

Seeking Paradise

Deborah Galiley

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Novels by Deborah Galiley



Polished Arrows

Seeking Paradise

Yohana



**The promise was there,
waiting, waiting,
but restlessness had a hold on me.**

From the thrilling and lush paradise of *The Garden*, to the utter loathsomeness of evil's rampage in the Nazi Regime, to the deceptive calm of modern America—Becky Hermon's heritage and life reflects a paradise terribly and dreadfully lost. Will her spiritual odyssey bring her back to Eden, or push her to the brink of despair?

PART ONE: **Paradise**

PART TWO: **The Fall**

PART THREE: **Berlin, 1938**

PART FOUR: **Long Island, 1961, to California, 1989**

PART FIVE: **Upstate New York, 1989**

PART SIX: **Cancer**

PART SEVEN: **Prelude**

Special Feature

Becky Hermon's Challah Recipe

PART ONE



Paradise



One

The woman opened her eyes. She was lying on the ground on a bed of soft moss, her head resting on a pillow made from crushed flowers. Enormous stately trees formed a green canopy over her, their interlocking branches swaying gently back and forth in the undulating breeze. Brightly colored birds flitted about, calling shrilly to one another. The gurgle of rushing water came faintly from the distance. Muted sunlight drifted lazily through the foliage, enhancing everything with its golden glow.

At first it all appeared as one riotous blend of color and noise, but soon items differentiated themselves. *That's a tree*, she instinctively knew. *That's a bird*. Slowly she lifted her left arm and brought her hand before her eyes. She noted the taut flesh, the well-formed forearm, the long and supple fingers. She gazed at her fingers for several minutes, bending them back and forth, back and forth.

When she tired of this, she pulled herself up into a sitting position. Something long and shimmery from behind her head uncoiled itself and floated down her back. Startled, the woman grabbed a piece of it, only to realize that her head hurt as she yanked. *Oh*, she thought, intrigued. *This is part of me. It's my...hair*. Fascinated, she rubbed a silky lock between her fingers and examined it. Strands of glittery gold, sparkling silver, burnished bronze, fiery red, glossy ebony, deep-hued and brilliant, melted into one glorious tapestry of dazzling, fluid color. The woman took all of her hair—it was long and heavy—and ran her fingers through it, marveling at the way the color constantly changed as the light touched it.

Next she stood, her lustrous hair swinging down and coming to a halt just above her backside. She tottered on her feet for a few moments, looking with interest at her long, slender legs, before attempting to walk. When she did take her first step, it was with a dizzying lurch, a half-stumble from which she gracefully regained her

balance. The second step was easier, and by the third step she was walking with the natural ease of one who had long done this without having to think first.

For several hours, the woman wandered through the forest glade. Everything fascinated her. She stopped repeatedly to touch and smell things. The rough bark of a tree, the velvety petal of a flower, the smooth hardness of a stone: all these things enchanted her. Upon hearing a rushing sound, she headed in that direction, slipping through a tangle of trees into a clearing. A murmuring river, running and swirling over rocks and sand beds, met her curious gaze.

Kneeling down at the bank, she cupped some of the water, letting it run through her fingers and onto her legs. The sensation pleased her. Next she brought the cupped water up to her mouth and tentatively stuck her tongue in it. *Ahh*. The dry sensation in her mouth eased. Again she cupped some of the sparkling water and, with her tongue, lapped some into her mouth, instinctively swallowing it. The delicious feeling of the water trickling down her throat, quenching the thirst she did not even realize she had, pleased her. She laughed.

It was the first time the woman had heard her own voice. She laughed again, tilting her head to the side and listening closely. The tinkling, cheery sound floated back to her ears, echoing across the surface of the river. A small animal, attracted by the sound, bounded out of the denseness of the forest and ran to her, rubbing itself against her legs. The woman reached down and stroked its furry back. It chattered loudly at her. It was a tiny thing, black in color, with a long white stripe that started between its black, beady eyes and went down its back, ending abruptly on its long, bushy tail. Quite quickly it tired of the woman and scampered back from whence it came.

The woman continued on her walk. Now that her thirst was satisfied, she began to be conscious of a gnawing, hollow feeling in her belly. She found her gaze drawn to the fruit that hung heavy on the trees all around. There were all different types of fruit, but it was the red globes that most intrigued her. She pulled one off its branch and held it in her hands, contemplating it. Then she took a bite.

Ugh! The tough outer skin was not meant for eating. The woman made a face and spit her mouthful out on the forest floor. It was then

that she heard it:

Laughter. Deep, resonant laughter. She jerked her head up and peered between the trees, trying to discover where the sound came from. In the distance, a flash of gold caught her eye.

“Who’s there?” she called out boldly, knowing no part of fear.

The gold flashed again, closer, and the sound of footsteps caused the woman to tilt her head to the side as she listened.

When the figure who belonged to the footsteps came into view, the woman eagerly ran forward. “Abba!” she proclaimed reverently, the familiar word for *father* rolling off the tip of her tongue.

“My beloved daughter,” he replied, gazing at her with great delight. He looked like the woman in that he had two arms and two legs, a head and a torso. Unlike her, however, his body seemed made of a fiery gold. Snow-white hair framed his face and a beard of the same color rested against his chest. Peace and security emanated from him, and the air about him thickened with glory.

Taking hold of the woman’s hands, he gently drew her to him. It was obvious he was very pleased with her. Joy flowed from him in abundant waves. Pleasure radiated out at every breath. The air around him pulsed with the joy of his presence.

“Who am I?” asked the woman. “What is this place to which I have awakened?”

“Ah,” he said, his voice so resonant and rich that the very earth rumbled at the sound. “You are the helper I have made for the man.”

“The man?” questioned the woman. Her eyes, rich brown with flecks of gold, green, gray, and blue, widened. “Who is ‘the man’?”

“Come and see.” Holding the woman’s hand, he led her away from the pomegranate tree and further into the forest. Soon enough, they came to a raised wooden platform heaped with the same sort of moss on which the woman had so recently found herself. A man lay sleeping there. His hair, cut short around his face, was black as ebony. High cheekbones, bearded chin, long straight nose, and sculpted lips made a very pleasing picture. Though he was motionless, a sense of barely contained power still managed to spark from his brown, muscular frame. A thin, red line running from his left breastbone almost to his waist was the only thing that marred his handsomeness.

“What is that?” asked the woman, pointing to the red line.

“That is the place from where I took the rib when I fashioned you.”

“I came from the man’s rib?” Wonderment caused the woman to blink. Tenderly, she placed her forefinger on the red line and traced its passage. Her touch, light as it was, succeeded in awakening the man.

He opened his eyes and saw both the Lord and the woman. Pure astonishment passed over his features before he rose from his bed and knelt before the Lord.

“My Lord God Adonai,” he exclaimed. “Is this the helper you promised me?”

