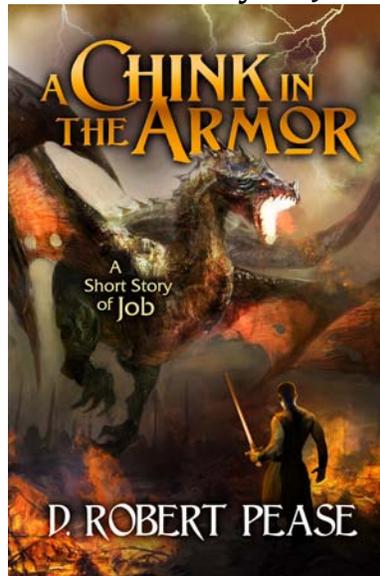


[A Chink in the Armor](#)  
A Short Story of Job



By  
D. Robert Pease

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### **A Chink in the Armor**

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Updated and Revised 2015

Originally published in *Forged in Flame: A Dragon Anthology* by Xchylar Publishing.

Cover Art Copyright © 2015 D. Robert Pease

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ISBN (EPUB Version): 1622534174

ISBN-13 (EPUB Version): 978-1-62253-417-3

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*Updated 2015 Version Edited by Lane Diamond*

*Original 2012 Version Edited by Penny Freeman and McKenna Gardner*

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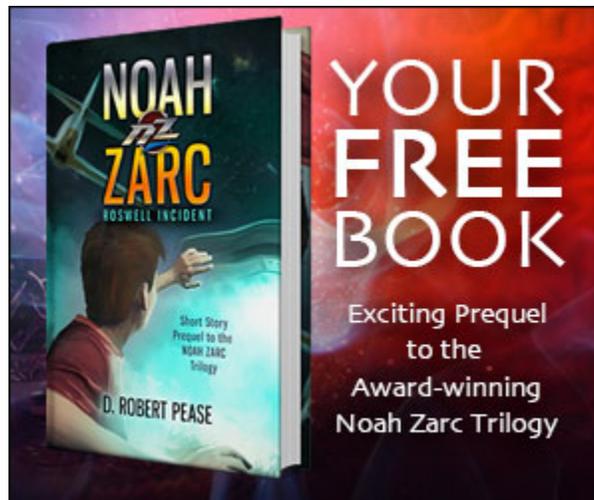
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## [A Chink in the Armor](#)

*Who can open the doors of his face? Round about his teeth is terror.*

*His breath kindleth coals, And a flame goeth forth from his mouth.  
In his neck abideth strength, And terror danceth before him.*

*Upon earth there is not his like, That is made without fear.  
He beholdeth everything that is high: He is king over all the sons of pride.*

*Job 41: 14, 21-22, 33-34 (ASV)*

“Have you considered the span of my chest?” Job stood, his chin pointed toward the sky. Eliphaz laughed. “How could we not? You strut about with nothing more than a cloth around your waist.” He took a deep draught from the mug in his hand.

Job raised his arms and flexed in the flickering light of the fire. “When have you beheld such power in any man, be he legend or among the living?”

“You’re a legend, all right.” Bildad leaned toward Zophar. “In his own mind.”

“Have I not killed the lion with these two hands?”

All eyes turned to Zophar. It was his turn to retort. “What? I’ve got nothing. He did kill that lion.”

The four men burst into laughter. The break felt good after such a long war.

Job looked with fondness on his three friends, his closest advisors: Eliphaz, the shrewd businessman, who ensured Job’s soldiers were fed and outfitted properly; Bildad, so small as to be nearly a dwarf, was a legendary tracker and scout; and Zophar had a tactical mind, able to see weaknesses where none else could discern any flaw.

He’d known them since they were each weaned from their mother’s breast. Job shook his head. After all they’d been through, it was a miracle they still lived.

*Not a miracle, Job thought. They had me looking out for them.*

“It will be good to go home,” Job said.

Bildad smirked. “More so for you. The prettiest woman in our village awaits your return.”

“That she does.” Job smiled. “I wooed her with my charms.”

“More like your forearms,” Zophar said. This set the friends laughing again.

Light flashed on the northern horizon—a deep ruddy glow, unlike any lightning Job had seen before. His friends caught his earnest stare toward the darkness beyond, and grew silent.

“It will be good to get home,” Job mumbled once more to the night.

He had put aside his blacksmith hammer and taken up a sword when the tribes of the north inexplicably joined forces, launching an invasion into the land of his forefathers. Job wasn’t one for picking fights, but when the call was sounded for every able-bodied man to enlist, he was the first in his village to join the cause.

His three friends had been close behind. By the time they met up with the main army, its ranks had grown to thousands.

Job’s prowess in battle matched his fortune in every endeavor. All his life, he had excelled at everything he put his mind to. Now he was named *Hammer of the South*. Not that he carried a

hammer, but he wielded his sword like one: mercilessly pounding his opponents until they crumbled in defeat. Many called him blessed by the gods.

He wasn't so sure.

All he had, all he was, came from the sweat of his brow. If others felt he was unfairly blessed, they simply did not work as he did. To the strong come blessings. To the mighty, good fortune.

He'd heard the whispers. He knew his standing, especially among those who did not know him. "Job is arrogant. Cocky," they said. He once overheard a blacksmith say, "If there's one chink in Job's armor, it's his blind faith in his own abilities." However, those who knew him best, those who lived and fought side-by-side with him, knew that his confidence – heck, call it arrogance – was justified.

Job knew his limits, and they were few.

His mastery on the field did not go unnoticed. Soon he'd risen through the ranks. For well over a year, Job commanded the armies of the South. His strength drove the enemy back. His power made even the mightiest soldier quiver. Everywhere he roamed, fear walked before him.

