

The Briar Patch Evangelist



Glenn Slade Clark, Jr.

***The Briar Patch
Evangelist***

Books by Glenn Slade Clark, Jr.

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THE CHRONICLES OF NIGHTFIRE, TEXAS:

The Vampire Murders
The Haunting of Alexas Mansion

The Great Debate

METROGNOMES:

The Demons of the Blood
The Shaman's Apprentice

THE LEGENDS OF NOD:

The Dragons of Nod
All for the Blood of Nightstorm
Enter: The Wanderer

The Briar Patch Evangelist

Or

The Tale of Beater Rabbit

Glenn Slade Clark, Jr.

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**The Briar Patch Evangelist;
or,
The Tale of Beater Rabbit**

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Beater Rabbit grew up in a magic shoe, in the most powerful country in all of Rabbitdom. This country was situated within a great thorny thicket of plants known simply as the Briar Patch. Beater was raised by his mother, along with four siblings: his brothers Happy and Flappy, and his sisters Glitter and Shimmer. Their mother took great pains in raising them alone, after the foxes devoured her husband. She was always so proud to be bringing up a family in the Briar Patch, a nation that had been formed centuries before by

rabbits fleeing the tyranny and religious persecution of the foxes in other lands. The Briar Patch was a great mix of beliefs and ideas and always had been.

Feeling the magic of this shoe in which Mother Rabbit raised her children was a simple matter of embracing the magic of freedom; a magic that the Briar Patch was built on. Rabbits in the Briar Patch had much to choose from. So many religious philosophies, so many books to read, films to view, musical compositions to listen to, opinions to hear. Everyone was entitled to their say.

Mother Rabbit was a Christian by choice and, as such, encouraged her children to give to others and always forgive. She would put them to work in soup kitchens for the poor every Christmas. This took with all of her children, except for Beater.

Happy was quick to make friends every year at these soup kitchens, Flappy would involve himself in deep theological discussions with the homeless, Glitter would always find a way to improve the organization of the service lines, while Shimmer would invent new tools to support her sister's ideas. Beater just wondered why the homeless rabbits couldn't get jobs or feed themselves. He hated them for making him work. He would sneak away and play video games whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Mother Rabbit loved books as well. She would let the children choose new books whenever her budget allowed. Shimmer

loved books on nature, mechanics, outer space, and dinosaurs; Flappy loved books on comparative religion, theology, mythology, and the Crusades; Glitter enjoyed books on heroines like She-Ra, Wonder Woman, Princess Leia, and Margaret Thatcher; while Happy liked to read stories about close relationships between men, like David and Jonathan, Achilles and Patroclus, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd. Beater only ever chose one book. He heard the preacher say once that it was the only book he'd ever need. Beater chose the Holy Bible, and when his mother would offer to read it to him, he would always turn her down, insisting that God would grant him whatever knowledge he needed just by holding the Bible close to his heart. He slept with the book nestled in his arms every single night of his childhood.

Mother Rabbit was also a great patriot, telling her children tales of how the Briar Patch was founded, how their forbears had fought with their lives to build a land where rabbits could worship however they chose, share their opinions without fear of persecution, and choose their leaders rather than suffer under a tyrannical dictatorship. She instilled this patriotism in all of her children.

As time went on, Beater and his siblings grew up, and, while all of them went in vastly different directions, all of them became

leaders in the Briar Patch. Glitter became a politician, eventually becoming the chairrabbit of the Briar Patch; Shimmer became the leading scientific authority of the land, and a tenured professor of quantum physics at Briar Patch University; Flappy made the decision that Christianity was not the answer he was looking for and became a leader in the Briar Patch's growing Muslim community; while Happy became an outspoken leader in the gay community and worked with his sister to try and pass legislation in support of equality for all rabbits. Beater became a TV evangelist on a network owned by foxes who had bought their way to power in the Briar Patch, claiming to have turned away from the ways of their ancestors. They funded Beater's show generously, so he openly rallied his viewers to overlook the past crimes of the foxes, even going so far as to help the foxes pin the blame for all of the oppression of the past on the rabbits who had fled to the Briar Patch in the first place.