“Yes, my son,” answered Adonai, affectionately placing his hand on the man’s shoulder. “This is the woman that I made from your rib while you were sleeping.”

The man stood and looked at the woman, who looked back at him. He was probably a good six inches taller than she. He extended his hand and touched the side of her face. It was smooth, and soft, not hairy like his own. Her hair entranced him, and he stroked one of the long, bright locks. When he gazed at her full round breasts, her firm, supple navel, and down at her long, shapely legs, the man felt a stirring of desire within himself that shocked him by its ferocity.

She, in turn, was thrilled with the man. Everything about him pleased her. His broad shoulders, muscular chest, narrow waist, powerful legs. She reached up and touched his curly black hair. When she looked into his brown eyes, so like her own, yet shaped differently, she laughed with delight. The man laughed as well.

“You are pleased, my son?” asked Adonai, smiling contentedly, much as an artist would who had just put the finishing stroke on a particularly brilliant work.

“Very, very pleased, my Lord,” answered the man, beaming.

“Come, children, I will give you my blessing.” Both the man and the woman knelt in front of him, and he placed his right hand on the head of the man and his left hand on the head of the woman. His melodious voice, pleasing to the ear yet somehow so pronounced as to be heard throughout the earth, nay, throughout the centuries, flowed through and among them. “Be fruitful and increase in number,” he

admonished them. “Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” He bid them rise, and they stood, wonder further lighting up their already glowing faces.

“This is The Garden I have given you for your home,” continued Adonai, as he gestured with sweeping arm toward the forest and river and plains and far-off mountains. “You can see that all around you are trees that are pleasing to the eye and good for food. I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.”

The Lord God turned to the man. “Adam,” he said, “you’re to take the woman and show her the length and breadth of The Garden. Show her the different types of fruit and vegetables and the manner in which they are eaten. Let her know that it’s the seeds of the pomegranate that are edible, but that she can bite directly into the peel of an apple.

“Point out the animals, and the birds, and the things that crawl on the ground. Go over the names and share with her all that you’ve learned. She is your partner—your helper—and she must know all that you know.

“But don’t forget to caution her not to eat from the tree in the middle of The Garden—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Don’t forget to warn her that if you eat of it, you will surely die.”

Adam nodded gravely. “Yes, my Lord. I will do all that you command.”

The woman spoke up. “The man is called Adam? Not ‘the man’?”

“Yes.” The Lord God smiled. “The man is called Adam.”

“What of me?” pursued the woman. “What shall I be called?”

The Lord God turned to the man. “I have already brought you all the livestock, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, and you have named them. What do you think? What should the woman’s name be?”

Adam thought about the blessing the Lord God had just uttered in which he commanded them to be fruitful and increase on the earth.

Then he looked again upon the woman whom he had been given as his helper. “Eve,” he said decisively, “because she will become mother to all the living.”

“Eve it is,” agreed the Lord God, pleased by the man’s choice.



After the Lord God took his leave, Adam and Eve strolled through The Garden. Proudly, the man pointed out the stunning vistas of mountains in the distance with their many-hued shades of purples and blues fading against the backdrop of the sky. Vast stretches of green with trees of every size and variety heralded the way. Birds flew from tree to tree and Adam would cry, “Look! there’s a red-winged blackbird, or, Look! That’s a parrot!” Likewise, when a herd of zebra thundered past, or a soft-eyed doe approached to nuzzle Eve’s hand, he would tell her their names. The grass beneath their feet was blanketed with flowers of every color and description while the soft, warm air caressed their naked bodies. Hand in hand, they walked for miles alongside the river, its cool, clear murmuring rising and falling.

“I will show you the hot springs where I bathe,” Adam told her.

“Bathe?” asked the woman quizzically. “What’s that?”

“When you get dirty, or sweaty, and want to get clean,” explained the man. “Or sometimes, just to relax, it’s nice to soak in hot water.”

“Oh,” said Eve. This was a lot of new information to process. She had yet to be alive for a full day and already she had learned so much.

“My stomach is making noise,” she told Adam.

“That means you’re hungry.” He laughed. “Here’s an orange tree. We’ll have some of these.” As he was talking, he reached up and pulled two golden ovals off the dark green tree. With his fingernail, he pierced the soft rind and ripped it off in segments, dropping it to the ground. When the fruit was peeled, he split it in half and took a bite, gesturing to the woman to do the same. She did, and her eyes lit up.

“This is marvelous,” she said, as the sweet, tangy juice awakened

her taste buds. Companionably, they sat against the trunk of the tree and ate their fruit. When Adam finished, he wiped his mouth with a leaf and dropped it on the ground beside him. The woman copied him.

“I like to eat oranges with almonds,” Adam told her. “It’s a short walk to the almond tree.” He got up, holding out his hand, and helped the woman up. She didn’t need any help but touching her soft hand filled him with delight.

Together, they wandered over to the almond tree. Adam plucked several hard objects off the thin, dark branches. Taking a stone that had been left propped against the base of the tree, he smashed the objects, Then he peeled away the shell and pulled out a teardrop-shaped brown nut.

“Try it,” he told Eve.

She popped one in her mouth and chewed. *Mmm*, the flavor was delicious. “These are wonderful,” she said, mouth full.

Adam watched, transfixed, as she chewed. Her curvy lips, the tip of her pink tongue, her dazzling white teeth, all entranced him. He felt that stirring of desire again, and he put his forefinger under her chin and leaned close. Eve stopped chewing and studied him intently. Instinctively, Adam pressed his lips to hers, kissing her. “You are so beautiful,” he murmured, gathering her in his arms while sinking down to the soft earth with her. “So incredibly beautiful.” His kisses grew more and more passionate.

Eve yielded to his embrace, and they explored each other’s bodies, heady with passion. “I am so happy with the man the Lord has given me,” said Eve, cheeks flushed, eyes bright.

“And I,” said Adam. “Never did I imagine that the helper the Lord gave me would be so incredible.” They stopped talking, intent on this new discovery of pleasure and fulfillment as they consummated their relationship.

Later, much later, Eve lay nestled in Adam’s arms under a velvety black sky. The light from the full moon and countless numbers of stars cast a shadowy sheen. Adam could just see Eve’s features and sighed with contentment. He had not realized to what extent he had longed for a mate until this day. But the Lord God knew. *Ah, what an awesome God he is*, thought Adam gratefully. Throwing back his head,

tightening his grip on the woman, he blessed the name of the Lord, thanking him for the gift of the woman, proclaiming over her, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”...(The Saga Continues)



THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS EVE WROTE.

When she died, a huge fire was made in her honor, and the first man, Adam, wept. Thousands of her descendants gathered to pay homage, and for seven days they sat on the ground and shared about how she had touched their lives. She was buried in a cave hewn into the side of a hill, overlooking a fertile valley.

