

# **Adventures in Koba By Kim Bond**

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## Prologue: About Koba

It is true that Jesus lived and walked on Earth thousands of years ago. He was God's Son—fully man and fully God. He was sentenced to death, crucified on the cross, and died there. His body was placed in a tomb with a stone rolled against the opening. On the third day, he was raised from the dead. On Earth, men praised God because this sacrifice paid for their sins. In heaven, Jesus sat down on the throne next to God because he was crowned with honor. *Adventures in Koba* takes place at the same time all of these wonderful things were happening on Earth and in heaven. It takes place in a pretend land in another realm—a realm between heaven and earth called Koba.

In the north of Koba, a steep yet beautiful Bliss Mountain Chain protects its people from crossing into heaven. On the south, the wild rapids of Grande River prevent the people of Koba, called Kobans, from wandering south to Earth. The Kobans do not even know human beings exist even though they are so similar.

Kobans have living spirits inside physical bodies just like humans do.

It is possible for Kobans to encounter physical representations of spiritual beings due to their location between the two realms. For this reason, it was a terrifying place to live until the ancestors agreed to live together in a village at the base of the Bliss Mountains and alongside Crystal River. They named it Green Hills because of the lush green grass that grew there. For three generations, the Kobans never even saw any spiritual beings which made their history seem more like myths than facts. Parents stopped warning children about the dangerous spirits living among them. They were so happy in Green Hills that they never warned their children about the dangers of the Rock Graveyard, the Thorn Forest, or the Grande River. That was a big mistake.

## Chapter 1: Green Hills

It was a typical spring morning. Trip grabbed his lunch and raced out the door. The grass was so wet with dew that he almost slipped, but he kept on running—breathing in the sweet smell of Koban honeysuckle flowers. He ran as fast as he could until his side began to hurt and his legs felt like jelly. Then he saw the one-room school. He looked around for Sarah. She was nowhere in sight. He knew he had won this race.

Fifteen-year-old Trip had a twin sister named Sarah. Sarah had won the race out of the womb because she was born three seconds before Trip. He never forgave her for that. He tried to defeat her in every competition since then. He raced her during their three-mile trail to school every day. Most days he was the first one sitting in his chair in school. There were only about fifteen kids in the whole school, and they were all different ages. They had only one teacher named Miss Kartel. She wore wire-rimmed glasses and black dresses every day. She was always getting Trip in trouble.

Trip walked into the school and found his desk. He slid into his chair at his desk and took some deep breaths to make the pain in his side go away. As he sat breathing, he opened his desk to put his lunch away and saw the strangest thing. His pencils were scattered all over his desk. He may not be organized, but he always put his pencils back in the box after he used them. He wondered who had been poking around his desk.

He snatched a handful and opened the pencil box to shove them in. That's when he saw it. He could hardly believe his eyes. A fairy! The fairy was laying down inside the box. She was so beautiful and tiny. She looked like a beautiful young adult, but she still fit snugly in a pencil box.

"Hello there," Trip said to the fairy.

The fairy ignored his words.

“That’s a pretty dress you are wearing,” Trip remarked about her clothes just to make conversation. In truth, her dress was a ragged gray old thing with a scarlet-colored scarf tied around the waist for a belt. “Look, it is the same color as my shirt.”

Trip wore high-top tennis shoes and blue jeans with a button-up shirt. Its color was originally white, but it had grayed over time. He waited for the fairy to say something, but he looked around for something else to talk about when she said nothing.

As he returned his eyes to the fairy, he noticed her dress was now a purple color!

“How did you do that?” Trip asked in disbelief. “Wait till my sister Sarah meets you! She will just love you. What is your name?”

Miss Kartel came in the school from outside. Just then Trip closed the pencil box, and the fairy laid still in pitch darkness. He put the pencil box into his shirt pocket. The box was sort of long and stuck out of his pocket awkwardly so he lifted the top of his desk and laid the pencil box inside his desk. He quietly lowered the lid just as the teacher entered the school from the back door.

From behind, he heard her voice saying, "Good morning, Trip. I trust you had a fine weekend."

He turned to face her. "Yes, Miss Kartel." He did not want the teacher to discover the fairy he had hidden in his desk. Making matters worse, he wondered if there was enough air in the closed pencil box for the little fairy to breathe.

As the teacher walked to the board to erase yesterday's lesson, Trip opened the lid to his desk. He reached inside and quickly found a pencil. He gently poked the box to make small breathing holes in the top. The fairy inside the

box sucked in her stomach to make herself lay flat as a pancake to avoid the lead dagger being stabbed through her tiny new home. Trip dropped the pencil and the pencil box, and the desk lid came crashing down on his fingers. He yelled out in pain.

“Serves ya right!” Sarah said, walking down the row to sit beside him. Other children were entering also. They were playing and laughing so no one else noticed the desk smashing his fingers.

Trip said in a low voice, “Sarah, you won’t believe this. I found a fairy. She is hidden in the pencil box inside my desk.”

“Yeah, right, and I am hiding a giant in my school bag.” She rolled her eyes and pulled out a book from her bag. “Hello, Giant. How are you doing today?” she asked her book, then chuckled under her breath.

He whispered, "I mean it, Sarah. I will show you the fairy at lunch."

"Great. I cannot wait," she said in a flat voice with her normal sarcasm.

"I will," Trip insisted with a seriousness that concerned Sarah.

"Alright—I believe you believe..."

A ringing bell interrupted Sarah, which meant the children should be silent for the day's lesson. Each moment crept by like a snail crawling across the map Miss Kartel was using to teach in class. It was a map of the land of Koba.

Trip's hand shot up. "Do you believe in fairies?"

The class erupted in laughter. The kids always laughed at Trip's usual jokes and pranks.

Miss Kartel put a hand on her hip. She stared down her silver wire rim glasses at him. "I am only answering questions about the land of Koba at this moment. Do you have a question about this map, Trip?"

"Yes, Miss Kartel. Is there a place called Fairyland? Or some other place where fairies live? Maybe it is an island that has never been discovered." Trip's hopeful eyes lowered as teacher straightened her long black skirt that fluffed out like a pumpkin as she always did right before her wrath flared up.