Things went on this way for some time. There were disagreements, but Mother Rabbit always found a way to make peace between her children. That is, she did, until the terrorists struck.

One day, the strength of the Briar Patch was put to the test, when a group of Islamic fanatics bombed several key locations in the rabbits' country. Many rabbits died horrible deaths that day. Every rabbit who survived was shaken and unsure what the future would hold.

As a Muslim, Flappy was very outspoken, condemning the actions of these fanatics, assuring the rabbits of the Briar Patch that these few terrorists did not represent all of Islam by any stretch of the imagination. He worked paw-in-paw with the rest of the community, as they rebuilt and struggled to move on.

Beater, on the other hand, was determined to place the blame. He knew that the Bible said many things about women being obedient to men and gay rabbits being abominable. He saw a country now run by a woman and well on the way to accepting gay rabbits as equals. He met with the foxes who owned the network, and they all came to a decision. They would work together to fight the evil that was spreading in the Briar Patch. They would turn things around for their country and for Christianity.

Beater went on the air and spoke out against his sister the chairrabbit and his brother the homosexual. He said that God was using these terrorist attacks to punish the rabbits of the Briar Patch for straying from their Christian origins. He told his viewers that it was the women in power and the gays who had brought God's wrath upon them. He urged them to denounce their female chairrabbit and silence the gay rights movement in order to win back God's favor. He "reminded" them that the Briar Patch was, and always had been, a Christian nation, in spite of the fact that it had been founded by rabbits of varying faiths.

For their part, the foxes bought up as many of the newspapers and radio stations as they could, and on their television network, they ran news stories that slandered Glitter and her policies of equality. They claimed that she hadn't even been born in the Briar Patch and, therefore, had no right to lead them. They urged their followers in the Senate to blindly oppose all of her legislative efforts, then attacked her for her inability to enact change.

They followed Beater's sermons and pointed out that the gay rights movement was a terrorist act in itself, a threat to heterosexual marriage and family life as rabbits knew it, a threat to children everywhere, who these activists might turn gay with a secret pawshake.

The foxes used the terrorist attacks to vilify all Muslims, telling the rabbits to fear and distrust them, because their entire religion was based on violence and warfare. They urged the rabbits, through their fear-inducing news reports, to take the country back from the unchristian leaders who were bringing them all to the brink of destruction with their blasphemous teachings.

They even turned on science itself, insisting that the world was flat, that the moon was made of cheese, and that all science books that did not discuss God, religion, and demonology should be banned from schools altogether.

Beater of course took all of this to heart. He knew that something had to be done, and that he was just the rabbit to do it. He would win the Briar Patch back for Christianity. He turned on the news and saw that his brother Happy had written a new legislation for legalizing gay marriage, and that his sister Glitter had promised to sign it into law if it passed in the Senate and reached her desk. The foxes reminded the public then that this was going to destroy their country. This act would put all of their legitimate, heterosexual marriages in jeopardy, it would assure that children were encouraged to be gay in elementary school, and that God would certainly continue to turn his back on the Briar Patch. Beater knew that it was true. His brother's gay marriage bill had to be stopped. Gays themselves had to be stopped. He turned off the TV and went to visit his brother Happy.

Happy answered the knock at the door to find his brother Beater standing there with a Bible in one paw and a baseball bat in the other. "Beater!" He forced a smile. "What a surprise! Come on in. We're just sitting down to dinner."

"Thank you, Happy. Don't mind if I do."

Beater sat down at the table, and Happy's life partner Sparky set a plate of vegetables in front of him. Happy and Sparky sat down then, and everyone began to eat. Sparky eyed Beater

nervously. “So, Beater...were you looking for someone to play baseball with? What about your kids? How many do you have now?”

“350,000.”

Sparky’s jaw dropped. “Jeez, dude!”

Beater replied tersely, “The Lord said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’”

“Oh, yeah...whatever.” Sparky went back to his food, giving Happy a freaked out look.

Beater noticed the book shelf and commented, “I’m not here to play baseball. I just wanted to have a word in private with my brother. You’ve replaced your Harry Potter books, I see.”

