

## Love and the Israeli Terrorist Terminator

"Climb!"  
"Grandpa, I'm afraid I'll fall and break a leg."

Grandpa: "Grandson, if you fall and break a leg, I'll break both your arms. No, I'll bounce you back to your neurotic mother. You won't climb trees, you'll climb walls. Now gird up your loins and climb."

So I girded up my loins - whatever they were - and cautiously, timidly, slowly climbed up and down the tree several times. And each time I lingered a moment longer at the swaying top, breathing deeply of the afternoon breeze, looking from the fertile landscape of Israel to the barren hillsides of Syria and Jordan on the far side of Lake

Kinneret and the Jordan River.

When I came down the last time, I said, "Thanks, Grandpa." I shyly put my hand in his, and to this day, spiritually at least, my hand is still there. And I am known as a terrorist terminator; and I am a grown man of 28, a wavering agnostic, with a deeply religious wife carrying our child, and Grandpa is buried between his two wives some 30 meters from this tree.

*continued on back....*

Macabee Dean

*A grandfather turns his introvert grandson into an extrovert who becomes a sergeant in a terrorist termination unit. While living with a girl from his kibbutz, she betrays him with an officer. The sergeant thrashes the officer and faces severe punishment, but the Army hushes up the incident.*

## Love and the Israeli Terrorist Terminator

by Macabee Dean

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*continued on back...*

## Macabee Dean

# **Love and the Israeli Terrorist Terminator**

by

**Macabee Dean**

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Editorial note: Several unusual features of the author's style should be mentioned:

- When transliterating Hebrew words that have a prefix, that prefix is written in lower case and the first letter of the word's root is capitalized. For example, 'haShomer' instead of 'Hashomer'.
- Multiple adjectives in a sequence are not separated by commas.
- Currently described actions or events are sometimes accompanied by a parenthesized 'flash forward' to indicate a future effect or a 'flash back' to indicate a past cause.
- Neologisms are explained the first time they are used. For example, *stanislaved*.
- If a paragraph break separates parts of the same speaker's dialogue, an open double quote is placed after the break but a close double quote is not placed before the break.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Laughter Heals Faster than Sleep**

The hospital lights have been dimmed for the night.

It is quiet now. Not a deathly silence because there is the muted hum heard in any dedicated assembly line healing factory: the hurried footsteps of a nurse, the quiet tinkle of a doctor being paged, and the occasional groan, moan or curse of a patient.

These noises soothe me for they mean that life is still pulsating, that I am still sufficiently alive to enjoy and appreciate my pulsation.

A fretful wind is blowing outside, bringing from afar the howls of a jackal. A strange sound to hear in Jerusalem, but this hospital lies on the city's outskirts, not too distant from the Judean Desert, and sounds echo far down wadis.

As scavengers, do jackals eat human carcasses?

"Stop being morbid," I order myself. "You'll be back on your feet in a couple of days, and it's a sacred tradition of the Israel Defense Forces never to forsake on the battlefield the wounded living, the dying wounded, or the dead."

I laugh. If captured alive or dead, I would become a grizzly item of Middle East haggling. The release of how many imprisoned, dedicated, recidivist terrorists would their leaders demand for the return of my dead body, of my live body?

Paradoxically, the longer I remain in enemy hands, the more the State of Israel would benefit because it has kept the imprisoned terrorists immobilized longer, preventing them from committing additional acts of terrorism.

My thoughts turn morbid.

I am dead. My lifeless body lies there. The slobbering jackals are approaching. I hate the idea of becoming food for these living four-legged abominations of the animal kingdom. But why should an agnostic worry about such things?" The dead are dead. *Punkt*.

Just the same I prefer to be eaten by worms – an ancient tradition – rather than jackals.

Yes, I would prefer hungry jackals to those satiated human abominations, those Christian German Nazis and their gas chambers. The jackals would leave identifiable bones and teeth behind. The SS Nazi crematoria would leave only my ashes and smoke to go up the chimney to be carried afar smelling like a juicy steak being broiled.

It is sad to be alone with such thoughts. I need company, happy company, but I am alone in this small ward. The two walking wounded have been sent home for the *Shabbat* (Sabbath). Doctors like easy weekends. (Fewer babies are born in most hospitals on weekends.)

I ring for the night nurse. She is earnest, sweet, innocent and young. "How could anyone be so young?" I ask myself from my battered age of 28.