"You know fairies are just myths and legends. None of that exists today. It may have never existed at all! You may stay inside for lunch today, Trip. Help me wash the boards as detention for wasting my time and the time of your fellow students with silly questions."

Trip felt so frustrated that he leaned forward and banged his head on the desk three times. With each pound, the fairy shook like there was an earthquake.

When lunchtime came, Sarah ran outside to talk with her friend Rosa while Trip walked to the front of the room as he had so many times before. He grabbed the rags he normally used to wipe down the board and began to walk to the sink.

“Where do you think you are going?” the teacher asked. Her brunette hair mixed with white strands fell from the loose bun on her head and into her eyes.

“To wet the rags,” Trip said in an innocent voice.

“Where did you put the fairy? I know you have one. What else could have caused your sudden interest in them?” The collar of her black shirt ruffled around her strained neck.

“What fairy?” Trip asked. He knew it would be useless to pretend fairies did not exist since she had figured out he had met one. He dropped the rags and ran straight to his desk. He grabbed the pencil box and slid it in his pocket as he ran out of the back of the school. By that time, he Miss Kartel had almost caught up to him. Then, he started to run. Miss Kartel chased after him, but he had so much experience racing his sister that he ran almost as fast as lightning. He never even looked over his shoulder once he started racing. He kept running until the lush green grass scenery had changed to a landscape of hard dirt and large boulders.

Suddenly, he realized he had gone so far west that he was now in the Rock Graveyard. He had heard rumors of violent Kobans who were punished by being sent out from the safe Green

Hills. They had wandered west until they had ended up here. He never truly believed it even existed until now. As the myths were told to him, this rocky area was nicknamed Rock Graveyard because no one ever left. The huge boulders actually became more like tombstones for the people who died in that area.

He could not spot a single person or even a cottage. No one from his generation had ever wandered this far from home and lived. Trip knew he could not return home. Surely, Miss Kartel would find him there. His sister would not believe him about the fairy so what was the use of telling her or even asking for her help? He was a kid on the run. Then his stomach rumbled loudly. After a moment, he remembered the reason why he had run away from his beloved family, food, shelter, and all that was safe and secure. He held the pencil box out and opened the top.

He said to the fairy, "Okay, it's time to start talking."

## Chapter 2: Rock Graveyard

The tiny fairy stood and flew out of the box. She hovered in midair until a transformation began to take place. The fairy grew gigantic white wings. Then a gorgeous young woman appeared in between the wings. She wore a sparkling white dress that shimmered in the sunlight like crystals.

“Woah,” Trip gasped. He could hardly believe his own eyes.

“Thank you for rescuing me,” she said as she gently touched Trip’s face.

Trip noticed his mouth was still open and closed it just before opening it again to ask, “How did you do that? How did change from a small fairy into one big fairy?”

She replied, “Not a big fairy, Trip. I transformed into my original state, which is an angel.”

Trip’s mouth dropped open again. “An angel? Like a messenger of God?”

The lady in white answered, “Yes, and my name is Maria.”

Trip ran his hand through his hair. “Maria, I’m Trip. I’m also very hungry so I would be grateful if you can whip up some bread or something with your magic wand.”

Maria shook her head. “Angels do not have magic wands. I am not a witch.”

“I am sorry. I am just so hungry.” Trip sat on rock and rested his chin on his fist.

“Never mind your hunger! Look where you are sitting!” Maria pointed where he was sitting.

Just then, the rock underneath Trip began to move. It was no rock! It was a four-foot Gila monster! The oversized lizard sunk his teeth into Trip’s arm. Trip tried to stand up and pull his arm out of its grip, but he could not do it. The Gila monster began to back away and knocked Trip right off of his feet. The lizard dragged Trip further and further until he had reached his den. Trip lay in the dark hole smelling the dirt and listened to the monster gnaw on his flesh. He came close to passing out from the pain radiating from the bite. The next thing he knew the angel was standing in the hole next to him.

She said, “Spit on it, Trip!”

“What? It sounded like you told me to spit?” he asked in a faint whisper because he had no strength to talk.

“I did say that. Spit on it,” she repeated in a louder voice.

Trip tried to form saliva in his dry mouth, but he could not. Then the angel touched his mouth, and it suddenly drooled with fluid. Trip spit hard at the monster. The Gila monster let go as soon as the spit reached his scaly skin.

The angel grabbed hold of Trip’s arm flew out of the hole.

“Your sister is in trouble. I’ve seen it in a vision.” She flapped her large wings several times, which took the two of them much farther and faster than Trip could have ever imagined.

## Chapter 3: Grande River

Sarah had seen her brother run out of the school with the teacher running after him. The other kids were playing tag or hide-and-seek since Miss Kartel was gone. Girls were screaming, and boys were laughing. She stood in the middle of it all as still as a statue.

Her friend, Rosa, walked up next to her and said, "Trip is in deep trouble this time." Rosa flicked a bug off of Sarah's red tee-shirt.

"I have to go after him," Sarah said. She stared forward like she was in a daze.

Rosa always followed Sarah everywhere she went, and today was no different. It was no surprise to Sarah when she said, "I will go with you."

Sarah suddenly woke up from her dazed feeling and snapped back to reality. “Rosa, I do not know where we are going or when we will be back. All I do know is that I am not coming back without my brother.”

“Me either,” Rosa said bravely. She put her hand on her hip like she was a superhero.

The two young girls jogged in the same direction as their teacher and Trip. They followed the trail of broken sticks and crunched leaves until they entered an open field.

“Now what?” Rosa asked with labored breath.

Sarah pointed back toward their home in Green Hills. “You can turn back if you want, but I am just going to keep going. I would rather live in the wild forever than face my parents. I would be in so much trouble if I go home without him.”

“You miss him, don’t you?” her friend asked.

“A little. Let’s go this way,” Sarah said pointing south. Little did they know, but they were headed right for the Grande River. Soon they began to hear its raging rapids.