Happy cleared his throat. “Actually, Mom did. She wanted me to forgive you for incinerating my first set when I lent them to you last month. So...I did.”

“Unfortunate she did that.” Beater shook his head. “Well, I guess you don’t have any children to corrupt in this place, so if you and your friend want to practice sorcery in private, only *your* souls will burn for it. And when it comes to Hell, you’ve already bought your tickets, so...”

Sparky was outraged, as was usual when Beater Rabbit paid them a visit. “We aren’t practicing *sorcery!* They’re books! Fiction books! It’s just a fun story!”

Happy sighed, tiredly. “Sparky, would you give us a moment?”

“Happy to oblige.” Sparky hopped up from the table and couldn’t get away from the room where sat Beater Rabbit fast enough.

When Sparky had gone, Happy asked, “So, what did you want to talk about, Beater?”

Beater answered hopefully, “I came over to try and convince you, one last time, to stop being gay.”

Happy laughed hard and loud. When he regained control, he said, “Beater, you looked so serious! It’s just too much. We’ve been through this before. I can’t just *stop* being gay. It’s how I was born. It’s not a choice. If it were, then why would anyone *choose* to be oppressed and betrayed by the faith they grew up with? Why would anyone *choose* to be a second class citizen without equal rights that should be due to all rabbits in the Briar Patch? Why would anyone choose a life of *fighting* for happiness? Why would anyone choose that? It’s not a choice, Beater. It’s not a ‘lifestyle preference,’ and it’s not a sin. God made me gay. And God loves me that way.”

Beater looked sad. “I’m sorry to hear that, Happy. Is that your final decision, then?”

“It’s not a decision! And back to an earlier comment you made, stop referring to Sparky as my ‘friend.’ He’s my *partner*, and once the gay marriage bill goes through, he’s going to be my husband. You really need to stop denying that now. We’re *very* happy.”

“You’re very *gay*! And God says gay is a sin! I don’t want my brother to burn in Hell! I really don’t, Happy! But I can’t just stand by and watch as you corrupt my children and threaten my marriage!”

“I haven’t done anything to your children, Beater. You’ve never even let me meet them...not that I could keep up. And you can stay married as long as you want to. You two shouldn’t get divorced just because Sparky and I get married.”

“We aren’t getting a divorce! You’re missing the point!”

“The point is hatred, Beater! You aren’t even *making* a rational point!” He sighed again and shook his head. “Look, I just got over your little Harry Potter bonfire fiasco, bro. Maybe you should leave. It would kill Mom if we started fighting again. I love you, but I need you to respect me and my partner when you’re a guest in our home.”

Beater hopped up. “I love you too, Happy. I love the rabbit you could have been if the gays hadn’t gotten to you first.” He put his Bible down on the table and lifted his baseball bat. “But I love my country, and I love Jesus more! I will not allow you to take us down into depravity with you!”

“Beater! What are you doing?” Happy jumped back, tripping over his chair.

“Cleaning the Lord’s House!” Beater swung hard, cracking Happy’s skull. Blood sprayed all over the kitchen, as Happy fell,

twitching, his eyes rolled back into his head. Beater swung again, and again, and again.

Sparky came in to see what was going on and let out a guttural scream that shook the very foundation of the home he'd built with Happy. When he caught his breath, just barely, he roared out, "*You monster!*"

Beater pulled a gun out from a holster he'd had turned around behind his back and shot Sparky twice in the chest, killing him instantly.

As Sparky's limp body hit the floor with a lifeless, wet smack, landing in a pool of Happy's blood, Beater grabbed Happy by the ears and dragged him outside. He found a hammer and some nails and nailed Happy's twitching body to the white picket fence in front of the house, making a statement for all gay rabbits who passed by. This was God's country, and Christian rabbits weren't going to take this lying down anymore.

By the time that someone found Happy nailed to the fence, the badly beaten rabbit was dead, and his body had been half eaten by birds. The gay community heralded the double murder as a hate crime against all gay rabbits. Everyone was shocked when Beater Rabbit stood up on his television show and took full credit for the deaths of Happy and Sparky. "I killed them in the name of Jesus. I killed them for the Briar Patch. I killed them to

make a statement against the bill that will surely destroy all families in the Briar Patch should it be signed into law by my sister.”

