you look damn cute doing it. You are so sexy."

"Great, I'm sexy. For now, leave me alone."

I left her alone. I waited in the den. Finally, she appeared with a couple strips in hand and a smile.

"Honey, I can't say I'm pregnant, but according to this," she presented the strips, "I am."

I examined the strips and box color codes.

"Oh, man, ah, Julie, really? Ah, well, I don't know. Are you happy?"

"Yes, I'm very happy. Thank you, Honey," she expressed with a hug.

It felt wonderful feeling her beautiful self with it's soft persona holding me closely in gratitude of something I contributed. As I basked in her affection, I harbored concerns.

A baby? Oh, man, I'm no one to father a child. Man, she looks so happy, though.

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

As of last month, August 2013, I have lived twenty-four

years of those *Wondering Evenings*. My baby was due August of 1989. Not a single August birthday since 1989, not a single Christmas, not a single Father's Day has passed without my *Wondering Evenings*. Over the years, I have seen other parents' babies, toddlers, and teens. I always have a flash of imagination in wonderment as to how my baby grew. Then I quickly return the memories to the locked closet in my mind. I made the only healthy, responsible, decision. I chose to be Father rather than Man. If you want to know more, I will not present it. You will have to purchase *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*. If it is not worth the purchase price to you, your opinion is worth no price to me. I am the one wearing the scars. Earlier this year, January 2013, I finally learned the baby's gender and name. Now, on with the story. . .

As Baby-Dari squirmed, I reflected back to my final conversation with Julie:

With my apartment so conveniently located to Ma's, I spent much time at Ma's. Then, one day, the Jetta pulled into the driveway. Julie made way to Ma's door. I opened it for her without a greeting. I merely positioned myself on the couch then asked, "What's up? You go by the apartment?"

As I admired her beauty, she advised in unemotional, matter-of-factly fashion, "George, when you want us back together, there's some things you need to do or I'm not doing it."

"Julie, you're misguided. You're not laying any cards on a table here. I am."

Her facial expression suggested I skewed her

vision of approach.

“Julie, My Heartthrob, listen closely. I fathered that child in your belly. I’m not a flake shooting a load then walking away. I gave you what you wanted, a baby. I did it in loving responsible fashion.”

. . . “Julie, make a list of your changes you demand in me. I’ll do it. I’ll even lay down the beer. Julie, I’m voting *Black*¹. I love you deeply. I’m excited at being a father. Head your list with beer then have your mother, sister, and you add more. I’ll do it. Now, there’s one stipulation. We, together, make my fix-ups **under the supervision of a trained professional**. If these fix-ups are healthy, we’ll know.”

“George, all you really need to do is. . .”

“Ah, ah, ah, I’m not through yet,” I interrupted.

“From here on, I’m the boss. I’ll handle that responsibly. I accommodated you in things that were against my better judgment. I wanted you to be happy, so I did it. Each time, though, I paid my feared price. We ain’t doing that, anymore. . . We have the insurance, the income, the time. This ain’t about us, damn it, Julie! It’s about the child in your belly. We gotta do this right. We need to vote *Black* for each other and for the baby. . . **you deal with Fran**. We’ll do it together under healthy supervision.”

“Mom just wanted. . .”

“This ain’t about her! It’s about the baby and us. See? Already, Fran enters. You need help with that. I’ll not stand for it. Julie, I had a lot of laughs with her before the marriage. We, together, had a lot of laughs with her. As Haggard sang, though, things aren’t funny, anymore.”

At a loss for words, undoubtedly because of my accuracy, she remained silent.

“If you can’t work with me that far, much as I love and adore you, and I’ll be miserable without you, I advise you don’t let Mammaw’s door hit your gorgeous derriere on your way out.

Now, if I have to file the papers, it’ll be ugly. You work in a law firm. They’ll help you. **If professional counseling is out of the question, I’m out of the equation**. File the papers. I’ll go through life as if it never happened. Well, other than being the best father I can under the circumstances you will have laid down for her and her father. I’ll be miserable if I have to go through life feeling I’ve fathered a fatherless child. I lived it. It ain’t pretty.

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

I stored a great deal of suppressed baggage to deal with from 1989. Dari unleashed it all.

¹Voting Black was language we both understood. It came from the *Red-Black Game* we had learned earlier in a self-improvement seminar. Voting *Black* meant voting for your opponent. Voting *Red* meant voting for yourself. The lesson of the game demonstrated that when voting *Black*, both sides win; voting *Red*, both sides lose.

Age seven, 1966, escaping our father resurfaces:

Figuring a police precinct no place for proffering opposition, Ma consented. She assured she understood, agreed, and would prepare us for pick up the next day.