“It sounds like a river. Sarah, I will stay with you no matter what, but unless there happens to be a giant bridge over what sounds like a really big river then we are not going to be able to cross.”

“I will find a way,” Sarah said as she walked to the top of the hill. “There is the river. And look, there is a log laying across the river. We can walk across the log.”

They walked down the hill, and Sarah spread her arms to balance as she walked across the log. She was glad she wore jeans and tennis

shoes. When she had taken a few steps, she turned and urged Rosa to cross.

Rosa took one step on the log and then got down on her hands and knees. After she had crawled a few feet, she wrapped her arms and legs around the log and began inching her body along like an inchworm. She was so close to the water that fish leapt up from the river and began pound against her body. The Koban fish were as big as a baseball bat and as uglier than a mole rat. Sarah cheered her on and encouraged her to keep going.

When Rosa had inched her way across a few feet of log, she looked up at Sarah. "I just cannot do it anymore. Even with jeans on I can feel that I am getting bruises from these giant fish, and I am so scared."

"I'll help," Sarah said and began to walk back across the log. She bent down to grab her hand, but Rosa refused to let go of the log. "The sun is setting, Rosa. Holding onto a log in the middle

of a river will be much, much scarier after night comes.”

“I’m going back,” Rosa said. She began inching backwards.

Sarah followed her friend, “You’re right. There is no reason we should risk our lives to cross this river when we don’t even know if Trip went this way.”

Rosa had reached land again and began to stand and dust off her black jeans. “And if he did, there’s no way to know if he, uh...well, you know...made it.”

Sarah stepped off of the log. “Rosa! Don’t say things like that!”

Rosa laid down on the uneven ground near the river. “Sorry, maybe I should not have come. I

thought I was brave, but I am just not as brave as you. ”

Sarah laid down beside her. “You did great.” They looked up at the sky. The sun was setting now. They had been hiking all day. The water rushing by calmed Sarah’s worries.

“I am just so glad it’s over. Yuck, it smells like fish. This is nothing like the Crystal River that flows down from the Bliss Mountains back in Green Hills. We had it so good.” Rosa sat up. “What’s that?” She pointed to a large slimy creature shimmying up the river bank. “It’s a fish.”

Sarah looked to the left and right at a mob of hungry Koban fish that were climbing toward them. “No, that’s a lot of fish. And they have teeth!” Sarah began moving backwards.

Rosa screamed as even more fish followed them. As they tried to stand up, the fish caught up to them and started eating right through their shoes.

Just then, the angel swooped down. She was holding him around his waist. “Grab them, Trip.”

The boy held out his hands, and each girl took hold of one hand. The angel flapped her wings and they flew across the sky to the top of a mountain. At the top of the mountain, they smelled something sweet like honey. It looked like the grass was covered in snow, but the air wasn't cold at all. Then as Trip bent down to touch it, he noticed it felt more like a little like bread.

Maria held up her hands like she was presenting something marvelous. “This mountain is angel territory. You'll be safe here for tonight.” She nodded at Trip, “Enjoy some of our food. It is called manna.”

Trip began to shove it in their mouths. Sarah and Rosa bent to look at it more closely.

Sarah said, "Wait a minute, guys. Since we are going to be eating angel food, don't you think it would be right to bless it first?"

"Yeah." Trip brushed the manna out of this mouth onto the ground as the girls made faces in disgust.

Rosa shrugged and folded her hands.

"Lord, please bless and thank you for this food," Sarah said.

The kids feasted on the manna. Realizing their thirst, they stood to search for water and found nearby daffodils nearly overflowing with sweet edible nectar.

“What happened back there, Trip? Why did you leave the school?” Sarah asked her brother.

“I was trying to protect the fairy—the fairy you didn’t believe in.” He pointed to Maria. “Well, now she is an angel. Anyway, Miss Kartel found out about her and chased after me. You believe me now, don’t you?”

“After being rescued from man-eating fish wiggling after me by an angel who airlifted us to a manna-covered mountain peak, I won’t argue about the existence of fairies.”

“Good. Well, I kept her safe in a pencil box in my pocket.” He tapped on his pocket which still held the pencil box. “Somehow she morphed into the angel when I let her out. I don’t quite understand it myself. Then we had to leave to rescue you two nutballs from the fish.”

“Nutballs? That’s some kind of thanks for coming after you!” Sarah shouted with a slap to the top of his head.

“Sorry, you’re right. Thanks for coming after me,” Trip said dropping his eyes low to the ground. “I’m hungry for some meat. Did you catch any of those fish? I sure would love to slice one open and eat it right now. I would it raw.”

“Ewww...” the girls said together.

That was the last word said before the three laid down on a bed of moss and drifted off to sleep until daybreak.

## Chapter 4: Shadows

Trip was the first to wake in the morning. Smelling the delicious manna, he bent over to pick up a handful of the delicious food. He shoved it into his jeans pockets. He stood up and stretched. He saw Sarah and Rosa laying nearby, but he could not find the angel anywhere. He shrugged and walked over to his sister and her friend. "Let's get moving. The angel left without us so no free flight back home. We'll have to walk."

The girls awoke with groggy looks on their faces.

"Why would she leave without us?" Sarah stood up and looked all around. The scenery from the mountaintop was more beautiful than anything she had ever seen in her life."Let's see. The sun rises in the east so it is this way," she said as she pointed to her left with squinted eyes at the bright sun. "And look! There is the Rock

Graveyard!” She looked further into the distance and saw Green Hills. “Home is east! We just need to use the sun as our compass to guide us back home” Sarah spun around. She could only see white clouds to the north. When she looked south, her eyes widened. Small puffs of smoke curled up from a smokestack from a small brick cottage in the distance. She said, “That’s weird. There is a cottage way out here. I did not think any Kobans lived outside of Green Hills anymore.”

Rosa said, “You’re too ambitious, Sarah. Let’s stay here. Then the angel will know where to find us. She will probably come back and fly us safely back home.”

The kids looked up in the sky for the angel, but instead they saw something terrifying. A dark winged creature with a dagger-like tail and a wingspan that reached as far as the eye could see flew their direction. As it neared, they heard its loud shrieks. They saw that its wings left a trail of complete darkness behind it. Once it flew over their heads, they were in complete

darkness. It was darker than it had been during the night that had just ended.