"I can't sleep. Will you lullaby me to sleep?"

"You must sleep," she says in slow, fumbling Hebrew with a heavy Russian accent. "Sleep heals. Shall I bring you a sleeping pill?"

Nurses are generous with sleeping pills. When patients sleep, nurses drowse.

She picks up my medical history clipboard, accidentally left behind. Either she had not been briefed when the shifts changed, or she had not understood much. Typical.



She reads slowly, mumbling aloud, trying to decipher the Hebrew scribbling of the senior physician, also a Russian. The hospital insists that all records be in Hebrew. Learning the language forges a future people, and the future takes priority over the welfare of present patients.

Of course, it could be worse: a doctor from Russia and one from Algeria via France trying to communicate in badly scribbled Hebrew. But then many Israeli born and trained physicians can barely decipher each other's written gibberish, sometimes their own.

Computer written notes rank high as life savers in hospitals.

I gently take the clipboard from her and read aloud, slowly deciphering the atrocious Hebrew script.

"Army sergeant. 28. Married, without (children). Battered left leg. Nicknamed the *Amoker*. Goes crazy violent. Don't anger. Pacify. Give him anything he wants within reason except alcohol. Probably alcoholic. If he gets violent, suggest another psychological evaluation. If this doesn't quiet him down, call Security. Preliminary psychological evaluation indicates a possible stunt *artiste* (impostor, charlatan) to attract attention. A *Schwitzer* (show off).

So, that kind motherly woman, who had spent an hour yesterday at my bedside asking inquisitive questions with an understanding smile had been a clinical psychologist, and not a do-gooder volunteer spreading cheer to "our brave boys upon whose broad shoulders and courageous hearts Israel's future depends."

She had cleverly started the conversation by asking me what I thought of Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. And I had opened my heart, speaking candidly, something I never did with any person until I had learned who he was and what he wanted.

Why had I let down my guard? Answer: Because of her motherly interest – which I sorely missed from my own mother.

A harmless remark that I liked to sip some aged Latrun brandy to better sensitize the acoustics in my brain when listening to classical music had been upgraded by the department head as an indication that I was an alcoholic, perhaps a violent drunkard. Beer is my drink, and then mainly in summer facing the Jordan Valley's murderous, dry heat.

She had categorized me as a bolt in her standardized psychological concept of a nut. Actually, I am a highly irregular piece in a confusing, ever changing jig-saw puzzle.

Why this trickery? Had she been honest, I could have lectured her that until her labor union threatens to strike, she would remain an underpaid and under-appreciated drudge.

Thus *side tracked*, she would have given me good marks, prefacing them with "preliminary findings to be followed up in several different directions." This is the routine alibi of the social sciences where vagueness is a virtue, where concepts change with time, or change their names to appear as new advances, and no one wants to be pinned down, something like an 'open-ended' short story that leaves you guessing.

Let some psychologist poke around again in my mind? No way. I value my mental privacy. When I finish tearing to pieces the ward's senior doctor who ordered this evaluation, he'll need psychological soothing.

(Later I'll report on my verbal *Amoker* clash with this senior doctor.)

The nurse regards me curiously, "An *Amoker*? But you look so calm, so even-tempered. Are you really 28? You look so much younger."

Had I not been slurred as an *Amoker*, I would have skipped indulging in a bit of clowning theatrics. Fake reputations must be constantly reinforced or they are drowned out by upstart publicity seekers.

It was a shame to inflict my antics on this young girl – but her very youth would spread my reputation throughout the hospital. Speedily. I might be upgraded to intensive care in a general ward. Worth a try.

She wanted to drowse, so she repeated, “You must sleep. Shall I bring you a sleeping pill?”

“I don’t want to sleep. I want to write my memoirs. Please bring me a fat notebook and a pen,” I said in English, hoping that her English was better than her Hebrew. It was, but it was just as slow.

She admonished me, “Why should a young man write his memoirs? Old men, somewhat of a nuisance to their wives and children, are urged to write them, thus diverting to story writing their need to regain family status as a personality. Young men should first experience life.”

This is the philosophy of raw youth whose rosy dreams have yet to be squashed by life’s realities.

“Like making love?” I leered suggestively, motioning for her to lie down by my side.