But from his men, Job garnered respect. Job led the charge. Job laid waste to all around him and inspired his men to fight and die for the love of their captain.

The war had been bloody and long. Then one day, after months of fighting, the enemy abruptly turned and withdrew – no explanation, no final salvo. In their wake, thousands of brothers, fathers, and sons littered the fields of battle. The armies of the South had triumphed.

Job had triumphed. But something made him uneasy.

He'd left the armies encamped to the south and selected a hundred stout men to pursue the enemy north. He needed to be sure they indeed quit the war. For two weeks, he'd harried the rear guard. For two weeks, he'd nipped at the heels of the retreating enemy. Yet with every day that passed, every hour gone by, Job's unease grew. He knew to trust his gut. Too many times in the past, it had been correct.

He scanned the encampment. Job's command tent was set on a slight rise in the middle of camp. His eyes played over the scores of fires circled around him. Shadows huddled close, keeping warm in the cold night air. It seemed unnatural being this cold so early in autumn. But they had chased the retreating armies far to the north – farther from their homeland than Job, or any of his men, had before traveled.

Steam erupted from the horses' nostrils picketed nearby. In this respect, his forces were stronger. The armies of the North knew nothing of mounted warfare, preferring the strength of numbers on foot. How glorious it was, to launch himself into the midst of battle on a mighty charger, seeing the fear in his enemies' eyes as he pounded down upon them. Such savages knew nothing of the finer art of war.

The horizon flashed again, and a strange scent rode the wind. He gazed off into the predawn darkness a while longer, then turned to his friends. They had quieted down, sensing their leader was troubled.

"There is something amiss," he said. "Bildad, I need you to scout north. I do not like that sky."

The little man nodded, plucked up his short bow and dashed off.

\*\*\*

The hours dragged on and the wind picked up. Job knew there would be no morning sunrise. Clouds, which only moments before were wisps across the moon, began to pile upon each other, blown from the frozen reaches of the North.

He did not sleep. He only waited. At the hour when morning should have dawned, he caught a glimpse of darkness streaking across one of the few bare patches of sky. Where the starry host still shone, a brief shadow blotted out the heavenly light, much too fast for cloud.

His instincts screamed and he leapt to his feet. "To arms!"

At the very moment his voice cried out, a thunderous shout sounded from every direction—a bellow from a multitude of throats.

Job's body reacted before his mind could catch up. He grabbed his sword and a great javelin. "To arms! To arms!"

The sky opened and a torrential rain fell.

Zophar and Eliphaz jumped to their feet, scrambling for their weapons. All around them, Job's highly trained soldiers rushed to the edges of the encampment to form a defensive perimeter. He quickly assessed the threat.

Torches sprang to life in the darkness beyond their encampment's dwindling fires. Flame after flame lit northern tribesmen's faces as fire was passed soldier to soldier. Just out of bowshot stood a vast army, easily ten times their own one hundred men.

How could he have been taken so unawares?

"They've drawn us into a trap," Zophar said.

Job scanned the torchlight looking for a weakness. *Why do they wait?*

"There." Zophar pointed to the southeast, toward a slight lessening in the number of torches.

In that direction, Bildad had reported a trail winding up through the rocky cliffs bordering the plain where they camped. Job was never without an escape plan, and this was it.

"It is our only hope." Job turned to Zophar and Elliphaz. "Leave two tens to guard our rear flank. The rest will follow me."

Within seconds, Job had mounted his horse. His men surged around him as flank-on-flank the horses stamped their hooves, eager for battle. In that moment, Job saw his victory. He knew, beyond all odds, he would triumph this night. He would get his men to a better position, and then he would show this northern scum the true metal of the South.

He thrust his fist into the air. "For glory!"

A hundred voices shouted back, "For glory! For glory!"

Job kicked his heels into his charger's side and the horse launched forward. Already the rain had turned the ground into a muddy slurry under the horses' hooves. His men flowed behind, forming a wedge with him at the spear's point. He pushed toward the southwest for a brief moment. Almost imperceptibly, he could see the forces arrayed against him shift in that direction. At their true target, a weakening in the lines opened up and he took advantage, changing course to the southeast.

Horse and man alike sounded the battle cry. So fierce was Job's onslaught, the enemy faltered. They dropped their torches and fell back, then Job smashed into the first line of soldiers. His javelin caught a man in the throat. He fought two-handed—a sword in one, the javelin in the other.

His horse moved with a nudge of his knees. He heard the terror of the dying all around him—the crunching of bones as the horses trampled the fallen. Within a few heartbeats, Job found himself halfway through the enemy's ranks. He could see out of the corner of his eye the main bulk of the army surging forward on each side.

Then the arrows began to fall.

The only sure defense against the horsemen was a barrage of arrows—death from the sky. Unconcerned for the loss of life on their own side, the armies of the north unleashed a hail of death against Job's men.

Horses screamed. His men died.

Still, he led the charge forward. He must break through. He lost his javelin in the chest of a soldier, but only a handful of men stood between him and the safety of the hills.

His horse shrieked. A shaft stuck out from its neck, and the charger stumbled, hurtling Job through the air.

He slammed into a surprised northerner. Before the soldier could react, Job grabbed the man's helmet and twisted, then let the northerner slump to the ground of his own weight. Job's first thought was gratitude for the soldier's body, which kept him from the brunt of the mud.

He leapt to his feet and swung around.

Only a handful of men remained mounted. They hacked their way toward him.

"To me!" he yelled. Job strode forward with his great sword and opened a path to his men. It was his duty, his strength that would give his soldiers victory this day. The northerners fell around him like wheat under a sickle. So great was his assault, the enemy fell back in shock and fear.