“Did that really just happen or am I having a nightmare?” Trip asked.

Sarah put an arm around her brother. “It could be worse. I am not sure how, but it somehow it could be worse.”

“Sorry to interrupt, but—um, does anyone have a match?” Rosa asked.

Trip said, “Who needs a match? I can start a fire by rubbing two sticks together.”

Sarah took a few steps until she heard a loud crunch underfoot. She picked up the two broken pieces of stick from the ground. “Here you go.”

He took the branches from her and started rubbing them together. Every few seconds, the girls saw a spark and heard blowing sounds. However, the sparks disappeared as quickly as they lit.

“This is taking forever. It’s probably useless anyway,” Rosa said.

Trip said, “Make yourself useful and find something to make a torch. I need a long thick branch and some Koban pine pitch.”

“Pine pitch? What is that? And how am I supposed to find it in the dark?” Rosa asked.

“Pine pitch is like sap. Feel around the tree trunks. If your hand sticks to it, you have probably found it. Hum like this...” Trip began to hum. “Then you won’t get lost.”

“I do not want to be in the dark for another minute. Don’t worry—I will find something.” Sarah started walking with outstretched arms in the dark. She tripped over a large branch. “Ouch!” She picked over the branch that caused her to fall. “I think I found our torch.” She set down the branch next to Trip who was blowing on a small spark that was growing into a flame on the stick.

Rosa began humming a tune. She felt up and down several trees before sticking her hand in an oozing substance. “I found something sticky over here.”

Trip followed the sound of her humming. He dipped the large branch into the pine pitch and then touched the flaming stick to the large branch. “Here goes nothing.”

Rosa loudly exhaled, which nearly blew out the flame but instead caused the flame to burn Trip’s fingers. Before it managed to burn out, he

stooped down to the pine to light the torch. The torch lit up a large bright fire.

Sarah said, “Rosa, are you sure you are here to help? It almost seemed like you blew out the flame on purpose.”

“On purpose? Do you think I want to go walking around here in the dark? What do you think that creature was anyway?” Rosa asked.

“Who knows? The Creature of Darkness. One thing is for sure. The myths of Koba are true. There are spirit beings living among us,” Trip offered.

“It looks more like monsters live in Koba—at least one monster anyway. I say we call it the Shadow Monster,” Sarah suggested. She began walking down the side of the mountain.

“I don’t think that’s the way home,” Trip said following after her with the torch.

Sarah said defiantly, “I’m not going home. Before the Shadow came, I saw a cottage with smoke curling up from a smokestack. That’s where I am headed. Maybe they can help us.”

“Shadow Monster? I already named it Creature of Darkness,” Trip said and paused.

Sarah kept walking. “Yeah, but my name is better.”

Trip began walking again and holding the torch to light the path. The siblings talked about their ideas of what the black monster could be and argued about their theories the whole way to the cottage. Rosa tried to settle their fighting, but she gave up after awhile.

## Chapter 5: Bliss Mountain

Sarah stood in the darkness and knocked on the wooden door of the small brick cottage. When there was no answer, she knocked harder and yelled into the crease of the door frame, “I know someone is in there. I can see the smoke coming from your chimney.”

“Someone could have left a pot on the fire while they went to pick berries or hunt a rabbit,” Rosa said. She stood a few feet back from the door alongside Trip.

“It is probably lunchtime. Maybe they already caught the rabbit, and they are roasting it on the fire now.” Trip rubbed his stomach and licked his lips. “Oh yeah, I still have some manna in my pocket.” He pulled it out, but it had tiny white worms on it and smelled terrible.

Just then, Sarah heard whispering on the other side of the door. “Shhh,” she whispered. “I can hear them. Let’s see if it is unlocked.”

“This was your idea, Sarah. If anybody is going in there, it is going to be you. I want nothing to do with this. Let’s just keep walking.” He shivered in the darkness holding the torch in Sarah’s direction.

Sarah rolled her eyes. “Keep walking in what direction? We have no idea where we are going without the sun as our compass. We need help, and the person on the other side of this door may be able to help us or give us directions or something.” She twisted the knob and opened the door.

The fire crackled in the fireplace and lit up the space, but the room had cold spots and a moldy smell. Spider webs hung from every corner. What little furniture could be found inside was draped with dusty sheets. Nevertheless, Sarah bravely stepped inside. “Hello,” she called. She

walked over to the fire and rubbed hands in front of the flames.

“Hello.” It was a whisper coming from an overstuffed chair facing the fire.

Sarah turned to see where the voice came from and saw a man. Well, it was the upper half of a man. There was nothing below his belly button. He had pale, powdery white skin with bright red lips like they were covered in lipstick. She tried to remain calm even though he gave her the most eerie feeling. “I am sorry I invited myself in like this. We are lost because this—this thing flew overhead and made it dark everywhere. We call it the Shadow Monster because it’s like it spread its shadows everywhere. Well, I call it the Shadow Monster. My brother calls it the Creature of Darkness. I am sure you noticed it was dark outside, didn’t you?”

“Oh— it gave birth, did it?” His arm reached up and stroked his chin.

“What are you talking about? You are not listening!” Sarah forgot she was conversing with a half-man inside of a creepy house for a moment.

“Are you quite done throwing your fit, young lady? I am listening. What you think is shadows or darkness is actually the younglings. This Shadow Monster gave birth to millions of tiny versions of itself. And soon, they’ll be coming after...”

“Are you trying to scare me? I don’t scare easy.” Sarah said as she bent down and leaned into the man’s face.

The man leaned forward so their noses almost touched. “Sarah, they want that little fairy you are carrying around.”

Sarah stood upright and took several steps back. “How did you know my name?”

“What do you want to hear? That I am psychic? I’m not. I heard it from Adeline Kartel. She works for the—what did you call it—Shadow Creature. She was nosing around here looking for you, but I will tell you the same thing I told her. I am not here to help anyone. I paid for this afterlife, and I intend to enjoy it.”