Adam outlived Eve by another hundred years. He died fifty-six years before the birth of Lamech, the father of Noah. He was buried in the cave alongside his first wife, Eve. Seven hundred and twenty-six years after Adam’s death, the wickedness and evil on the earth had reached such a putrid state that the Lord God punctured the waters above the sky and sent a *mabul*, a Great Flood, which wiped out everything—man, animal, bird, reptile—except for Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, and two of every living thing (seven if they were “clean”).

Always, the great enemy of man, that fallen angel now known as HaSatan, tried to destroy the messianic line and so escape the curse of destruction that the Lord God had uttered in The Garden. As Adam’s line went through Shet, then Noah, it proceeded to Abraham, then King David until reaching Yeshua the Messiah. The wrath of Pharaoh, the diabolical plot of Haman, the scourge of Antiochus Ephiaphanes—all were attempts to wipe out the Jewish people before Messiah’s birth.

When the enemy failed, he still sought to devour the Jewish people so as to thwart the Second Coming of Yeshua. Scripture clearly teaches that there must be a distinct Jewish people to say *Baruch haba b’shem Adonai* (blessed is He who comes in the name of Adonai) before

Messiah returns. The turning of the Church from its Jewish roots at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, the Spanish Inquisition in 1492, the Russian and Polish pogroms in the nineteenth century, the murder of the six million in the Shoah (Holocaust), are but a few examples of the raging anti-Semitism the enemy has used to incite the world against the Jews.

More than anything, the enemy seeks to keep the Jewish people from a knowledge of their Jewish Messiah. Yet through the millennia, through the centuries, a remnant of Adam's sons and Eve's daughters have acknowledged His Name. And so the story continues, at another time in history when the Jewish people had little hope, but the Great Plan was still at work....

PART THREE



Berlin

1938



INGIS LANG'08©

Seven

The woman sank onto the cold stone steps of the British Embassy, sobbing quietly. She was not the type of person who normally gave in to despair. Indeed, hadn't it been she who kept up the spirits of all those around her? Hadn't she been brave when they dragged her husband back across the border to dreary Poland? Hadn't she managed to convince her frightened children that all would be well? And wasn't it she who, all this horrible autumn, had relentlessly pushed terrified friends and family to take action and not let themselves be overcome by fear?

Months—even years—of wrangling with authorities had succeeded in obtaining visas from the British for herself and her three children. These precious pieces of paper represented life to her. All she had to do was to bring her husband's passport, and they would issue a visa for him, as well. So they said.

She got her husband to mail his passport from his mother's house in Poland. What risk should it get lost or stolen in the mails! But it hadn't, and the woman now carried it safely zipped into the secret lining of her purse. She had left the children in Leipzig and had come to Berlin only to find that the place was a madhouse, teeming with frantic, desperate Jews who suddenly knew that to stay in Germany meant destruction.

It still seemed incredible to the woman that it had come to this. Five years previously, when Hitler first came to power, she and her husband had soberly discussed the implications.

"He means what he says, Lena," declared Saul, her husband. "But it will be useless to immigrate to any European country. You'll see. He will fight them all."

"But where shall we go?" asked Lena, intensity thickening her voice.

"To either the United States or Palestine," he responded.

Then had begun the long process of applying for visas. The British only let a trickle of Jews through the gates of Palestine. That turned into a closed door. America should have been easier. Lena had one brother living with his family in New York and the wife and son of another brother in Chicago. The relatives sent affidavits to her and then she was assigned a quota number but would be unable to get a visa until her number came up.

That same year, 1933, the Lena's aged mother, who lived with them, became desperately ill. In stark contrast to years past, every doctor Lena phoned refused to come to the apartment. They expressed fear at visiting a Jewish home. Finally, she was forced to take her mother a long distance to an understaffed, underfunded Jewish hospital, where the mother died of pneumonia. The mother's last words to Lena, her frail gray head resting wearily on the white pillow, voice hoarse and thick from infected lungs, were, "If there is a God, where a mother can pray for her child, I'll do it for you."

So they waited, biding their time. Last summer Lena and Saul, growing desperate, hatched a plan. Lena left with the children and went on a summer vacation trip to Czechoslovakia, where she had a cousin. The three children had a marvelous time, frolicking in the cold, clear waters of a small mountain river, in a tiny, rustic town. At the end of the summer, the family planned to cross the border to Russia. But Saul never received permission to join his family. The Gestapo held up his exit visa until the family, disappointed, returned from Czechoslovakia. Only then was his visa issued.

The following month, September of 1938, the family attended their neighborhood synagogue, or *shul*, for the yearly Rosh Hashanah service. The rabbi started to blow the shofar, the yearly call to repentance. A strange thing happened, though. When he put his lips to the ram's horn, no sound came out! Puzzled, he squinted at the shofar, peered at it closely, shook his head as if to say, Nu, what's this? and tried again. Still, nothing. The older women in the shul knelt down on the floor after the second useless attempt to blow the shofar. "This is a bad foreboding," they wailed, pulling at their hair. "This is an evil omen." Chills ran up and down Lena's spine. She felt ill. Later, she discovered that not one shofar had sounded in any of the shuls in

Leipzig that year.

And then on a Thursday night in October her youngest, Isaac, had gone to bed healthy but during the night got very sick, running a high temperature. Lena and her husband had been up half the night with their son. Finally, exhausted, Saul fell asleep in the early morning while Lena slipped from bed and got the second daughter, Gerta, off to school. Then she went into the kitchen in order to knead the *challah* dough and start the apple strudel, in preparation for Shabbat. Her thoughts centered on her little boy, the hot tea and toast she planned to serve him once he awoke.

The doorbell rang shrilly, interrupting her thoughts. So early in the morning! Who could it be? With great trepidation, Lena noiselessly walked over to the front door.

“Ja,” she said. “Who is it?”

“Gestapo,” came the harsh response. “Open up!”

Trembling, she pulled her robe tightly around herself, then unlatched the door chain. When she pulled open the door, two men stood outside. One smiled slightly, the other scowled. Both wore the traditional black uniforms and glistening black boots of storm troopers, complete with swastikas on their arms.

“What can I do for you kind gentlemen?” asked Lena carefully.

The one man looked down at his shoes, but the other SS man snapped, “Pack up some things. We will be back to take you and your family away!”

“Oh, but *Herr Leutnant*, my little boy is very ill,” she cried. “I have been up all night with him. I cannot leave him alone, and I certainly can’t take him with us. He is too sick to go anywhere.”

The SS man was about to respond when his partner interjected. “It’s all right. We’ll come back later and send the boy to a hospital and get the rest of you as well.”

“But your husband, the Pole, he comes now,” said the SS man. “Tell him to get ready.” He spun on his heel, and the two men left, heading in the direction of another Jewish family who lived in the apartment building.