A horseman surged forward, and Job caught the tack and swung up into the saddle—behind Zophar.

"You shouldn't be out in weather like this without a horse," Zophar said.

"Unfortunately, my horse decided to take a nap."

Zophar swung his horse back toward the fighting. The remainder of Job's men—no more than a score—broke through the last of the attackers. Turning his mount, Zophar charged toward the dark gap between two outcroppings of stone, and the last of Job's men flocked around them.

And right on their heels: the army of the North.

Job could see the cut in the cliff. Bildad's trail. If he could just make it another few hundred yards, they'd at least have a chance. He thought for a moment about his small friend. *Most likely dead.* A pain burned inside him, but he pushed it aside. *There'll be time to grieve the lost later.*

A shout erupted from the northerners behind.

Job looked over his shoulder to see them fall back. "Why do they hesitate? They had us in their grasp."

"I know not," Zophar said.

"Continue on."

The rock on either side rose around them until Job's men had to form a single-file line. The horses were a bit skittish, but at least the cliff walls afforded some protection from wind and rain.

The terrain lifted, and Job could sense a slight lightening of the sky above. Somewhere behind the dark clouds, the sun had risen. They had made it through the night. Job knew his men required rest. Many had injuries that needed tending, but he wanted to get them to higher ground—to a better vantage point overlooking their enemy.

He pushed onward.

When they finally climbed out of the small slash in the land and up onto a flat, rocky area, he called a halt. The land tumbled off to their left, and to the right a jagged spire of rock lifted up toward the churning sky.

Eliphaz was last to come out of the cleft in the stone. Always faithful, he had taken up the rear. He rode toward them as Job and Zophar dismounted. "I count twenty-three remaining."

"Where did that army come from?" Zophar said. "It was as if they appeared from the dust of the ground."

"There's no time to speculate." Job looked at the bedraggled men sliding from their saddles to splash in the mud. "Eliphaz, gather five men who faired the best and go back down the trail. Not far, but enough to ensure we aren't surprised again."

Eliphaz nodded once and turned his mount around.

"Zophar, I need you with me. Let's go see what the enemy is up to."

"But your arm, sir."

Job looked down. An arrow had pierced his right arm, just behind the bicep. "When did that happen?" He reached over and snapped off the shaft. "I'll take care of it when we return."

He turned and scrambled up a broken mound of rock piled along the lip of the small plateau.

Zophar followed.

\*\*\*

By the time they reached a location suitable for seeing the army, Job wished he had done something about the arrow embedded in his arm. But what was a trifle when nearly a thousand soldiers filled the plain below?

"What see you, Zophar?"

His friend studied the army. In the rain and morning gloom, they'd be barely visible, except for the torches the soldiers still held. "They are simply standing there waiting."

"Waiting for what?" Job began to feel uneasy again, as if the sense of impending doom he felt before the attack had nothing to do with the army that ambushed them. He shook his head at such foolishness. What could be more devastating than what they just faced?

He turned from the spectacle below. "Let's see to those men. We need to move—"

A horrible roar filled the air, echoing over the plains.

Job threw his hands over his ears and shot his gaze back toward the army below. The orderly lines of soldiers fell back from the cliffs where he and Zophar stood. The front soldiers dropped their torches and collided with those behind as they tried to scramble away.

Again, a noise akin to thunder, but a hundred times louder, rent the air.

Job turned. The spire of rock that rose behind his men seemed to have grown. His eyes betrayed him as two massive wings, somewhat like a bat's, but larger than a great ship's sails, unfurled from the stony monolith.

The horses bucked and tore at their pickets. Job stared in disbelief as a dark form detached itself from the rock and dropped toward his men. The sheer immensity of the beast overwhelmed him. A snout, the size of a farmer's wagon, split wide open. Teeth like rows of swords gleamed in the feeble light. A bellow echoed off the stony walls. For a heartbeat longer, Job stood frozen in place, but then fire lit the sodden ground as a ball of flame engulfed two men. His men.

Job yanked his sword from the sheath at his side and charged over the rocky boulders, into the heart of danger.

The beast opened its wings and pulled up from a dive. Razor sharp talons the length of Job's arm reached forward and plucked a horse from the ground. Without any effort, the creature hoisted the flailing charger over Job's head and flung it over the cliff behind.

Job continued to scramble down the slope, with Zophar right behind. Burning flesh assaulted his nostrils as he assessed his men.

"To the cut!" He pointed to the trail where they had ascended. They had to get some protection from this horror.

His men ran, some helping the wounded.

Job turned to see the creature, the behemoth, pivot on a wing pointed at the ground.

“Stand!”

As a unit, his men turned and raised their weapons, swords and javelins held firm toward the sky.

The shadow plunged at them and the creature smashed into the soldiers. Swords shattered against the hardened scales of the beast’s underbelly. Javelins splintered into sawdust.

Job lunged forward, but the behemoth launched back into the air. Again Job yelled, “To the cut!”

Three men remained motionless on the ground. Job shoved his sword into its sheath, grabbed a brute of a man, hefted him over his shoulders, turned and ran toward the cleft in the rock.

Zohpar grabbed another man, and two soldiers pulled the third.

Just as Job made the relative safety of the rocky cut, the creature wheeled around for another attack. Job dropped to a knee and gently laid the soldier down. The man’s face was deathly pale. Job didn’t like the man’s chances.

“Down the trail, as far as you can,” he commanded his men. “But don’t forget the waiting army below. I doubt they’ve gone far.” He turned back toward the shelf of rock and drew his sword.