“Afterlife? You mean you are dead?” Sarah kept backing away and was almost at the door now.

“Yes, dead indeed. I gave the lower half of my body. It was a steep price, but I have purchased my years so they are mine....” The half-man turned back to stare into the blazing fire as Sarah slipped out the door.

“What happened, Sarah?” Rosa asked.

“Alright, I admit going in there was a bad idea.” Sarah walked over to Trip and pulled the pencil box out of his pocket. As she opened the top, a bright light shown from the box.

Trip pointed at the pencil box in Sarah’s hand. “Look—a light! It’s coming from the box. No, wait—it’s coming from the fairy. Maria, you were in there the whole time? Why didn’t you say something? We’re saved!”

The fairy sat up as if from a deep sleep and stretched out her arms. “Why are you waking me up? It’s not morning yet. Look, it’s still dark.”

Sarah said, “Nope, it is only dark because the Shadow Monster had babies. They are going to come after us all because of you! We are lost because of you! We might be captured now—all because of you!”

## Chapter 6: Black Lake

The fairy explained, “The winged creature and its younglings only want to kidnap us to block the work of God. The—what did you call it? Oh yes, the Shadow Creature hates God and His Son and everything good. You do want God’s messages delivered, don’t you? Do you live for God? If you have made no choice, you must make one now.”

Sarah stumbled over her words. “Yes, I do. I choose God. I don’t know if I have ever said it aloud before, but yes—I choose God.”

Trip waved out his hand as if to present the fairy. “Meet my angel Maria.” He looked at the fairy and said, “My sister calls it the Shadow Creature. I call it the Creature of Darkness. I command you as my angel to call it the Creature of Darkness.”

The fairy stood. "I am grateful for your protection, Trip, but I only take commands from God Almighty. God calls it the Enemy." Maria looked up to the sky as if she could see the blue heavens through them.

Trip's eyebrows wrinkled. "I saw you fly away as an angel. How could you have turned back into a fairy and returned to the pencil box in my pocket? And when did you start glowing like that?"

Maria answered, "I return to fairy form every time I am in the presence of an evil being. I always glow, but you can only see my light in the darkness. Try to understand: I am a creature of light. I cannot exist as an angel in the presence of evil. And now that the Enemy's younglings are everywhere, I cannot deliver God's messages as an angel that passes through the realms. The younglings are all evil. I returned to you, Trip, because I know you will protect me. The pencil box must be my home until the Enemy's younglings are dead."

“I promise to protect you. Plus now we have a light and don’t need the torch anymore.” He stomped out the flame then turned to the fairy who shone brightly giving light to the area all around them. “Tell us their weakness, Maria. How can we kill them?”

Rosa snorted with laughter. Sarah gave her a strange look.

The fairy shook her head and put her face down. “You cannot kill them, Trip. No Koban can. The Enemy’s younglings are powerful supernatural beings. You must know your place. You are a Koban—a lowly being in this universe. You are important and loved by God, but you are still a lower being than the Enemy and the younglings. Keep God’s commands, and He will lift you up with honor.”

Trip’s nose crinkled. “What commands?”

“Love God and love each other. That’s a big one,” the fairy said.

“Come here, Sarah. I want to give you a nice big hug,” Trip said jokingly.

“No thanks!” Sarah pushed Rosa forward.  
“Here—Rosa wants a hug.”

Rosa shook her head and backed away. “I don’t need a hug right now.”

The fairy said, “Actually, Miss Kartel needs your love, Trip. She’s in trouble.”

“Miss Kartel?!? She wants to capture you! Why would I want to help her?” Trip crossed his arms. “How do you know she needs my help anyway?”

“God commands us to love our enemies too! I saw Miss Kartel in a vision just like I saw Sarah and Rosa when they needed to be rescued from the fish. Your teacher is trapped in a thorn forest five miles west of here.”

Trip said, “Alright, alright. We’ll help her, won’t we?”

Sarah and Rosa agreed. The three Kobans followed Maria’s directions. After they traveled awhile, they saw a lake that was smooth as glass. In the middle of the lake, they could see something reflecting light back at them.

“What is it?” Rosa asked.

“It’s a gazing ball.” The fairy turned to Trip. “If you look into the gazing ball, you will see your true self. “

Trip said, "We are on our way to rescue Miss Kartel, remember? Besides, there is no way I would swim out there into the middle of that black lake in the dark."

The fairy said, "We must always take time to get to know ourselves. There is no other way to make good decisions."

"Do it. Do it..." the girls chanted together.

"Fine!" Trip took off his high top shoes and socks and his shirt. Then he began to step into the shallow black water. It was chilly, but he liked the way the mud felt as it squished between his toes so he kept putting one foot in front of the other until the water came up to his chest. He was almost to the gazing ball. "Aaagh, what's got my foot?"

Rosa screamed and grabbed Sarah's arm.

“He’s joking,” Sarah said. “You can always tell when he is joking around because his nose twitches.”

Trip gave Sarah a dirty look. “Okay, yes— I was joking, but my nose does not twitch.” Just then, he looked into the gazing ball. He stared straight at his nose to see if it was twitching, but instead he saw a mouse huddling against a wall. He backed away and then fell back into the water and swam the backstroke until he was ashore again. He picked up his dry shirt and slid one arm in the sleeve.

Sarah stepped toward her brother. “You look disappointed. What did you see?”

“What I saw is my true self, and I am the only one who needs to know that. If you want some secret knowledge, look into the ball and see your true self.”

The fairy agreed, “He’s right, Sarah. You should take a look.”

“Alright, I will.” Sarah removed her shoes and carefully stepped into the chilly water as well. “Ooh, the mud feels disgusting!”

“It feels so awesome. The mud is the best part!” Trip began tying his high-top tennis shoes.

Even though the water was shallow, Sarah began to swim until she stood in the middle of the lake. She took a deep breath and looked into the black ball. At first all she saw was a distorted picture of herself, but as she looked closer she saw a brave knight. The only problem was she did not want to see a brave knight. She wanted to see a beautiful princess in a silky dress with wavy golden hair.