Lena closed and chained the door, then leaned against it, breathing hard. Her fists clenched and unclenched, but she refused to give in to

panic. After a few moments she forced herself to walk back to her bedroom, where she woke up her husband. "The SS was here," she said quietly. "They are coming back for you, then for all of us."

Saul sat up in bed. He reached out and drew his wife against his chest, holding her tightly. "As God wills," he said, his voice sad.

"As God wills," she repeated.

They clung together for several moments, then burst into action. Lena sent the oldest daughter, fifteen-year-old, Renate, to the family store to tell the employee to bring suitcases. "Don't talk to anyone; try to stay out of sight as much as possible," she warned the girl, who numbly obeyed. Then she checked on Isaac, who slept fitfully, his face pink and feverish, blonde curls tousled on his high forehead. Her husband hurried through his morning *toilette*, then packed a few changes of clothes and some necessary items in a small bag. Lena wiped away a tear when she noticed him slipping a framed picture of herself into the bag, along with his prayer book and *tallit*.

Much too soon the doorbell buzzed again. Saul went into his son's room and tenderly kissed the boy while his wife hurried to answer the insistent summons. Sighing deeply, he grabbed his bag and went to join her. The angry SS man stood there alone, scowling.

"Come on, Jew, we don't have all day," he snapped. "Let's go!"

Saul attempted to reason with the Nazi. He pleaded, trying to convince him that a terrible mistake was being made. "We are about to emigrate to America," he said. "Look, here are affidavits from the United States; they promise us visas..."

But the SS man was not impressed. "Too bad. You're coming with us," he barked.

Lena wanted to kiss her husband again but hesitated to in front of the SS man. She placed her hand on his arm and he looked into her face. The love she saw in his eyes was all she needed. She nodded.

"*Auf wiedersehen*, my love," she murmured.

"*Shalom, l'hitraot*," he responded in Hebrew.

And then he was gone....(The Saga Continues)

PART FOUR



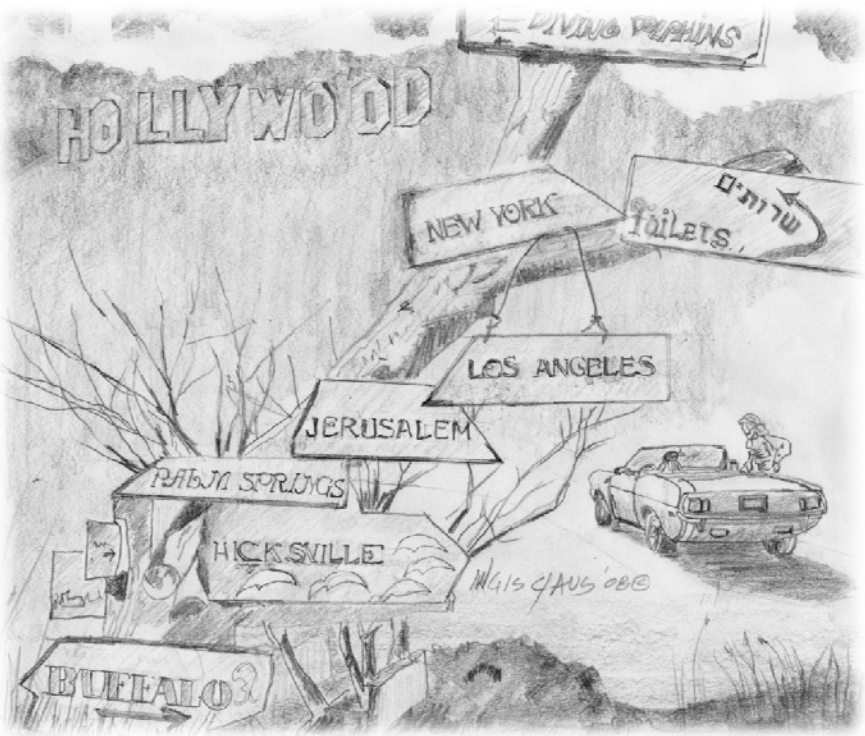
Long Island

1961

to

California

1989



HOLLYWOOD

DIVING PUPPINS

NEW YORK

TOILETS

LOS ANGELES

JERUSALEM

RABBI SPRINGS

HICKSVILLE

BUFFALO

INGIS CAUS'08

Eight

Whenever I think about my early childhood, I can smell the scents of early spring. The sun is warm, the air cool, the sky blue, daffodils and tulips push their way out of the rich, black soil. The raspberry bushes at the side of the house have yet to bloom, as do the peach and cherry trees in the backyard, but the promise is there. Waiting, waiting.

It's odd that I should remember it this way because in reality I grew up in the shadow of the Holocaust. My father's family had narrowly avoided death, escaping from Germany through a series of miracles, the latest being a surprise encounter with a kind-hearted ambassador, and from birth, or so it seemed, I was aware of the crushing details of that terrible time. The town I lived in until I was eight was over 50 percent Jewish, yet even at a tender age I knew that the Gentile culture dominated, and that to be Jewish meant that one was different.

One memory stands out, when I was five years old at Christmastime. My father, Isaac, took myself and my two older brothers to a department store. A pot-bellied store employee with a glued-on white beard and a red and white fur-trimmed suit sat in a big chair, inviting children to share their deepest toy longings.

"Can I, please?" I begged my father.

"Okay, Becky," he acquiesced.

I waited in the short line, then climbed eagerly in the big man's lap when it was my turn.

"What do you want for Christmas, little girl?" he boomed.

"I want to be Christian, but my father won't let me," I babbled, grateful for what I perceived to be a sympathetic ear.

Santa looked at me, startled, but not nearly as startled as my father. Unceremoniously, I was hauled out of the ample red lap and marched

to the car. I don't remember if there were additional repercussions, and indeed no one in the family has mentioned this in subsequent years, but I've never forgotten it.

It was a very Jewish childhood. My father took the three kids to *shul* (synagogue) every Saturday morning while my mother stayed home, taking advantage of the only time all week when she got the house to herself. All it took was a couple of hours and she was refreshed. By 12:30 pm, we flew back into the house, pulling off our dressy outfits in search of play clothes. My mother, smiling and relaxed, presided over a table laden with bagels, cream cheese, lox, tuna salad, cottage cheese, and, if we were lucky, pastries. Again, when I think back on these things, it's always May. Or June.

At *shul*, I remember sitting quietly next to my father on a hard wooden pew, the Hebrew chants swirling around my head, meticulously braiding the fringes on his *tallit*, then holding them over my finger and pretending they were dolls. I loved the *kiddush* after the service, as well, little cups of grape kosher wine and slices of sponge cake. The old men sometimes drank slivovitz; the heat from the brandy turned their ears red.

It seemed that everyone was named Cohen, like us, or Greenspan, or Shapiro, or Rosenthal. Other than some kids at school, I didn't really know anyone who wasn't Jewish. The teachers at my school, our neighbors, my parents' friends, all were Jewish, weren't they? Yet still I knew that society was not safe, that we were somehow set apart.