All his life, Job had considered the world his to conquer, from taming the wild stallion to fighting ferocious lions – even riding out the fiercest storms at sea. Never had his faith in his own resources waned – until today. For the briefest moment, his footsteps faltered, but Job, who had never known fear, pushed it aside and strode forward.

Momentarily losing its prey, the behemoth circled overhead.

With each step, Job’s confidence grew. *I am the Hammer of the South. None can stand before me.* He caught a flash of steel to his left and right.

Zophar and Eliphaz walked beside him.

“No, my brothers. This is not a fight you can win.” Job stopped and looked upon his friends. “Against this beast, no mortal can stand.”

Their faces fell, but both men fought to suppress the relief their eyes betrayed.

“Do not allow shame to color the courage you have displayed this day.” Job reached out a hand and placed it on Zophar’s shoulder. “The gods have decided to send their vengeance upon man. Who would not quake in the face of such as this?” He gestured toward the creature circling above.

He locked eyes with Eliphaz. “You must lead our men to safety. Inform our forces to the south that the retreat was a ruse. I can only guess they drew us here to be slaughtered by the teeth of the behemoth.”

Zophar and Eliphaz nodded. With heavy steps, they retreated back down the trail.

A roar filled the air like thunder.

Job turned to answer the behemoth’s call. He stepped from the shadow of the cliffs.

Moments later, the creature spied him and folded its wings. Like a great, burning star, the monster fell and spewed forth fire.

Job leapt toward a hollowed-out area under boulders to his left, rolling under the rock a moment before fire engulfed the ground where he had stood. The hair on his raised arm burned off. Blinking spots from his eyes, he scrambled out from under the boulder.

The behemoth landed with a great crash, and the ground rippled out like waves in a pond from a thrown rock. Job was hurled to the ground as the creature turned its great head toward him.

He pushed himself into a crouch, his sword ready. The behemoth watched from thirty feet away, unmoving for a moment and for the first time Job got a good look at the creature.

It sat back on its haunches—a great, golden tail wrapped around its body. Job couldn't gauge the behemoth's size, sitting as it was. The head sat on a neck taller than an ancient oak. It had four legs—the front pair more like arms, each with deadly talons. The rear legs were like the massive trunks of a cedar, but built of muscle that rippled under a mail coat of impenetrable scales. Its vast wings, not quite furled, beat slowly against the air as it waited like an enormous cat, ready to bounce.

Job would not give it the chance.

He leapt to his feet and feinted left, then ran right.

The great head swiveled to follow him, but the behemoth did not move.

Job charged forward, expecting the creature to vault into the air at any second, or belch forth fire, but it did not.

Job swung his great sword overhead and smashed the blade against the underbelly of the beast, where he assumed it was weaker. The sword rang out as if striking against granite, and pain rippled up his arms.

The behemoth thrust its head toward him, opened its great mouth and roared.

Job staggered back under the onslaught. More powerful than any foe, the sound beat upon him. Rows of teeth, longer than his own sword, sliced the air just a few feet above his head.

The behemoth swung a clawed hand at him, and he spun out of the way, narrowly avoiding being cut in half. He brought his sword up in a feeble attempt to parry the next attack, all the while searching for a weakness—for a chink in the armor.

He found none. The behemoth's scales were sealed tight.

Job slashed behind the knee but his blade bounced off. He battered against the creature's tail but not even the slightest scratch appeared.

He danced around as the behemoth took swipes at him, brushed him aside with the back of its massive hand, roared at him, and swung its great tail, sending huge boulders flying.

As the minutes passed, he realized the behemoth was only toying with him. There would be no victory today.

*No. I cannot believe that!*

He fought on. Sweat poured from his body and his breath came in great heaves. Fire burned in his arm where the arrow remained embedded.

*There must be some weakness. Nothing; be he man or beast, he is without a flaw.*

"Enough!" A rumble shook the ground.

Job stopped and locked his gaze on the creature above him.

"Who strives against me as a raindrop before the ocean?"

Job's sword fell to the ground with a clang. After all he'd struggled to comprehend—an army appearing as if out of the ground, a beast from legend coming to life—he found the creature speaking to be the most difficult to accept.

"Can a moth challenge an eagle?" The behemoth sat back and lowered its head toward Job, lips curled back. "Does fire burn inside your stomach? Does smoke pour from your nostrils? Have you circled the earth in search of any who could stand against you, only to find you alone are without equal?"

The behemoth pummeled him over and over with its voice, until Job feared his head would explode from the barrage. Each word stripped away years of glory. Each syllable proved him the fool.

"When have you witnessed the sun rise over the ocean to the east, and set over the ocean to the west on the same day?"

The creature's eyes narrowed. "The whirlwind is my playground. The hurricane my sport."

Job lost his last shred of confidence. He dropped to his knees and wept. *Who am I next to such power? My whole life has been a lie.*

"I am a worm," he whispered.

A deep rumbling chuckle boomed forth. "The creature speaks."

"I—"

"Silence!" The behemoth flattened Job to the ground with its voice. "Who dares come before me? A worm you say?"

Job kept his face buried in the mud, waiting for the final blow to come.

"I was told a great warrior was coming. The *Hammer of the South*."

Job looked up.

"Ah, so you have heard this name?" Again the behemoth laughed. "A man feared throughout the lands. A warrior of such strength, armies flee his coming."

The creature bent its head down to just a few feet above him, and sulfur burned in his nostrils.

"Have you heard of this man? This great warrior?"

"I... am—"

"Surely not you." A chuckle began in the fiery depths of the behemoth and rolled out like a storm.

No weapon could cut more deeply than that laugh—full of disdain and loathing for lesser beings.

