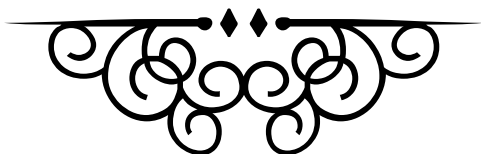


# Abbey

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Gary R. Hope

“Abbey” by Gary R. Hope. ISBN 978-1-62137-831-0 (softcover).

Published 2016 by Virtualbookworm.com Publishing Inc., P.O. Box 9949, College Station, TX, 77842, US.

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Got Truth?

Gary's Hope

Scéal

The White Book

FICTION

It's Too Late To Die Young Now



**This book is dedicated to “LOVE”**

The love of the Lord,

The love of your family, and

The love of that special someone who makes your  
eyes sparkle every time you see them.



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# Chapter 1

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THE \$2,500 ABHINANDAN just made for less than five minutes of simple computer work was filling his mind with all sorts of thoughts. He could pay off most of his remaining debt from the doctoral program at Virginia Tech. He could put a down payment on a nice, reliable car. Or, he could purchase a new hand-tailored suit he'd been dreaming of. Abbey, as his friends called him, was only a few weeks away from completing his PhD in Computational Science and Engineering and was negotiating with several companies over job opportunities. He needed a reliable car to get him to the various interviews, but he wanted a new hand-tailored suit. He also knew that his starting salary would enable him to pay off the last of his student debts rather easily. So, the decision boiled down to a new car or a new suit. Some women are impressed with cars, but all women are impressed by a man in an expensive suit. It was an easy decision for him.

He had just been paid for doing a little side job for someone that required him to hack into the computer system of an investment firm. He was assured this simple job was not to steal anything, not to jeopardize any accounts, nor to do anything illegal. His contact only wanted some information because he was curious. One of his greatest strengths, aside from his computer genius, was being able to read people. He

could sense this man was telling him the truth, that he only wanted the information for his own personal knowledge. And, the fact that the job was so simple and quick made it an easy decision for him.

Abbey was a much sought after commodity from many high tech companies and from the federal government. During his first year in the doctoral program he made a name for himself nationally when he devised a program and engineered the software that enabled computers to significantly increase their capabilities. And, even more incredibly, to enable these computers to “think” for themselves, without needing input or data from outside (outside, meaning human help). What he had designed and perfected was beyond cutting edge. He not only pushed the limits of computational science where no one had ever been. He was operating in areas where others couldn’t even comprehend.

The Defense Department and the CIA were both heavily recruiting him, as were several major technology companies nationwide—especially those in Silicon Valley, California. Unfortunately for the government, they couldn’t compete with the salary scales of these billion dollar companies, all of whom wanted this computer wizard on their payrolls. He knew he was going to hit it rich very soon and he was in no hurry to choose. He had enjoyed his tenure at Virginia Tech and had become a Hokie through and through. But, the winters in the highlands of Virginia, fighting the wind and cold were not on his short list of job locations. However, unbeknownst to the firms in California, moving to the land of fruits and nuts was not very high on his priority list either. He was simply using them in his negotiations with other companies to drive his salary requirements higher.

He grew up in the mountains of North Carolina, in the little town of Boone, where his father and mother were both professors at Appalachian State University. His parents immigrated to the U.S. as college students from a village in India, high up in the Himalayas, called Jabalpur. Abbey had been born in the U.S. and was as Americanized as he could be—much to his parent’s chagrin. Although he could understand a little of his parent’s native dialects, his normal speech was 100% American, with just a hint of southern twang, for effect. Aside from his computational genius, the other quality that set him apart from his peers was his movie star good looks. The perfect posture on his 6’1” frame, which was accentuated by wavy, black hair (maybe just a tad too long), perfectly straight, white teeth and the facial features that made college girls swoon and all other women dream lusty thoughts of forbidden interludes.

One of his two weaknesses, if they can be called that, is a distinct and overwhelming rapaciousness for a pretty woman—especially a shapely, pretty blonde. He had a great appreciation for the beauty of women, but he had a weakness and an infatuation for a beautiful blonde. And, apparently, most of the attractive blondes in Blacksburg had, at one time or another, been on the arm of Abbey. He was not a one-woman man. This greatly concerned his parents, who were still a little old-fashioned and tried as hard as they could to convince him, to coerce him, to blackmail him and to bribe him into marrying someone of Indian descent. It didn’t work.