My mother's parents were a rarity for that time: Jews from Brooklyn who had been born in America. They had no trace of an accent, drove cars, wore bathing suits and not wool suits to the beach, and seemed, well, very American. Unhappily, my grandmother passed away when I was five and my grandfather followed soon after so I have only dim memories of them. It's my father's parents who are so vivid.

After Oma and Opa escaped the Holocaust, they went first to England and then came to New York in March of 1939. Except for a few relatives on both sides who had already been living outside of Germany and Poland, everyone else in their extended families perished. My grandmother was the youngest of seventeen children and everyone, *everyone*, along with their children, spouses, grandchildren, was

murdered by the Nazis. So yes, the family miraculously escaped but they left behind a blazing inferno that consumed humans like the pit of hell itself.

I vaguely understood this as a child. I didn't realize the pull that people outside your own small family can have on your life, your soul. I didn't know that you couldn't just walk away from something so horrific, sigh deeply, and say, "Whew! At least that wasn't me!" So I took my grandparents at face value, not knowing at what cost their lives had been preserved.

They lived in an immaculate brick apartment building in Queens, populated with other Holocaust survivors. They politely greeted one another with *Frau* and *Herr*. My father once asked his mother, exasperated, "Mom, you've known Mr. So-and-So for twenty years. Why don't you call him by his first name?" She laughed, but you knew she would *never* do that.

All these people got monthly checks from the West German government, reparation money for the losses they suffered. The green halls smelled strongly of disinfectant; the gleaming floors reflecting back our echoing footsteps in that unnaturally quiet place. My brothers and I temporarily brought life and youth through its tragic portals when we visited, but even that seemed forced, unreal.

The apartment itself, a tiny one-bedroom, seemed so small after our spacious suburban home on Long Island. That's what grandparents did, I reasoned. They lived in little places because they were old and didn't have kids. Still, I loved visiting them. I loved getting a shiny quarter from my grandfather, *just because*. I loved climbing onto their high bed with its satin coverlet. I loved sitting in the narrow little kitchen and eating a plate of *spungetti* (translation: spaghetti) that my grandmother had tossed with an awe-inspiring amount of butter. I loved listening to the adults talk, my grandmother's voice dropping to a whisper and switching to German when something really juicy was being said ("Speak English, Mom," my father would say, sighing). I loved being treated as a little princess because I was the only girl and had blonde hair like my grandfather's dead mother in Poland. I loved being special.

But I didn't always feel so special. I remember being three years

old, at nursery school, and being lonely. I thought I was ugly. Now I look at pictures of myself from that era and think, *What was wrong with me? I was such a cute little girl.* But my perception was darkened; my ability to make and hold friends somehow stunted.

Home was better than school. My mother, one of the more social beings to grace this earth, effortlessly gathered people around her. Jewish holidays, summers, in-between times, invariably found us entertaining family and friends. Unable to maintain much in my own life in the way of a social network, I nevertheless benefitted from the social whirl swirling about me, through no labor of my own. Sampling the cheese, crackers, and bowls of nuts that graced the coffee table, listening in to the adults' conversations, playing with my cousins—these things I enjoyed. Home was safe.

Sunday nights, however, I would lie awake for hours, watching unblinkingly as my light-up digital alarm clock clicked the minutes away. Though bright, I felt out of step with my classmates and dreaded the coming week.



When I turned ten, an awful thing happened. My little five-year-old cousin had a terrible accident and lay dying in a coma. My mother left for a week to help the grieving family and I turned to God. Praying fervently night after night, I begged him to heal my cousin. To my great disappointment, the little boy grew worse and eventually died. A part of my heart turned to stone, and I lost my childlike faith.

When re-examining one's life from the vantage point of middle-age, the question is: What is worth telling and what is not? So many events make a story, some critical yet of no special interest except to the subject herself. I know that I veered from a good and righteous path at a young age despite a good and moral upbringing. Why?

Looking back, I can see that I got in trouble through some of my reading choices. *Cosmopolitan*, Jacqueline Susann novels, various other

really nasty books that I never should have found, much less read, all contributed to a certain *bentness*, as C.S. Lewis called it in *Out of the Silent Planet*. My concept of sexuality became perverse, distorted, and my taciturn, closed nature kept me from discussing this with those who could have set me straight, had they known.

All this led to an ugly involvement with a young man in his twenties, a friend of the family. At the time, I thought this a great romantic secret; now I see a pedophile abusing a gullible young girl. The upshot of this entanglement was that I grew to hate myself. By sixteen, like many girls today, I became obsessed with being thin, as how much food I allowed myself was the only thing I could control in an increasingly out-of-control world.

In my teen years, I looked for boys to take away my loneliness and magically make me happy. Pursuing the ones who were disinterested and quickly tiring of the ones who did seem to like me, I bounced around like a beach ball run amuck. When I went off to college, as an immature seventeen-year-old, I hoped to start my life over again. Instead, I merely dug deeper and deeper into the sin which by now had an iron grip.

Halfway through that first year of college, I came apart emotionally. My parents rescued me from an ill-conceived plan to fly to London and brought me back home, where I got a tedious job at the local mall and sought to renew myself in the security of my childhood home. But restlessness had a hold on me, and books had a terrific grasp on my imagination.

I read *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and suddenly Bozeman, Montana, seemed to me the new Mecca. I had previously met someone on a bus who told me about job opportunities at Yellowstone National Park, so I applied and, to my amazement, was accepted. At eighteen, I stuffed an already oversized backpack and got on a plane for Montana, my longsuffering mother deeply upset at my latest antic but helpless to stop me.

For most kids my age, the job at Yellowstone would have been a dream come true. A group of young adults sharing a rustic house, an older couple cooking and supervising, an easy job at the touristy general store, the breathtaking landscape of lake, woods, and mountains. But I

had never learned how to plunge in socially. I was looking for someone else to take care of my needs. I was desperately lonely and unable to find my way out. So I did what I always did: I looked for the perfect boyfriend to take away my pain.

One day, during my time off, I wandered around the lobby of the quaint hotel by the lake. I noticed two handsome young men, one blonde and one dark-haired, early twenties, a little older than me. I went over and introduced myself. It turned out that the blonde one had just graduated from the law school of the university I had attended. I thought this a great coincidence and felt an immediate bonding with these fellows. They were vacationing for a few days on their way further west, where the blonde man had a job waiting for him.

As I got to know these brothers, I discovered that they were born-again Christians. Now, the term *born-again* was just getting highly popularized by 1980 and had all sorts of bad connotations for a Jewish girl. But I was surprised at how normal these guys seemed and also impressed by their genuine kindness. They didn't seek to take advantage of me, which would certainly have been easy enough. Instead, they spoke to me about God. The blonde man gave me a pocket New Testament and told me to start reading the book of John. Though I was a voracious reader, I clearly remember not understanding a word and giving up after less than one chapter. Undaunted, this fellow somehow knew of two Jewish believers at Yellowstone and set up a meeting for me. I still didn't understand anything I was told, but accepted the gift of a New American Standard Bible (a Bible I still have today).