Rosa asked, “What did you see, Sarah?”

Sarah cleared her throat. “The fairy is right. Our true self is something only we need to know.”  
She swam quickly back to shore.

The fairy said, “It can be disappointing to learn you are not the person you want to be, but you just need to know so you can work on becoming that person.”

Sarah sat down to put on her shoes again. “It’s your turn. Take a look at your true self in the gazing ball, Rosa.” She put an arm behind Rosa to guide her in the direction of the lake, but Rosa pushed her hand away.

“No! I don’t want to get all wet and muddy. Besides, some of us already know who we are and don’t want to change...even if we are not perfect.” Rosa crossed her arms.

Sarah's eyebrows raised. "You don't have to get so mad."

## Chapter 7: Thorn Forest

The fairy led the three teenagers for the remaining miles until they saw a dense forest of thorns. “We’re here,” she said.

The kids stood before the low curvy branches with giant thorns like oversized shark’s teeth pointing out from them. Sarah was exhausted from hiking and sat down on the grass under their feet. “How are we supposed to get through there? It’s impossible.”

“Nothing is impossible with God,” the fairy said.

“Let’s make another torch and burn it down,” Trip said holding a pretend torch with both hands in front of him and aiming it at the forest.

“No! You will burn Miss Kartel alive. She is trapped. This forest may look like an average

forest, but it's not. It lives and breathes. It grows, and as it grows it traps its victims inside. Now you must get her out without getting trapped yourself, Trip."

"Me? No, I uh—don't think that's a good idea. Rosa, why don't you go?"

Rosa shook her head quickly and sat beside Sarah. "Sarah, you are the bravest of us all. You go."

"I would if I could, but how can I? The wood is too dense for me to enter the forest. If it's possible, then show me a way, Fairy." Sarah stood up and put her hands on her hips.

The fairy said, "Find a green Koban olive and crush it with your foot. Then rub the oil on your skin. The oil will make you so slippery that you will not get stuck under any of the branches. There is an olive tree right here!" The fairy flew

to a nearby tree and pointed to its branches. A Koban olive grew as big as an apple and oozed with oil.

Sarah walked over to it, reached up in the tree, and grabbed a small green olive. “Would these be alright to eat? They look delicious!”

The fairy said, “Sure! Haven’t you ever eaten Koban olives before?”

Trip said, “I guess we have never been hungry enough, but I am hungry enough now.” He filled his mouth with a large bite. As he was chewing, he mumbled, “It tastes pretty good.”

Rosa reached up and took one off of the branch. She took a bite and chewed slowly. “Oh no! This tastes like diarrhea!”

“Spit it out, Rosa. That one is rotten,” the fairy said. She turned to Sarah. “Take an olive for Miss Kartel.”

Sarah began crushing an olive with her foot. Then she began rubbing her arms with it.

“You smell like a salad,” Trip said.

“Gee, thanks!” She shoved an olive in her back jeans pocket for Miss Kartel. “I’m ready. Come on, Maria. Light the way.”

The fairy flew in front of her face and looked her straight in the eyes. “You must go alone, Sarah. It will be too dangerous for me to go near her. You must help her decide to give her life to God. Otherwise, she will surely kidnap us all.”

Sarah said, "But if you don't go, how will I be able to see? It's pitch dark unless I am near you."

Maria flew over to Trip, "Start digging! We need to find some Koban glow worms for your sister to have light in the woods."

"Okay..." Trip bent over and found a stick. "How will I know when I have found them?"

Rosa said, "Duh, they'll glow."

"Right." Trip used it to dig a tiny ditch in the ground. Then he used his hands to dig deeper. "Aha!" He held up a Koban glow worm.

"Right here," the fairy said pointing to Sarah's arm.

“Gross!” Sarah yelled as Trip laid the worm on her arm. “Are they dangerous? Are they going to bite me?”

The fairy said, “No worries, Sarah. The glow worms are your friends.”

After a few minutes, Sarah had Koban glow worms on her arms and in her hair. She gave off a bright glow by the time she laid on her stomach to begin trudging through the forest. Trip and Rosa wished her luck, but the fairy said nothing. She closed her eyes and folded her hands in prayer.

Sarah disappeared into the forest. She was making good progress until she saw a hairy spider on a web right in front of her. She paused, but then she remembered the fairy’s words about how the forest grows so she must be quick or she will be trapped. She put her face down and went straight forward.

Soon after, she felt the spider crawling down her back. Without thinking, she reached back to brush it off. Her arm became entangled in the branches. She yanked her arm free. The thorns tore into her flesh, and she began to bleed. Still she trudged forward until she saw Miss Kartel straight ahead.

“Miss Kartel, it’s me—Sarah. I can help you, but you must promise not to harm Trip or the fairy.”

“You make it sound so easy, Sarah. I have already made a deal with the Enemy. If I do not take the fairy back to him, he will kill me!”

“Now you are as good as dead. It’s never too late to change sides. You have evil in your heart, but God can fill it with something wonderful and pure. He can protect you too—if only you’ll trust Him.”

Before Miss Kartel responded, the forest grew and a massive thorn pierced her back and blood dripped to the ground and seeped into the dirt. “Okay, I promise not to hurt them as long as God will protect me.”

“God can only protect you if you join His team. Have you chosen God as your master?” Sarah asked.

Miss Kartel yelled, “Yes, help me out of here before I die!”

Sarah crawled underneath the tree limb Miss Kartel was trapped in. She instructed her to get the olives out of her pocket and rub them all over her body.

“But my clothes are caught in the branches!” Miss Kartel said.

Sarah reached up and yanked off one sleeve of her teacher's black shirt and then the other. Afterwards, she began tearing at her skirt to make it shorter. "I know you are used to telling us what to do, but you are going to listen to me—that is, if you want to live. Step on the olive and put the oil on your skin."