He loved his parents and respected them in nearly everything, except his personal life. They were stuck in the past a little too much for him. Their lifestyles and customs of old India were simply not what he had become, or wanted for himself. He listened to them, out of respect, but he did what he wanted to

do. Not what custom required or expected him to do. He never lived in India and the caste system and religions there were foreign to him. He visited a few times, but never enjoyed it—except for the time he spent with his grandfather—who still lived there. His grandfather was the one person he listened to—and he listened to him in every aspect of his life.

His grandfather, Ramesh, has lived in India his entire life and knew the famous Maharishi Mahesh Yogi very well. In fact, they went to the same schools and learned religious beliefs and creeds from the same teachers. They were close friends during their childhoods and school years, but it quickly became apparent to Abbey's grandfather (as a young man), that Transcendental Meditation and the "state of enlightenment" was fool's gold. He broke away from Maharishi Yogi and his cults, before they became famous by luring celebrities and rock stars to the foothills of the Himalayas, with the promises of "inner calmness" and "spiritual peace" from across the universe.

The Maharishi tried to convince his friend to return to the fold and help him once his followers started multiplying. But Ramesh had found his own inner peace and had discovered all the answers he ever needed to know, in Jesus Christ. He was ostracized, ridiculed and outcast for his Christian beliefs, but he knew the truth when he saw it and refused to be bullied and threatened because of his beliefs. He was a great influence on Abbey as a youth and young man, for his courage and for his faith—which Abbey is still experimenting with.

Ramesh was greatly distressed when the Maharishi's public persona took a hit after the Beatles affair, when it was rumored that the master was a little more interested in Mia Farrow's sister than he was in all things eternal. Then he really became disenchanted when it seemed as though the Maharishi was

more interested in making money than in saving souls. When the teacher died in 2008, his U.S. assets alone were over \$300 million. Ramesh was sad his friend had died, and he was also sad to learn of the houses, cars and money he had accumulated in the name of spirituality.

His grandfather lives alone now in the same small village where he grew up. His wife died a few years ago and he now devotes all his time to teaching the Gospel and converting souls. Abbey misses seeing his grandfather and cherishes the memory of his grandmother.





# Chapter 2

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SILICON VALLEY COMPANIES WERE NOW FIGHTING over the rights to hire Abbey. His reputation was growing more and more lucrative with each passing week. His knowledge and expertise could mean millions of dollars in innovations for the company lucky enough to get him. He was aware of this. He also knew he would be going nowhere near California (except for vacation), but they didn't need to know that—not just yet. He had been negotiating with several east coast companies, mostly in the New York metropolitan area, and a few new companies from North Carolina. This is what intrigued him—North Carolina companies.

It seems as though Winston-Salem, North Carolina has cultivated and stimulated a technology growth sector that is expanding, not only in numbers and capital, but also in reputation and stature. This new growth appeals to him. Unlimited opportunities are what he's looking for. That, and he gets to stay in North Carolina—if they can match what Silicon Valley is offering. There are two companies in Winston-Salem that are especially aggressive in pursuing him: Simplexicon Technologies and Lonewolf Enterprises. The Silicon Valley companies had already made offers and he knew what his market worth was—or should be. The question was if these North Carolina companies had the capital and courage to match

(or come close), to the offers already on the table. He knew if they could, he'd stay in North Carolina.

He was offered \$225,000 a year by several California companies. That number disappointed him a little, but he reasoned it was simply a “starting” salary. He knew he'd quickly advance. After all, when it came to computers and computational science, Abbey was playing chess, while everyone else was playing checkers.

He went on second and third interviews with Simplexicon and Lonewolf and each was prepared to make him an offer. His next visit was the day of reckoning, the day that would decide whether he would live in California, New York or North Carolina. Simplexicon offered him a company car, a membership to Gold's Gym, a membership to Maple Chase Country Club and \$250,000 a year to start—with the provision of adjusting that salary after six months. He was stunned. He was prepared to accept around \$200,000 in order to stay in North Carolina. He almost accepted the offer on the spot. Almost. He was overwhelmed with the offer, but he still hadn't talked to Lonewolf Enterprises. Although he didn't think they could, or would, match this very generous offer, his analytical mind told him to at least check it out. So he did.

Lonewolf was a recent startup company that was backed financially by Wake Forest Baptist Hospital and Forsyth Medical Hospital. It specialized in cutting edge technologies in the health care system that enabled doctors and scientists to push as far and as fast as they could into the cures of cancers and heart diseases. They needed computers and systems that were dynamic and beyond the realm of imagination to look for innovative ways to fight and cure these diseases. They needed Abbey more than he needed them. In final negotiations, he finally realized this.