Beater Rabbit was arrested quickly after his show aired that afternoon. He was charged with two counts of murder and told to expect to receive either life in prison or the death penalty.

The foxes launched a campaign of their own through their news show. They insisted that Beater Rabbit was the victim, and that he’d been acting as a patriot. They insisted that the chair-rabbit’s burning desire to label this heroic act of patriotism as a hate crime was really an attack on all rabbits’ freedom of expression; that to charge and sentence heroic Beater Rabbit for defending his country and his faith was another nail in the coffin of their dying freedom in the Briar Patch, the end of their right to be heterosexual if they so chose and not to accept gay marriage.

Popular opinion worked in Beater’s favor, and he was let off with a slap on the paw and a misdemeanor on his record for public rudeness, based on his nailing a near dead homosexual to a perfectly good picket white fence in an otherwise very tidy neighborhood. The foxes heralded Beater as a hero, and the gay community was attacked anew from all fronts. God-fearing rabbits rounded the gays up one by one and handed them over to the foxes, who sold their fur and devoured the rest, all in the name of Jesus Christ and patriotism.

Beater's family was horrified at the outcome, horrified that Beater had gone insane, and the world with him. His brother Flappy decided to make an offering of peace. He announced his plans to use the resources of his mosque to build an inter-faith community center for the better understanding of the different sorts of rabbits living in the Briar Patch. He bought the land and went to work right away, just a couple of blocks from where the Muslim terrorists had struck not so long ago.

The foxes went after him without hesitation. They alleged that he was building a "Community Center of Terror" to launch Muslim terrorist strikes from within the Briar Patch with ultimate plans of bringing down the nation. When Flappy's sister Glitter stood by his *right* to build this 'Terror Community Center,' the foxes alleged that she was in with the terrorists and that she sought to overturn centuries of democracy, handing the Briar Patch over to a group of religious fanatics who would force the world to worship as they did.

Beater Rabbit took this to heart. He knew that something had to be done to stop the Community Center of Terror, and he knew that he was just the rabbit to do it. He went to visit his brother Flappy.

Beater arrived at the nearly finished Terror Community Center and knocked on the door. Flappy answered, open-mouthed and wide-eyed. “Beater? What are you doing here?”

I think you know, Flappy. Let me in.”

“How ‘bout let’s talk outside?” Anger entered his voice, replacing the shock of seeing Beater at all, “After what you did to our *brother!* You’re lucky that I’m speaking to you at all.”

“Why not let me in, Flappy? Afraid I’ll see where you’re keeping all the bombs? I’m here to ask you, one last time, not to be an Islamic heathen terrorist anymore. Why not take the first step, and let’s dismantle all the weapons of mass destruction in there together?”

Flappy rolled his eyes in disgust. “How is it that you are my brother? It’s only because Mother wants us to forgive you that I’m even having this conversation. She says that you’re misguided, and that your brain simply isn’t as discerning as the rest of ours. She wants you to come home.”

“Answer my request, brother! Will you turn away from terrorism and anti-Christian sentiments?”

“Come in, Beater. I’ll show you that there aren’t any weapons in there. I stand for peace. I always have.”

Beater scoffed. “I don’t intend to go in there and walk into some terrorist Islam trap! You can’t tell me that you read the Koran and are able to stand for peace! The Koran is a book of violence and terrorism!”

“Have you *read* the Koran?”

“I don’t have to read! I watch the news!”

“Have you ever actually *read* the Bible? Or do you still just snuggle with it every night?”

“How dare you...!?”

Patiently, Flappy explained himself, “The Bible is also a book of violence. If you’d read it, you’d know that. The Old Testament doesn’t fall in line with a lot of what Jesus taught about peace and forgiveness. It doesn’t fit with the sort of Christianity that Mother taught us. But it’s in there. It has its place in the history of both of our faiths. But just because Moses put someone on the rack for picking up a twig on the Sabbath doesn’t mean that Mom, or Glitter, or Shimmer, as Christians, would resort to such tactics too. Happy wouldn’t have either. But you would. That tells me that *you* are the one who’s truly fallen away from his faith.”