Miss Kartel kicked off her shoe and began to squish the olive with her foot. Then she put it on every bit of skin she could reach while still being entangled in the thorny branches. As she put on a little, she was able to slide with more freedom. Then she was able to put on more until she was able to wiggle her way free and trudge on the ground like Sarah. "I'm sorry, you know. I'm sorry I got you into this—you and Trip. It's just that the Enemy told me he would send me someone to love—true love if I captured the fairy for him. He told me to bring her to a cave in the Bliss Mountains. That's where he is keeping all of the fairies."

Sarah spoke sincerely, "I forgive you, Miss Kartel. We all make mistakes. There is a way

you can make things right though. You can help us save those fairies from the cave.”

“I will help you...” Miss Kartel said with small grunts that came from trudging on the ground in a growing thorn forest. “...even if it means going from one mess to another.”

## Chapter 8: Tree Rings

When Sarah came to the edge of the forest, Trip ran over to her and helped her up. “Thank God you are alright. Wait—you’re bleeding! What did Miss Kartel do to you?”

Just then, Miss Kartel reached the boundary of the tangled trees. Sarah helped her up. “She did not do anything. It was the thorns! God is her master now. There is no reason to be afraid.”

Trip shook his head and backed away.

The fairy flew over to the teacher. She was covered in dirt, and her hair looked wild. “Come over here with Miss Kartel, Sarah. As children of God, you are both permitted to receive God’s healing power.” The fairy put her hands on Miss Kartel’s back. New skin appeared in the place where the thorn had torn her flesh. “I hope that helps you relax, Trip. That would not have

worked if she had no faith in God to help her.  
Now your turn, Sarah.”

Sarah lifted her arm. The fairy touched the bleeding sore, and it was instantly healed before their eyes. “Thank you!”

“Now break off a large branch from the thorn forest. With a Koban thorn branch, I can read its tree rings and know the past, present, and future.”

Trip pulled on a branch, but it did not move. He pulled on a smaller one that was closer to the ground, but it still did not break. He stood on it and jumped up and down. It wiggled, but it did not break. Then the two girls came and jumped together with him. Still, it did not break. Then Miss Kartel came and stood on top of the branch with the children, and it snapped right in two.

The fairy flew over to it and studied the rings.  
“In the past, it says three children will wander far from home.”

“Really? That’s old news. We did not need a Koban thorn branch to tell us something obvious like that?”

“In the present, it says the suffering of the fairies is great.” The fairy began to weep. “It’s my fairy friends.”

“I can help you, Fairy,” Miss Kartel said. “I know where the younglings are hiding the fairies. It’s in a cave in the Bliss Mountains just north of here.”

Sarah walked over to the fairy and delicately put her pinky on her shoulder. “We will help. Do not be afraid.”

Rosa called out, "What about the future?"

"The tree ring forecasts betrayal for the future. Betrayal and red rain," the fairy said with a serious look.

Trip said, "It's that freak show in the cottage. He's going to betray us. I know it! He has probably told the Enemy where to find us."

"Probably," Rosa said.

Trip turned to the fairy, "After that, I sure hope you can show us the way home. I miss my parents so very much."

"Your parents are probably very worried. I am sure they love you very much, but Koba needs you or else it will be dark forever. Now we must journey away from this forest and get some rest. You cannot tell because the winged

creatures block the daylight, but the sun is setting as we speak. In the morning, we will go to the cave and free my fairy friends.”

The fairy flew ahead, and the teens followed. When they were a safe distance from the growing thorn forest, they all laid down on their backs and stared into the blackness. Suddenly, they could see the moon—or what looked to be the moon but it was red in color instead of yellow. Then rain began to fall from the sky—red rain!

“The tree ring was right! It’s red rain. But what is it? What’s happening?” Trip asked. “Is the world coming to an end?”

The fairy flew up and clapped her hands. “It’s better than that! Someone is defeating the enemy’s offspring in battle. We can see the moon because he has captured some of them.”

Trip turned to Maria. “Who has the power to defeat the enemy like that? The angels have all turned into fairies because they cannot be around evil in their angel form. And well, no offense—but you are not exactly fierce in that form.” He wiped the red rain off of his face, but it was useless. All of them were covered in red. It was in their hair and clothes.

“There is only one person that could have done that...God’s Son.” The fairy smiled like she was thinking of someone she loved very much. “C’mon, take cover under this tree.”

“So then why is the rain red?” Rosa asked.

“It’s not red rain, Rosa. It’s the blood of God’s Son. The Enemy has attacked God’s Son in another realm, and He is dying. The Enemy does not know Jesus’ blood is so pure and righteous that it is killing the spiritual demons—the younglings. Soon the fairies will be able to return to their angel form and carry on the work of God. They will still need to be freed from the

cave though. Get some rest. The Bliss  
Mountains are steep. It will be a challenging  
hike.”

## Chapter 9: The Hike

The bright morning sun woke the group. Sarah danced arm-in-arm with Trip, Rosa, and even Miss Kartel as she sang a made-up song, “Look at the beautiful sun; it makes me want to run; sunnnnnn.....”

The fairy said, “Okay, we are off to a good start! The younglings are defeated, but the Enemy still prowls around us looking for someone to devour. Let’s get moving. First, we hike north to the Bliss Mountains.”

“Then I can show you the cave where the enemy keeps the kidnapped fairies,” Miss Kartel said.

“What about breakfast?” Trip asked.

“Remember the manna is on the Bliss Mountains,” the fairy said. “The sooner we leave, the sooner we eat the angel food!”

“Let’s go!” Trip said rubbing his stomach.

The teens hiked and hiked until they reached the bottom of the Bliss Mountains. As they hiked uphill, they started seeing sparse amounts of manna. They ate as they found the pieces. Soon, they were full and the trail changed from a slanted dirt trail to a steep rock face.

Trip looked over the edge. “Woah, look how high up we are. I can even see Green Hills from here.” He yelled, “Hi, Mom! Hi, Dad.”

“Shhh...” Miss Kartel said. “We’re getting close to the cave. Who knows? The enemy might be there.”

“What?” Trip yelled. Then he whispered, “What? I’ll wait here and protect Rosa. You’re not going in there, are you? Rosa?”

Everyone looked around, but no one could find her.