"How quickly you grovel. The mud suits you." For a long moment, the beast considered him. "I grow weary of you. Stand!"

Job's heart raced. Never before had he feared for his life. In truth, he had felt touched by the gods—invincible. Battle after battle he'd waded through the fire, only to come out unscathed. A wall of protection had been placed around him from the moment of his birth. Now, as he struggled to his feet, the thrill of imminent death washed over him. He had dreamed of making such an end—songs would be written about him—but he could barely bring himself to raise his eyes to the beast.

"I wished to behold the greatest of men. Those creatures below said you were the one." The behemoth nodded toward the cliffs. "The mightiest warrior who has ever existed."

Again that disdainful chuckle filled the air. "But you are nothing. In pride you came before me, flashing that impotent piece of steel. Your glory is at an end."

Each word smote down upon Job like a hammer. "Finish this!" he yelled.

The creature gazed upon him, and then shook its head. "No. I will pay you no more heed. Man is nothing. A disappointment." The behemoth turned.

"No. Don't leave me like this." A great emptiness welled within him. Everything he'd done, all he'd accomplished, now washed away before the creature. He groped through tear-stained eyes for his sword, pulled it from the mud, and charged at the retreating behemoth's back.

"You cannot leave me to wither and die." He slashed at the behemoth's tail. "Fight me."

Still the beast strode onward, up the pile of boulders toward the cliff.

"I will not let you leave!" Tears filled his eyes. "Please."

The creature reached the edge of the cliff and turned its neck toward Job.

For a moment his heart raced. Perhaps he would die after all.

But the behemoth just looked at him, a sad smile splayed across its lips, then turned and leapt, disappearing over the cliff.

Job scrambled to the top, intent on hurling himself after the beast, but he could not. Even that was denied him—Job the worm, incapable of the strength to cast himself over the edge.

Fire sprang from the creature's mouth as it plummeted toward the armies below. They scattered in every direction when the behemoth smashed into the ground. Even from this great height, Job felt insignificant against the sheer might of the beast.

For nearly an hour, he lay on his belly and watched the spectacle below.

The behemoth systematically pummeled the army from the North, until at last none stood. Then the creature turned north and thrust down its powerful wings. Within moments it was gone.

The rain finally broke, and a ray of sunlight shone down on Job. He sobbed. The army, which had so easily driven him into the hills, was destroyed. Along with the desolation below, everything Job knew was gone. In his arrogance, he thought himself blessed by the gods. No, he thought he was beyond the gods, without need of such superstition. He had always triumphed, always exalted in his own strength. Now, he wept in the mud. Now, he knew the measure of himself.

He was nothing.

Job begged for the behemoth to return – to put an end to his misery.

It did not.

He heard footsteps behind him, and a hand pressed against his back. He turned, and the sunlight burned his eyes.

"It is over." Zophar reached down and extended a hand.

Job accepted the help and climbed to his feet. His men stood around him.

Eliphaz smiled and glanced at a small figure beside him: Bildad.

"You – you live." Fresh tears poured from Job's eyes. *How weak I must seem.* He shook his head. What difference did it make now?

Bildad stepped forward. "You'll not be rid of me so easily." The small man looked around. "Although, it appears I missed the action."

Job glanced toward the northern horizon. "The behemoth..."

"Don't worry," Zophar said. "You'll get him next time."

"No." Job turned back to his friends. "Maybe some other man can find the beast's weakness, but not me."

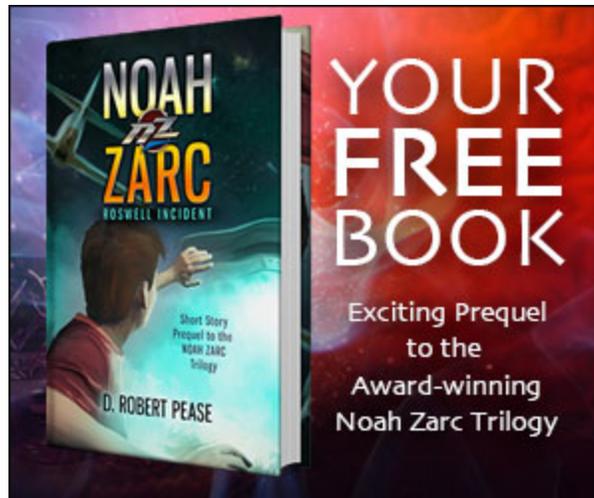
He put his arms up and gestured to his friends. At first, they hesitated, but then moved in to embrace him.

At last, the four turned and faced the south. "It is time to go home," Job said. "Our families await our return."

"And you've a bride to marry," Bildad said.

"If she'll still have me." Job shook his head, stepped away from the cliff, and left the desolation behind.

---THE END---



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### [A Note from the Author](#)

The book of Job is one of my favorites in the Bible. The idea that a man could go through such misery, the loss of his family, boils all over his body, friends who berate him, and still not lose his faith just amazes me.

I found myself imagining what happened in Job's youth to create the man we see in the Bible. At one point God challenges Job and describes an awesome creature that could only be described as a dragon.

Thus the genesis of this story.

What if Job was at one time an arrogant man, who was blessed by God beyond measure, but thought it was all of his own making? What if God sent a dragon to humble him? And that humbling turned Job into the man we see in scripture?

Of course this is all an imaginative story, but still it's fun to wonder.... What if...?