After the brothers left, I fancied myself in love with the blonde one and grew depressed and restless. I moped around for a couple of weeks, then abruptly quit and decided to follow him to his new town. Catching a ride with some people I met who were heading in that direction, I unexpectedly showed up at the blonde's house. He was shocked to see me and quickly enough sent me on my way, disentangling himself from the very difficult situation I had so blithely put him in.

So it was that on a gloriously sunny day in June, with dusky blue mountains in the distance and vibrant wild flowers lining the sides of

the road, I found myself standing next to the highway on the Idaho/Oregon border with my thumb out. Since I was only eighteen and had led a very sheltered existence (with the exception of *Yom Kippur*, I had yet to miss a meal), it didn't occur to me to be frightened. Quite the contrary. Though I had not grasped the Gospel message preached to me at Yellowstone, nevertheless the idea of *Jesus* took root.

"He's protecting me," I said. And I'm convinced now that he was.

So began my hitchhiking odyssey, á la *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, *Even Cowgirls get the Blues*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, and probably several other 1970s books I should never have read.

Somehow or other, I went from Oregon to Nevada, to California and down the coast to Los Angeles, always having a clean place to stay at night, never having to pay (with either cash or sexual favors).

When I hitched into Sacramento, California, I got a ride with an older guy whose *schtick* I never quite figured out. He had a modest home and seemed to take in kids who needed a place to stay. That first night he had some errands to do and asked me if I wanted to come along.

"Sure," I said, ever the adventure junkie.

We drove around the city, doing whatever, and then went to a Chinese restaurant for dinner. Halfway through the meal, this fellow (I think his name was Lloyd) motions with his head. "Look over there," he said, lowering his voice. "See those men at that table? The one in the middle is Governor Jerry Brown."

Jerry Brown! Throughout high school, I had taken an active interest in politics. Plus, back in 1980, who didn't know about Jerry Brown? The hip California governor who dated Linda Ronstadt. These were the heroes of my post-60s generation.

"Can I meet him?" I asked, eyes wide.

Lloyd shrugged. "Go ahead."

Immediately, I jumped up and boldly walked right over to the governor's table. "Excuse me," I interrupted. Politely, the men stopped talking and gave me their full attention.

Ignoring everyone else, I held out my hand to Jerry. "I just got into town," I began, trying to look older than my age, although with my

wild, waist-length hair, skimpy shirt, and faded jeans I doubt I succeeded. "And I'm thrilled to meet you."

"It's a pleasure to meet you also," said the governor gallantly. "How do you like Sacramento?"

"I haven't seen much of it yet," I replied, amazed with the generous reception I was getting.

"Well, look," said the governor, "why don't you come to the Capitol tomorrow and I'll have Jacques (he pointed to the man on his right) show you around?"

"Wow, thanks," I said. Saying good-bye, I returned to my table.

"I can't believe how friendly he is," I told Lloyd.

"He's a great guy," agreed Lloyd, staring at me in a way that made me uncomfortable.

The next day, I had no idea how to get to the Capitol building and hesitated to ask more favors of Lloyd, so I let the whole thing slide past me.

That night, Lloyd asked me if I wanted to accompany him to a local concert. I went, but decided that this older man was not for me and he was getting on my nerves. As a result, I became demanding and petulant. We came back to the house and I went to sleep in a room with two other girls who were also staying there. We were all in our sleeping bags on the floor.

About five a.m., I suddenly woke up when a hand pressed down on my shoulder. It was Lloyd.

"Get your things together," he said unsmilingly. "I'm going to drop you off at the highway so you can keep going."

Wordlessly, I went into the bathroom, got dressed, and rolled up my sleeping bag. Within minutes I had slid into the front seat of his car. Embarrassed, I knew that I had behaved badly the night before, yet I was also relieved to be rid of this man. Soon enough we reached the entrance to the highway and he stopped the car.

"So long," he said, not looking at me.

"Bye. Thanks," I answered, grabbing my stuff and getting quickly out of the car.

I stood on the side of the road, watching him as he pulled away. Though I hadn't wanted this man, and it had been obvious that he

wanted more from me than I was prepared to give, still, I felt mortified at being thrown out of his house. *How difficult am I?* I wondered. Always when things went wrong I assumed it was the other person misunderstanding me. How ugly was my behavior?

I didn't have time to ponder these thoughts, however, because, almost immediately, a battered, old pickup stopped for me. The driver, a bearded, redneck type, had a bumper sticker emblazoned across the glove compartment that read, *Drugs or sex, no one rides for free.* Fortunately, in my case, that proved to be overly optimistic.

I emerged from the truck in the vicinity of San Francisco. Very soon (I never had to wait for long) another car stopped for me. The driver of this vehicle could not have been more different. Clean-shaven and well-dressed, he was obviously a professional of some sort. Pilot, I learned.

Mark invited me to share dinner with his family (he lived with his parents) and spend the night in the guest room. I said *yes*, having no idea what "home" entailed. An hour later, we exited from the coastal highway and drove through the dusty, aromatic hills near San Jose. The bucolic scenery entranced me.

After a while, we turned into a long, gravel drive. A large sign announced the *Sanders Vineyards*. The road snaked up a hill for close to a mile until a long, low, stucco home, reminiscent of a Spanish hacienda, sprang into view. Tires crunching on the gravel, Mark pulled up close to the house and parked the car. He opened his door and got out. I jumped out on my side.

I stood in front of the house and gazed at the view. "You live here?" I asked him, astonished.

Rolling vistas of cultivated grapevines stretched ahead of me as far as the eye could see. Lemon and orange trees perfumed the air with their luscious fruit. Masses of flowers I couldn't identify brightened the air with vibrant yellows, reds, blues and purples. A lone donkey sauntered leisurely off to the right. This wasn't a home: it was a movie set!

"I'll put your stuff in the house and then show you around, if you like," he offered, obviously proud of the place.

"Sure," I said.

I watched as Mark opened the back door and seized my huge backpack. Then I followed him through intricately carved double wooden doors and into a dark foyer, tiled with stones cool to the touch.

A heavyset, smiling Mexican housekeeper greeted Mark, exposing a gold tooth. When she caught sight of me, she frowned, letting loose a string of Spanish. Mark listened patiently and responded, also in Spanish. I didn't understand a word they said, so I focused on looking around.

The house had that rustic, early California look. Dark woods, colorful furniture, artifacts mounted on the paneled walls, pottery bowls filled with freshly cut flowers. I thought I was in *Gunsmoke*, or at least *Bonanza*. I was about to examine an ancient gun more closely when I heard the housekeeper sigh. "*Si signor.*"

I looked over as she left the room. "She okay?" I asked.