Trip said, “See? She needs protecting. She even got lost. I’ll find her. You three go on ahead.” Trip sat and caught his breath while Miss Kartel led Sarah and the fairy to a cave entrance that was blocked by a huge stone.

Miss Kartel said, “The kidnapped fairies are in the cave on the other side of this stone. It’s far heavier than the three of us can roll away. How can we save them?”

Maria said, “Since the younglings are gone, I should be able to change into my angel form as long as the Enemy is nowhere near.” She squeezed her eyes together as if she was

wishing very hard, but nothing happened. “I cannot change into an angel. That means the Enemy is nearby.” She looked left and right like he might appear in front of them at any moment.

“Great!” Sarah said as she sat down on the rocky surface. “It’s hopeless.”

“You give up too easy,” Maria said. “Don’t you know that you can move mountains with prayer?”

Maria began praying. Sarah and Miss Kartel joined in. Sarah could hardly believe her eyes when the stone began to roll away like it was moved by an invisible hand.

Sarah stood up and began jumping up and down. “It worked. Thank You, Lord!”

The fairy led them inside. They pressed their bodies flat against the cave wall so they would not be easily seen. Then she saw the fairies. They were locked in birdcages—dozens and dozens of black birdcages. Maria flew to each one and opened the doors to free her fairy friends.

## Chapter 10: The Cave

Trip was still sitting on the rocky surface when he caught a glimpse of the back of Rosa's lime green shirt.

"Hide and seek!" she said to Trip as she went off the trail they had been following.

Trip followed her. He called to her, "Rosa, this is not the time to play a game." Trip caught up to her. She was hiding behind a narrow tree and facing the other direction. "Sarah and Miss Kartel are going into the cave as we speak." Then he reached up and grabbed her shoulder and spun her around.

Rosa's eyes glowed yellow like a tiger. "I know," she said in a strange low voice. "We're going in there too along with my new friend. You call him the Enemy."

Trip wanted to talk, but he couldn't. He was too terrified. He felt something like fangs dig in the back of his neck. Then he was dragged up the mountain like he was a fierce animal's prey. All the time he was being dragged, Rosa followed him and looked at him with her creepy yellow eyes. Every time Trip tried to wiggle away, the fangs sunk deeper into his neck.

Just then, the ground trembled below Sarah, Miss Kartel, and the fairies.

"What was that?" one of the fairies asked.

Miss Kartel walked in the direction of the cave entrance. "It's blocked! Someone rolled the stone back in place. We're trapped!"

Fairies began screaming and weeping. One said, "I thought we were free!"

“You still will be,” Sarah said. “Prayer power got us in here. Prayer power will get us out.”

Suddenly, they heard a terrifying voice come out of the darkness. “I am the Enemy. The fairies are now mine. I kidnapped them fair and square. If you take what is mine, I will take what is yours. Do you know what I could do to your brother, Sarah?”

Trip said, “Don’t listen, you guys. Pray the stone away. Even if I die by the hand of the Enemy, it will be worth it. Pray the stone away.”

As the fairies began praying, the Enemy said, “Think carefully before you do that.”

“He’s a liar, and he’s been one from the beginning,” the fairy said.

Sarah and Miss Kartel joined in the prayer, and the stone rolled away again like it did the first time. As the sunlight lit up the cave, Sarah saw her brother against the wall. She could see no sign of the Enemy though.

“If you don’t give into the Enemy, he will run from you,” the fairy said to her.

The fairies began changed to male and female angels. There were all types of strange looking angels. Some had four wings; other had six. Some had lots of eyes, and others looked like ordinary Kobans. After they changed, many of them flew upward into the blue sky above. Maria and a man angel named Bart remained.

Sarah hugged her brother. She said, “I’m so glad you are okay. That was the first time I can remember being really scared. I was scared he was going to kill you, but you were so brave. Imagine that! You were brave!”

Trip smiled. “I feel brave. I mean I don’t feel like a little mouse anymore.”

“Mouse, huh?” Sarah let go and backed up.  
“Wait—where’s Rosa, Trip? Did you find her?”

“That’s the bad news. I found Rosa, but her eyes were turned yellow like a tiger. She got me to follow her right to the Enemy. That’s how I got kidnapped.”

Maria said, “She changed sides just like Miss Kartel—except our teacher turned from evil to good, and well, Rosa turned from good to evil.”

“Can’t we save her?” Sarah asked her.

The angel shook her head. “No, that would be like spitting on a fire to put it out. It would not do any good while she has pledged devotion to

the Enemy. Besides, you would probably be kidnapped or injured or something worse.”

“Is there any hope at all for her then?” Sarah asked.

The angel covered her own heart with her hand. “If she changes her heart, Rosa can be saved by God. Just pray for her heart to be changed. Now let’s get you home unless you want to walk.”

“No thanks, I am done being a brave knight for awhile. I’m ready to be rescued like a fair princess.” She held a hand out waiting to be lifted by the angel.

Maria took hold of her hand, and she grabbed hold of Trip’s hand. The three flew up into the air as she flapped her huge wings. Bart carried Miss Kartel and flew from the mountain next. As they approached Green Hills, they flew right under a vibrant Koban rainbow. They landed

safely on the ground near their cottage. When they walked inside, they found their mom and dad on their knees in their cottage praying for their safe return—which was indeed an answered prayer!

## Note to Readers

Maybe you are like Sarah and you have never made a choice for God. Even though Jesus died on the cross for all the sins of mankind, you must personally accept the free gift of salvation. If you have never made this choice and would like to accept Jesus' blood as payment for your salvation so that you can be in a good relationship with God, pray this prayer with me right now:

Lord, I confess I have sinned against You. I claim Jesus' blood as payment for my sins. I believe Jesus is the Son of God and my Savior. I believe He died and rose again. Send the Holy Spirit to teach me and guide me in the way I should go. Thank You that I am now reconciled to You, Father. In Christ's Name, Amen.

Congratulations on making such a wise decision! I pray you will maintain this close relationship with God by attending church and

reading your Bible. Thanks for taking the time to read *Adventures in Koba*. I will see you in the non-fictional realm of heaven!

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