## About the Author



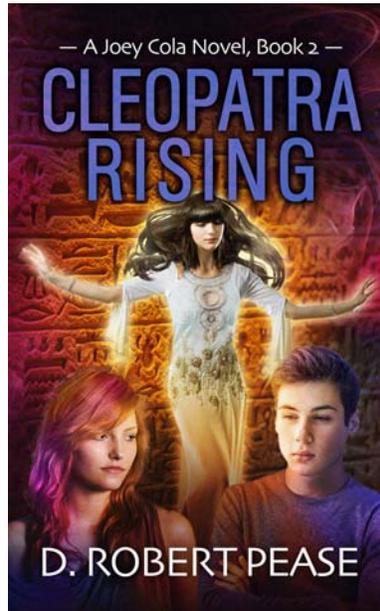
Epic adventures filled most of D. Robert Pease's childhood. Middle Earth and the planets of *Dune* were his stomping grounds. It's not surprising he chose to write stories with worlds just beyond reach but familiar enough for readers to get lost in new lands with epic adventures all their own.

D. Robert lives in the gray-skied world of Northeast Ohio with his wife, son, daughter, dog, cat, and a backyard pond full of goldfish. When not writing, he loves traveling the country in an RV and riding his bike up and down the hills of Ohio.

Find out more at [www.drobertpease.com](http://www.drobertpease.com). Also, sign up to be the first to hear about new releases at [www.DRobertPease.com/MailingList](http://www.DRobertPease.com/MailingList).

And if you liked this book, please take a moment to leave a review on your favorite online book retailer site.

## What's Next?



### **CLEOPATRA RISING** **A Joey Cola Novel – Book 2**

Watch for the second book in this series of young adult fantasy adventures, coming soon from [Evolved Publishing](#).

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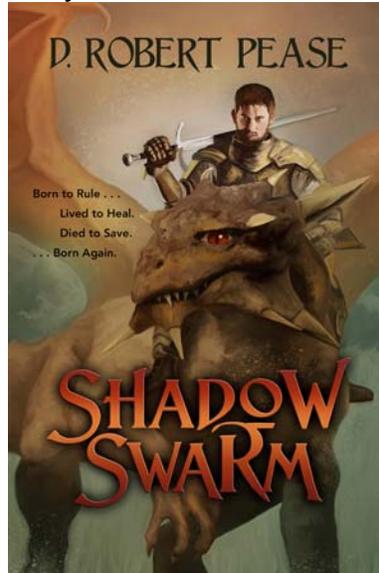
As food riots engulf the physical world, and a battle for power consumes the dream world, sixteen-year-old Joey Cola must come to grips with his place in both worlds. Can he help save a planet on the brink of starvation? Should he seize power for himself and fill the void left by the missing Pharaoh?

While on the run from assassins sent to kill him, Joey struggles to maintain his own identity and sort out his feelings for his best friend Alexandra and the exotic and mysterious Cleopatra. The princess may hold all the answers, but logic tells him she can't be trusted. Unfortunately, for the first time in his life, logic isn't in control.

As the pull of the dream world grows, and the physical world becomes indistinct, will he be dominated by his lust for more power? Or will the love of his friends and family finally show him what is real, and what is just a dream?

## [More from D. Robert Pease](#)

An epic fantasy suitable for readers 15 and older:



### SHADOW SWARM

This epic fantasy, with its cast of diverse and intriguing characters, is now available. For more information on this book, please visit the [Evolved Publishing](#) website.

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Aberthol Nauile doesn't know that he once led legions in a war that had raged since the dawn of time, against an enemy that could not be killed. He doesn't know that he rode on a dragon with his father, or that his mother died while giving birth to him. He doesn't know that he once saved his great, great, great grandfather by defeating the black enemy on the slopes of a volcano.

Aberthol doesn't know that he beheld the creation of the world, as his grandfather eight generations before took the planet, ravaged by a war of the gods, and began anew.

All he knows is that he awoke in a coffin deep within a tomb, and now the whole world thinks he is their savior. All he really wants to know is his name, and why he keeps hearing voices in his head.

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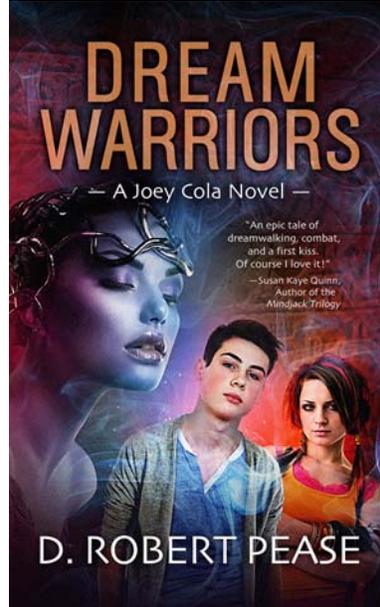
#### **Praise for *Shadow Swarm*:**

"Having read other offerings from this author, I quickly found myself fully immersed in the story, unable to willingly set it aside for anything but short periods of time. The quality of writing was such that, as I tell my students, I was able to "see a movie in my mind"; a key, I tell them, to tell whether or not you're encountering good writing. The development of the characters made them believable, realistic, and genuine." — *usafe7ret* (Reviewer at Amazon)

"I love how this story just sucked me in and took me to another land. The detail was perfect; I could use my imagination and felt like I was there. I loved the dragons and all the different species. I've since passed this book on and my friend loves it too!" — *Cheshire Cat*

"Once I picked up this book, I had a hard time setting it down when I needed to, I wanted to stay in the story. The world building is very good and the story-line is equally as good. The characters are very well developed and written. I am sad as this seems like it is not going to be a series, I may be mistaken, but I have not seen anything telling me otherwise. I would like to see more books on some of the main secondary characters." — *Dalene's Book Reviews*

A young adult urban fantasy, suitable for readers 13 and up:



**DREAM WARRIORS**  
**A Joey Cola Novel – Book 1**

This young adult urban fantasy, featuring magic in a modern setting, is now available. For more information on this book, please visit the [Evolved Publishing](#) website.