On his final interview, instead of offering him a salary, the president of the company asked him what it would take to get him to sign with Lonewolf. He had rehearsed this scenario overnight and quickly and emphatically said he would need \$407,125. The president never blinked. Instead, he looked back at him for about thirty seconds with no reply, then said, “How about \$250,000?” Now it was Abbey’s turn not to blink, which was hard for him to do since his heart was racing at about two hundred beats a minute. He waited another sixty seconds, never taking his gaze off the eyes of the president, and said, “\$337,850.” The president wasted no time now and replied, “My final offer is \$275,000....take it or leave it.”

One of Abbey’s greatest abilities, aside from his genius with computers, is his ability to read people—unerringly and accurately. He now had to trust his instincts implicitly. He looked back at the president and held his gaze until the president finally looked down at his desk. That gave Abbey all the information he needed; he said “If you want me, my final offer is \$314,150.” The president called his secretary and told her to bring in Abbey’s contract. He took the document and wrote in \$314,150. They shook hands and they both smiled. They were each very happy with the results.



Abbey and his grandfather kept a daily email communication between them for years. He could not start his day without reading the few lines his grandfather had left him overnight. Sometimes it was only a sentence or two, sometimes only a word or two. Always, it was insightful and helpful to his

grandson. He felt there were days when his grandfather could sense his concerns and anxiousness. Somehow, the daily email from his grandfather directly addressed his issues and thoughts—he never understood how this happened. How did his grandfather know what he was thinking and what he needed from 12,000 miles away? It was a mystery he didn't understand, nor did he want to understand—he just didn't want to lose it.

The night he accepted the job in Winston-Salem he emailed his grandfather with the great news. After his parents, he wanted him to be the next to know that his future was now a reality that he could plan on. With all the excitement of the day, it was hard for him to sleep that night. Almost as much as the excitement of the new job, was the anticipation of what his grandfather would say to him. He couldn't wait till the sun came up in the morning. He started checking his emails about 4:30 AM. Soon, the message from his grandfather came through. As usual, it was short and insightful:

“A SINGLE DREAM IS MORE POWERFUL THAN A THOUSAND REALITIES.”



He had a few loose ends to tie up in Blacksburg and at Virginia Tech before he started his new job with Lonewolf Technologies. He drove back up there and gave all his friends the news. Some were happy for him, some were happy for themselves because he was leaving. With Abbey out of the way, maybe they could be the stars now, maybe they could get

some attention. Jealousy can often bring out the worst in people and expose characteristics and truths that were hidden for months and years—even in those you thought were your friends. He was popular and had rock star status in the technology underground in and around the academic circles of Virginia. Everyone came to him for advice, including his teachers and mentors. A person with Abbey's abilities came along very seldom.

He had a few days to disassemble his array of personal computer and programming equipment for the trip to his new home in Winston-Salem, but first, he had a few parting gifts he wanted to make. This weekend the UNC Tarheel basketball team was in town to play his beloved Hokies. In years past, Virginia Tech had a fighting chance against Carolina and won some of the games (not many, but some). Now, however, they had no chance. Football ruled at Tech and basketball was simply something to observe until spring football practice started. This irked him. He hated to lose, especially to the baby blue Heels.

He knew there was nothing that could change the outcome of the game, Carolina was just too good for Tech, they had too many good players. And even though there was nothing he could do to change this fact, maybe there was something he could do to make the game a little closer. He went back to his little dump of an apartment and opened up his array of computer equipment—much of which he built himself, while waiting on patents from the government. He knew all visiting teams stayed at the best hotel in town, the Golden Arms Inn. It was child's play for him to hack into the hotel's mainframe and set up his plan.

Tomorrow's game was televised, as all UNC games are, with a noon start. Which meant the coaches would ensure all the

players got to their rooms early and were in bed at least by 11:00 PM. He found the alarm system for the hotel and programmed a test for the fire alarm network and sprinkler system at 3:00 AM. The fire alarm itself would probably have been enough to disrupt the sleep of the UNC players, having to get out of bed and go outside at 3:00 AM. Maybe they could've gone back to sleep after that—maybe not. But he knew if the sprinklers were also activated and everyone got thoroughly soaked, it would really make it difficult to get a good night's rest.

It all worked. The fire alarm went off and the sprinklers soaked everyone on the team's floor, but not any of the other guests floors. And UNC only won the game by 9 points (the spread was 19). The game's commentators noticed a lack of energy from the UNC players and commented on their "tired legs." He knew his prank would never affect the outcome of the game—the Tarheels were simply too good. But, in the end, it did make him feel a whole lot better for his team to win a "moral victory" by holding the score to less than 10 points.