Her face flamed red in confusion. At her age, true love is an obtainable Mecca, an ever beckoning light at the end of a short tunnel. Saving her virginity for a husband who would only know the difference if she told him.

“Shouldn’t your wife extend such an invitation?”

“My wife would scratch your eyes out for trying to seduce me.”

This was nonsense. My wife knew that I neither plucked nor ate forbidden fruit, although I did look, for I admired

beauty, be it a woman, a horse, or a dog. No cats. Cats are of the devil.

Moreover, I suffer from that rare malady psychiatrists call FPD – Faithfulness Personality Disorder. Now hold your laughter. I am not alone. But are we a vanishing phenomenon?

“I want to write them now,” I said, speaking more to myself than to her. “Memory is a pathological liar whose pathology deepens with age. Cowards become heroes, disasters become amusing adventures, defeats are presented as glorious victories, a crucified love is hidden as a psychological study, and active participants retire as philosophical bystanders. I want to freeze events on paper before they emerge from my memory distorted by subtle ego puffing.

“Yes, I want to write them now before my fake super-extrovert façade fades away to reveal my highly introverted inner self. But why write at all? Who gives a damn about me except my wife who knows me all too well? Who would be interested in reading my memoirs? I never was curious about my great grandparents. I never even cared to learn their names. It must be a family trait for my own mother hadn’t the least bit of interest in me.”

My elaborate monolog convinced me that my veiled conscious mind had processed vague ideas floating around in my mind so fast that it outpaced the ability of my conscious mind to formulate sensible sentences. I could, of course, utter poetic purple prose and say: “My mind stumbled like a staggering drunk on a jumbled pavement on a gusty night.”

“Sleep is a good medicine,” the young nurse reiterated sharply.

“Are you the only nurse on this floor? Come closer please.” I stretched out my right hand, fingers opened vise-like, curled to grab her. I *stanislaved* wide-open ravenous

eyes, tightened my face muscles into a mask, bared my teeth in a snarl, opened my lungs wide, and released a long, high-pitched, threatening wolf howl.

(Editor: Konstantin Stanislavski, born in Moscow in 1863, revolutionized acting by insisting that actors should actually 'experience' the role they played, and not just 'portray' the role.)

One of my best. Really, one of my best. Despite being pinned down. Any wolf could learn from my howl for I had fashioned it to strike the most human fear receptors.

The nurse retreated several paces.

An eerie silence followed. The moaning patients grew silent for the howl awakened some atavistic fear of wolves that dulled present pain.

A religious relic of the Christian German Nazi concentration camp, screeched, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Editor: Psalms 22:2) The same words the crucified Jesus uttered on the cross? (Editor: Matthew 27:46) Had the Christian German Nazis made a born-again Jew out of this ancient death camp survivor? Who knows? Who cares? His generation would soon degenerate into emotional annual memorial ceremonies in which the living pay their debt to the dead who kept them alive, perhaps even learning something from the past. Don't bet on it.

The camp survivor began screaming. The man-eating spiders were again coming out of the walls.

"Bo," I tell myself, "You're an SOB for forgetting that religious Holocaust survivor dying in the next room. He trusts with all his might in God, but he is in no hurry to meet Him."

I raunchily suck air into my lungs to roar in my best parade-ground voice as the nurse backs still further away, but I only bleat like a sheep in a low, sweet, gentle voice, "bah, bah, bah."

I rock with laughter, shooting a spasm of pain down my battered left leg, as she dashed out of the room shouting '*manyak*' (maniac).

I shouted after her, "Laughter heals faster than sleep."

A few minutes later she slips hesitantly into the ward with a thick wad of blank medical record pages and two pens. "I couldn't find a notebook. This should suffice until morning." She tosses them on the bed without approaching close.

I snarl and snap my teeth at her.

She flees.

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So I girded up my loins - whatever they were - and cautiously, timidly, slowly climbed up and down the tree several times. And each time I lingered a moment longer at the swaying top, breathing deeply of the afternoon breeze, looking from the fertile landscape of Israel to the barren hillsides of Syria and Jordan on the far side of Lake

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*continued on back....*

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*A grandfather turns his introvert grandson into an extrovert who becomes a sergeant in a terrorist termination unit. While living with a girl from his kibbutz, she betrays him with an officer. The sergeant thrashes the officer and faces severe punishment, but the Army hushes up the incident.*

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