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Joseph Colafranceschi is a fifteen-year-old, self-described geek, living in the Bronx. The second youngest of twelve sons of the former U.S. ambassador to Italy, Joey discovers that a small Egyptian statuette, given to him by his father, endows him with power to control his dreams.

After his brothers throw him down a manhole, Joey is drawn into a hidden society of warriors who have been battling a reincarnated Egyptian Pharaoh for over 3,000 years. In the dream world, everyone is not what they appear to be, and it's impossible to tell who to trust. As Joey slips deeper into a world of gladiator battles and clandestine missions within other people's dreams, he catches the eye of a beautiful Egyptian princess.

The only thing that keeps him grounded in reality is his best friend Alex, but even she may not be who he thought she was.

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**Praise for *Dream Warriors*:**

"I loved *Noah Zarc*, Mr. Pease's MG trilogy. And I enjoyed his recent grown up fantasy, *Shadow Swarm*. But this is his best book yet. Just as Noah was a loose parody of the Bible story, so Joey has similarities to the biblical story of Joseph. If you're familiar with those old favorites, I'll let you pick out the parallels--there's a bunch. But Joey soon takes a dive into the fantasy world that's full of originality, fun, danger, romance, and suspense. There are some great twists and turns in here that I never saw coming! This one is appropriately billed as YA. There is some violence, but it's mostly, well, dreamlike. Dream warriors have some great gladiator scenes, but they can't die. Mortal blows simply send them back to wakefulness. But they can be killed if they're followed back to their physical bodies. Also, romance is sweet. There's some very mild sensuality. Nothing I'd censor for my kids (and I'm pretty conservative), but it might be enough to gross out fourth or fifth graders. Language is 100% clean. I highly, highly recommend this one for anyone eighth grade or older." — Michelle Isenhoff

"Must say I was very impressed with this book. Very enjoyable. It even had me jumping off my bed in anxious excitement at one point. A mix of fantasy, action, mythology and our very own dreams. There is a bit of romance, some fun fight scenes, lots of 'familiar' faces, magic and a hint of mythology. A wonderful blend that I quickly latched onto and held on to the end. As soon as I finished this book, I jumped online to learn more about the next book. I am so impatient to read it!" – *J. Rivera*

"Yes, this is a book intended for young adults, but I enjoyed it so much that I immediately turned around to read it a second time. I wanted to make sure I had not missed any subtle clues Mr. Pease may have given. I didn't miss anything that might have warned me of the ending to come, but was surprised at the detail that went into building the dream world and how it works. The characters are the type that stay with you long after you turn the page and close the book. I am admitting that as a woman well into middle age I am eagerly awaiting book two in this series to be released in March of 2015. I will definitely have a note on my calendar to be on the lookout for the next gem. If you do not want to wait for March after you finish *Dream Warriors*, you may want check D. Robert Pease's *Noah Zarc Trilogy*." – *Del Anne*

"What nerdy, geeky kid wouldn't want to fall asleep and wake up in a dream world where he morphed into a cross between King Leonidas and the Incredible Hulk? This element of the story alone is enough to draw readers to *Dream Warriors*. The story rates five stars, it was a fun read and I'd recommend it to readers age 13 and up." – *Kevin Gerard*

The Noah Zarc trilogy:



THE NOAH ZARC TRILOGY

- 1) [Noah Zarc: Mammoth Trouble](#)
- 2) [Noah Zarc: Cataclysm](#)
- 3) [Noah Zarc: Declaration](#)

All three books of this middle grade science fiction adventure are now available. For more information on this thrilling series for kids 9-13 years old, please visit the [Evolved Publishing](#) website.

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If you're looking for an out-of-this-world, action-packed adventure, and love such books as *Percy Jackson*, *The Softwire*, *Artemis Fowl*, or *The Search for Wondla*, then the *Noah Zarc* series needs to be your next thrill ride.

In a future where Earth has been wiped clean of all life, and humanity has moved on to other worlds, twelve-year-old Noah Zarc and his family have embarked on a quest, in a time-traveling spaceship called the ARC, to retrieve two of every animal and repopulate a dead world.

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"Pease's strength as a storyteller lies in his ability to connect multiple time periods imaginatively, as well as Noah's excited, fast-paced narration." - Publishers Weekly

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**Noah Zarc: Mammoth Trouble:**

Noah lives for piloting spaceships through time, dodging killer robots and saving Earth's animals from extinction. Life couldn't be better. But the twelve-year-old time traveler learns it could be a whole lot worse. His mom is kidnapped and taken to Mars; his dad is stranded in the Ice Age; and Noah is attacked at every turn by a foe bent on destroying Earth... for the second time.

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**Noah Zarc: Cataclysm**

Thirteen-year-old Noah Zarc rockets to Venus in a quest to learn more about his past. He refuses to believe his father is really the monster everyone says he is. Could there be valid reasons for everything he's done, including abandoning Noah at birth?

While searching for answers to secrets no one wants to talk about, even those that have remained hidden for over a thousand years, Noah becomes embroiled in a mission that could cause the greatest cataclysm in the history of the solar system. Will his name, Noah Zarc, be forever linked to the most devastating crime in humanity's existence, all because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time?

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**Noah Zarc: Declaration:**

As battles rage across the solar system, Noah must work to join together a rag-tag bunch of miners, farmers, and scientists who would rather just live in peace. With only a time-traveling ship full of animals and a general from the history books, the Zarc family has to stand against the full might of the Poligarchy.

Will the truth about what really happened a thousand years in the past be enough to stop total war, or will Noah and his friends need to find another way to bring down a dictator?