"Fine," Mark responded, not quite meeting my eyes. "Follow me. I'll show you to your room."

I trailed after him down a long, polished hallway, almost bumping into him when he abruptly turned into a room on the left. He placed the backpack carefully on the floor, like it was a Louis Vuitton suitcase and not something I'd gotten a deal on secondhand.

"This is great," I enthused. "Thanks!"

It *was* great. A high, four-poster double bed boasting a quilt that Grandma on the frontier might have made dominated a small but meticulous room. A long, low dresser with a large mirror could have been at least a hundred years old. Two framed oil paintings with horse and ranch motifs graced the walls.

We walked back down the hall and into a huge kitchen. Mark opened the refrigerator and took out two cold cans of soda, handing me one. Then we went outside and got into something that can only be described as a glorified golf cart.

"This is great for riding around the property," Mark explained, noticing my raised eyebrows. "It's too big around here to walk."

As we rode around the vineyard, and Mark pointed out the various outbuildings, fields, and animals, my heart leaped within me. Immediately, in my mind, I went from being a temporary guest to mistress of the place. I didn't want to work to make a dream come true.

I wanted a ready-made life I could just plug myself into. I wanted to be dropped down into the middle of paradise. I wanted to be taken care of.

Mark's parents were very kind people, and dinner went well. I didn't understand just how unusual a young, Jewish girl from Long Island seemed to this Old California Napa Valley wine-growing family. I didn't understand how preposterous my longings were.

The next morning, after breakfast, Mark offered to drive me wherever I needed to go. With a heavy heart, I realized that my fantasy of *The Princess and the Grapes* was to remain just that: a fantasy.

Later that day, I emerged into the hip, beach town of Santa Cruz. Immediately, I found my way to the ocean, took off my sandals, and luxuriated in the sensation of the warm sand between my toes. Some muscle-bound guys surfed nearby, their boards a bright assortment of colors. I sat and watched them, contentedly breathing in the sun-baked salty air. When they emerged from the blue and white flecked water, I strolled over and engaged them in conversation.

One of the men turned out to be last year's Mr. America. *This is too cool*, I thought to myself, donkey and hillsides and grape arbors forgotten. *How California is it, to meet Mr. America on the beach?* Life had ceased to be life; it had somehow become one of the novels I so greedily devoured.

Nothing turned up in Santa Cruz as far as overnight accommodations, so I restlessly hitched a ride further south. A short drive down Highway 1 took me to the trendy resort town of Carmel. What a magnificent spot! Art galleries and outdoor cafes jostled for position, cascading down a hilly main street that ended abruptly at the turquoise beach. Famed Pebble Beach Golf Course wound its emerald green beauty adjacent to the pounding surf of the ocean. Fashionable-looking men and women in designer clothes, sunglasses firmly in place, rubbed shoulders with equally fashionable-looking tourists.

The longer I walked around, the more I liked the place. *Maybe I should try to get a job*, I thought. I pushed open the door of a clothing boutique. The young Asian girl behind the desk looked at me quizzically, her long, dark, silky hair draped over one shoulder.

"Yes?" she said, with the slightest trace of an accent.

"Do you need any help here?"

“Ah, no.” She studied me critically and pursed her lips. “But two doors down is a cookie shop. They are always hiring.”

My face lit up. “Thanks! Towards the ocean or away?”

“Towards,” she said, her face softening into a smile. “Good luck.”

“Thanks,” I said again, waving as I left the store (but not before I noticed the \$500 price tag on a dress worn by a headless mannequin. *Whoa.*).

Two doors down I smelled that oh-so-familiar scent of baking flour, sugar, butter, and chocolate chips. I looked up. The lettering above the door read *The Cookie Shoppe*. The door opened and an older couple carrying little white bags walked out, talking to each other. They looked happy. The husband saw me standing there and held the door so I could enter.

“They’re the best,” he said conspiratorially, while his wife, laughing, concurred.

Once inside, I waited on a long line. When my turn came, I asked the teenage girl behind the counter if they needed any help. “I’m looking for a job,” I told her.

“Oh, this is a great place to work,” she enthused, her ponytail bobbing up and down as she nodded for emphasis. She pointed to a spot against the far wall of the store. “Just wait over there and I’ll let Liz, she’s the owner, know you’re here.”

A few minutes later, an attractive, blonde, thirty-something lady wearing a long, white apron emerged from the back of the store. She smiled sweetly when she saw me.

“Come,” she said, gesturing to a little round table with two iron grille work chairs. “Have a seat.”

Liz asked me a few questions and had me fill out some paperwork. Twenty minutes later, I had a job.

“Can you start right now?” she asked.

“Sure,” I said, stunned at how fast things had progressed. “Uh, Liz?”

“Yes?”

“Would you happen to know of any place I could stay? I just got into town today.”

“Well,” she said slowly, “my ex-husband has a big house five miles down the road from here. Maybe he’d be willing to rent a room to you.

I'll give him a call.”

“Wow, thanks!” I grinned. “This is great!”

“I'll let you know by the end of the day. Don't worry; you'll have a place to stay tonight.” She then stored my backpack, got me an apron, and introduced me to the fellow who would be training me to bake and sell cookies.

Liz came through with a place to stay, and that evening she dropped me off at a big, beautiful, new home several miles south of Carmel. Set back in the woods, it was at a high enough elevation so you could catch glimpses of the blue sea across the road and down the cliffs. Her ex, Jeff, seemed old to me, though he was probably not yet forty. Thin and wiry with dark hair and a mustache, he perpetually wandered around with a long-stemmed wine glass in his hand. A fluffy-tailed cat purred against one of his legs. I had no idea what he did for a living.

Back in the summer of 1980, even though we were at the end of the hippie era, the world remained an innocent enough place so I didn't fear being left alone in a deserted house with a man I didn't know. If you asked me that night, “Aren't you nervous?” I would have told you that I believed Jesus protected me, not having any clue as to who Jesus was or why he would do such a magnanimous thing. And protected I was. No one bothered me, plus I had a clean room to call my own along with kitchen privileges. The rent was \$200/month.

The biggest problem with such a great place to stay was that I had no transportation. Five miles was pretty far to walk. When I couldn't bum a ride off Jeff, I turned to hitchhiking. It was one thing to stand at a major highway and go as far as the person who picked you up would take you, but when there was a specific goal with a time limit it wasn't very reliable.

After the euphoria wore off from such a successful start to my new life in Carmel, old problems re-emerged.

First, I was lonely. I didn't know how to connect socially with the other young people at the cookie store. I could joke around and be friendly, but when everyone left at night, I hadn't made any real friends. I continued to look for a boyfriend to meet my needs instead of getting to know other girls, which would have made me much happier.