I had questions and fears about our new family order on the horizon. My brothers and mother put me at peace with their responses. As a result, I slept that night fairly well. While I slept, Ma pondered the Charybdis of resistance with the Scylla of compliance. Refuse them? That would inevitably lead to a hopeless battle. Give us up? Unthinkable. She chose Rick's earlier suggestion, "Let's go away, Mommy."

I awoke in the wee hours of the night by Tony's soft nudge and whisper, "George, Georgey, wake up. We're going on a trip."

He tempered my confusion with something such as, "Everything is okay. We'll be all right. It's just a journey like when I go camping."

Boy, would that prove true, but without scout luxuries.

"We need to start early; we don't want to miss anything, do we?"

I responded, "Well, okay, right now?"

"Sure," he answered with staged enthusiasm.

Well, with Tony, everything would be fine. If he thought we better get going, though, we better. He, being all grown up, would protect us from whatever night's darkness held in store.

My family had been preparing our departure while I slept. With blankets in hand, the only clothes we wore,

and whatever else Ma and Tony could stuff into their clothes or an easy-carry sack, we walked our dog, Tiny, our cat, Thomasina, and a sack of baby pictures over to a neighbor friend of Ma's. Then we sneaked down a side street, passed a familiar coffee shop, and scurried like rodents out of the street lights, deep into the black of the woods. If fate would separate us, it would be some other day. . .

. . . Ahead of us awaited a long, rocky road to be traveled under torrential rain, against bitter wind, wearing worn-out shoes. Following our expedient exodus, many years would pass before we would see a blood relative again, even a photograph. Life, as I knew it, ceased. Our only escape from the Antone Medeiros evils would be to disappear from the face of the earth. In essence, we did.

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume One

That haunting memory reminded me that I would never be normal. So far, I had done nothing wrong, though. In fact, I did everything right. Yet, I remained open to change. I had to, for The Baby. We talked on:

I'll change to prevent it. Please, Julie, vote *Black* with me. I beg you, please, vote *Black* with me. I beckoned my opponents back at Omega. They didn't get it. Granted, I lost less, but I'd rather our baby and us come out *Black*. Professional supervision is my way of voting *Black* and being a responsible sperm donor. Julie, My Heartthrob, things aren't funny anymore."

Viscerally, I knew she told me the truth on our first date that I got more out of the *Red-Black Game* than

she. She left prepared to play the *Red-Black Game* in a way I did not imagine. In the end, all parties involved lost big time. Julie would vote deep *Red*. No, things were not funny, anymore.

She turned to the door and carefully saw that it did not hit her gorgeous derrière on the way. As I admired her beautiful self enter her Jetta, I viewed my final view. I would never see her again.

Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two

With my suppressed memories flashed before me, Dari squirmed on. . .

I wondered something new about babies. I wondered. . .

Softly, almost in a whisper, I called, "Melinda?"

"Yeah, Babe? What's wrong?"

"I'm pretty sure nothing's wrong. I think you might want to come in here."

Understandably, she assumed negative.

"Oh, no! I'm coming!"

"Shssssh! Melinda, slowly, quietly, come here."

She stepped around the doorway.

With a finger on my lips, I advised in a whisper, "I'm not sure. I don't have experience in these things, but I wonder, is little Dari trying to sit up?"

She assessed the scene.

"Jordan, I think so. I think you're right."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Cool. I wonder, can he do it? Is it too early?"

I do not know exactly what happened. As I witnessed his struggle, I felt what seemed the adrenaline of someone watching a sports event in final innings, touchdowns, baskets, whatever it is they do with those needless play-balls.

"If he's trying, Jordan, he probably will."

He lifted again, all of halfway.

"C'mon, Dari. . . You can do it, Bud," I urged.

"Bud?" Not "Creature?" Not "Organism?" Not "It?"

How did "Bud" surface?

Finally, after a few attempts, he sat straight up.

"Darius! Look at you! Melinda! Look! He's sitting up!"

"He is!"

Out of my desk chair, straight to him, offering him a kiss, I praised, "Look at you! You look like a full grown man!"

Smile, drool, nose drop. . .

"Darius," I crooned with a kiss to the top of his head, a hug about as hard as the one I first received from Miss Walker, "that's the most fun I've had in a long time. The Olympics have nothing on you, Champ!"

Smile, drool, nose bubble. . .

I did not fully see the drool and nose bubble. Yeah, though conscious of it, I only really experienced the feel of his smile.

The Jordan-Baby-Children bubble finally burst after a decade and a half. All the affectionate baby dreams of 1989 flowed out. Again, my memory traveled:

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