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**Praise for the Noah Zarc Trilogy:**

"I enjoyed reading every page of Noah Zarc: Mammoth Trouble – it's an exciting, fun, stay-up-all-night-reading kind of book." - *Twelve-year-old Amazon Reviewer*

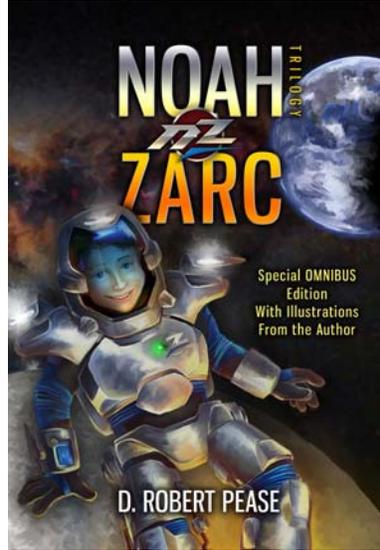
"I was absolutely blown away by how well this book is written.... The setting is nothing short of brilliant in its conception. I love, love, love the way Pease used the Biblical story of Noah's Ark as a very loose skeleton for this story. That said, there is nothing religious about this book, and it could and should certainly grace the bookshelves of every school library!"

- *Tina Chen, blogger at [www.desperatehomeschoolers.com](http://www.desperatehomeschoolers.com)*

"LOVE LOVE LOVE... I don't know if there is enough room to express how much I enjoyed this book... the story line is original and interesting, the descriptions and locations lively and the action is nonstop... and my favorite part... this is a smart book. The adventure and characters will surely capture our attention, but the philosophies and deeper subjects will capture your mind and have you thinking well past the last page." - *Kirstin Pulioff, Author and Blogger at [www.kirstinpulioff.com](http://www.kirstinpulioff.com)*

"This is a fabulous dystopian world! Mr. Pease makes it sound so real and believable. I wouldn't be surprised if this actually happened in the future (hmm... maybe Mr. Pease is the time traveler?)." - *Erik, twelve-year-old Author and Blogger at [www.thiskidreviewsbooks.com](http://www.thiskidreviewsbooks.com)*

A very special edition:



### NOAH ZARC: OMNIBUS

#### Special 3-books-in-1 Edition with Exclusive Illustrations

This special edition middle grade science fiction adventure is now available as an eBook or as a hardcover. For more information on this thrill ride for kids 9-13 years old, please visit the [Evolved Publishing](http://www.evolvedpublishing.com) website.

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In a future where Earth has been wiped clean of all life, and humanity has moved on to other worlds, twelve-year-old Noah Zarc and his family have embarked on a quest, in a time-traveling spaceship called the ARC, to retrieve two of every animal and repopulate a dead world.

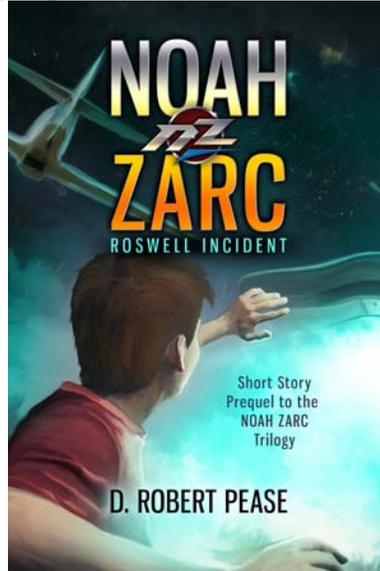
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#### **Praise for *Noah Zarc: Omnibus*:**

“There’s really not enough science fiction for kids that has awesome straight-up science – not just the humorous space fantasies that most SciFi for kids seems to dish out – but Noah Zarc has the goods! This trilogy is exactly the kind of SF I wish I had as a kid – lots of adventures, great (male and female!) heroes, and fun time-travel tech that’s out of this world. And it’s the kind my own kids love now. The great interior illustrations make the Omnibus the way to go! Hand this trilogy to your kids and don’t expect to hear back from them for a while.” – *Susan Quinn* (Amazon)

“Why the Omnibus edition? Well if you don’t own any in the series yet, you get all three for a discounted price when buying this edition. Already own all three? Still worth it. The illustrations are great and only available in the omnibus. Many times as I found myself thinking ‘I would love to see what he looks like’ or ‘what would that look like,’ and there it was. There are not so many pictures that make you feel like you are just reading a child’s book. There are just enough to give it that extra special touch. The stories of Noah Zarc are fantastic and it was great for me to keep right on reading through as if the book never stopped instead of reading each book individually, which are ALL fantastic. Pease writes with such detail it is impossible to not be able to picture exactly what is going on and feeling a part of the adventures. I felt like I was watching the book at times instead of reading it, and I love when I feel that from a book.” – *Tracy Haidle* (Amazon)

A prequel to the *Noah Zarc* trilogy:



**NOAH ZARC: ROSWELL INCIDENT - A SHORT STORY**

This special prequel to the *Noah Zarc Trilogy*, a middle grade science fiction adventure, is now available as a **FREE** eBook. For more information on this great opportunity, please visit the [Evolved Publishing](#) website.

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What really happened on July 14, 1947 outside of Roswell, New Mexico? Did an alien spaceship crash, only to be confiscated by the U.S. government? There's one kid who knows the whole story, and even though he might get in a heap of trouble for telling it, he just can't keep quiet any longer.

## [More from Evolved Publishing](#)

We hope you loved *A Chink in the Armor*. If so, you're sure to love our other great books for fantasy lovers, no matter what age level you're looking for. Be sure to stop by our website and check out the full selection.

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