The other problem centered on my poor eating habits. After a bout

with anorexia in my midteens (I vividly remember barely tipping the scales at 100 pounds and my father demanding that I eat half a sandwich and a banana for lunch. “What?” I shrieked, appalled. “If I eat all that, it will make me fat!” And I really believed it), I had swung the other way my freshman year of college and weighed 5-10 pounds more than what was ideal. I looked just fine, but at the time thought I was grossly overweight and didn’t deserve normal food. It was really a sickness. I tried not to eat and then, out of sheer hunger, consumed far more calories on junk than if I had just eaten filling, healthy food.

I didn’t have the life skills necessary to go to a supermarket and make decent choices. Instead, I ate haphazardly, always restricting myself. Of course, by the end of an eight-hour shift at the cookie place I was ravenous, so I ate way too much cookie dough and broken cookies. Then I felt nauseated from excessive sugar. This did not help a healthy mental outlook, either.

After two weeks of this juggling act, despite the potential of staying in a town like Carmel and pulling my act together, I had had enough. Restless, discouraged, lonely, I lost interest and told Liz that I was quitting.

“Are you sure, honey?” she asked, solicitously, more concerned for me than I knew.

“Yeah. I have a brother in L.A., and I’m going to head down and spend time with him.”

This was actually true. My oldest brother had moved to Los Angeles after he graduated from college and gotten a job in the entertainment industry. I admired him greatly and had called him from Carmel in a fit of loneliness. “Come see me,” I pleaded.

“It’s not a good time for me,” he said. “But as soon as I can, I will.”

I was in a frame of mind where “tomorrow” was not soon enough. Suddenly I felt young and overwhelmed. I needed to see a family member.

I did my usual hitchhiking act, this time landing in Santa Barbara. I met a guy who lived on a boat, and he offered me a berth for the night. My divine protection, however, was wearing thin. This fellow tried to rape me, but I somehow managed to talk my way out of it (more unwarranted grace from above). The next morning, as soon as it was

light, I escaped, determined to make my way to my brother's.

I got a ride in an old van (old in 1980, that is) with a bunch of aging hippies. They ignored me, which was fine. The world didn't seem as friendly a place as it had a few days ago.

I found my brother's apartment, but he had already left for work. The key was right where he had said it would be, though, and I let myself in. There wasn't very much to do. Jerry's refrigerator reflected his status in life as a 23-year-old bachelor. That is to say, it contained three bottles of champagne, half a gallon of milk, some old lettuce, and a rapidly aging carton of eggs.

When my brother came home from work that night, he seemed less than thrilled to see his irresponsible sister. "Mom and Dad are worried sick about you," he said by way of greeting. "They've already left on their trip to Israel, but Mom gave me her Visa number and I'm to put you on the first plane back to New York."

What could I do? I had no plan. I stayed another two days and then Jerry drove me to LAX. He was very kind, but I didn't fit into his new, exciting life at all. I was a liability.

After finding my way home from Kennedy Airport (an airline employee gave me a lift), I came face-to-face with my other brother, Michael. He thought that he would have the whole house to himself for six weeks while my parents were in Europe but now, within a week, his crazy sister had returned. Suffice it to say that he was not pleased.

I dragged my oversized backpack into the house, aware of the hostility vibes heading my way. "Hey, Mike," I said.

"Hi," he grunted, arms folded.

Then he got more talkative. "I can't believe what you did. Do you have any idea how upset Mom was when you disappeared like you did? Dad had to convince her to get on the plane with him."

"I was fine," I said, completely dismissive of my mother's pain. I didn't believe my actions affected anyone else. It was all about me. "Anyway," I said, my eyes brightening, "I was perfectly safe. Jesus protected me the whole time."

Mike's eyes narrowed. I could tell he was thinking, *Jesus? This was new*. "You're a moron," he spat. "If Dad ever hears you say that, he's gonna kill you."

That's all it took. Just those words, "Dad's gonna kill you." All my newfound, ethereal faith drained right out of me. It would be another five years, five sin-drenched years, until I would have the courage to seek after God.

For more of the story, read on...

Seeking Paradise

Deborah Galiley

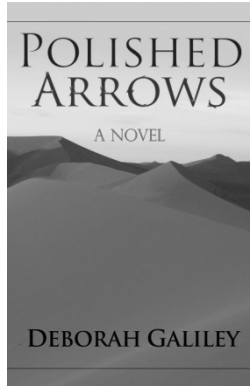
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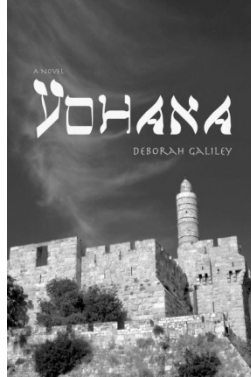
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For more information on Deborah Galiley and her books:

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About the Author



DEBORAH GALLEY grew up in a Conservative Jewish home on Long Island. After coming to faith in Yeshua in Los Angeles as a young adult, she met and married Steve, moved to central New York, and has been rebbetzin to his rabbi ever since. She is also a mother of five, percussionist, bread baker, youth group leader, and author.

In addition to her three novels for OakTara—*Polished Arrows*, *Yohana*, and *Seeking Paradise*—Deborah has written numerous articles for publications in the Messianic Jewish Movement. Along with her husband and oldest son, Josh, she is currently translating the text for a Messianic Family Bible. The New Testament is due out by the summer of 2009. For more information about the Bible, see www.messianicfamilybible.org.

Deborah has also supported Steve (with love, food, and encouragement!) in his pioneering of a Messianic and Contemporary Jewish internet radio station, www.soundsofshalom.com.

For more information:

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About the Illustrator



GAIL INGIS CLAUS, ASID, a native of Brooklyn, New York, early on had a love of both drawing and music. All of her available time went into creating and studying in these two areas.

After earning a degree in interior design, Gail continued with studies in architecture and design criticism and ultimately studied with many prominent artists. A popular award-winning designer and artist, she is internationally recognized.

For more than thirty-five years, Gail has been involved in design, architecture, teaching, and art. Her career has spanned all aspects of design and art with an emphasis in interior design. She is successful as an ASID (American Society of Interior Designers) certified and registered interior designer, home stager, professor of history of architecture & design, photographer, artist juror, writer, design critic, realtor®, and the founder of the nationally accredited Interior Design Institute. Besides teaching at her school, she has also taught at the New York School of Interior Design, Kean College in Union, New Jersey, the former King's College, Briarcliff Manor, Tarrytown, New York, and in Connecticut at the University of New Haven, University of Bridgeport, and Fairfield University.

As an interior designer with architectural training, Gail incorporates her drawing skills and painting into her art and illustrative work. Her sought-after award-winning work is represented in private collections, galleries, museums, and corporations both in the United States and abroad.

For more information:

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