“How can you list our Islam terrorist sister with the Christians? We all know the truth about Glitter.”

Flappy shook his head. “She’s not Islamic just because she says that we have rights. She isn’t a terrorist...and neither am I. If all you want is for me to back down and not build my com-

munity center, then please leave. I don't want to hurt Mother by fighting with you again.”

“Flappy, please listen to me!” Beater sighed, shaking his head in frustration. “I don't *want* my brother to be an Islamic terrorist. You're my brother, and I love you. But I can't stand by and let you terrorize the Briar Patch. I can't stand by while we all live under the threat of your people forcing their religious beliefs on us and the fear of you bombing our sacred monuments and edifices, taking away our freedom. I won't have it. I am a Christian and a patriot. I *will* stop you, if I must.”

“Beater...you're crazy. What you're describing to me is exactly what you're doing to *us*! The foxes are trying to manipulate you. Think about it! They don't care about your freedom or your country. Only their profits, only their dinner plates. What happened to all that fur when they ate the gays, anyway?”

“Flappy...stop it. That's crazy talk. Now, make your decision. Are you going to surrender your blasphemous religious beliefs, or am I going to have to slaughter you and blow up your Terrorist Community Center?”

“I will stand my ground, Beater.”

With visible sadness, Beater revealed a machete and a machine gun that had been concealed in a bandolier at his back. “Then I'm afraid you've forced my paw, brother.” He screamed, “Jihad!” and slashed Flappy across the gut, watching his brother grasp at his entrails as they slid out of his belly. Satisfied at the

ironic look of terror on his terrorist brother's face, Beater filled him with bullets from head to toe with the machine gun, leaving him a bloody pile of smoking rabbit meat at the front door of the center. Beater then pulled a remote control from behind his back and summoned a big, remote-controlled airplane with massive explosives strapped to its body. He hopped back and aimed the airplane right at the Terror Community Center. When the plane hit, the building erupted into a pillar of smoke, flame, and dying, screaming Muslims.

Beater wept at the site, again shaking his head, and offering a eulogy for his wayward brother Flappy. "I hope you enjoy Hell, you terrorist sack of crap."

Once again, a gargantuan media circus surrounded the events of Beater Rabbit's latest crusade, and once again the fox news anchors were able to present Beater Rabbit as a hero and a God-fearing patriot who was just doing his duty as both a Christian and as a citizen of the Briar Patch. Islamophobic rabbits sent unprecedented amounts of money to Beater's ministry, and God-fearing rabbits all over the Briar Patch rounded up all of the Muslim rabbits one by one and handed them over to the foxes, who sold their fur and feasted on the rest, all in the name of Jesus Christ and patriotism.

Over time, a great schism overran the schools of the Briar Patch. Not surprisingly, Beater found himself poised on opposite sides of the debate from his sister Shimmer, who was leading the movement to keep God, religion, and demonology out of science text books. She maintained that science books should teach more empirical evidence than unproven theory and certainly not theology. Beater's side argued that scientists wanted to teach atheism and push God out of the Briar patch. When new text book legislation came up in the Senate, both rabbits were there to argue their cases before the powers that be.

“What I’m saying,” Beater Rabbit spoke heatedly, “is that it is not the place of public schools to tell our children that there is no God.”

“But no one is telling them that,” his sister Doctor Shimmer spoke up. “All we’re saying here is that public school is not the place to learn about religious viewpoints, just as church is not the place to learn about science. The Bible is not a science book, Beater. You would know that if you’d ever actually *read* it. So why should science books be expected to contain elements of theology?”

The argument went on and on, and ultimately, the legislation was relegated to a committee to study both sides of the argument

before a vote could be taken. Beater was angry and frustrated. Shimmer was angry and frustrated. Their sister Glitter, the chairrabbit, invited them to her office to make peace and discuss a compromise.

The two rabbits were led into her office to await her arrival. As they sat there, Beater could not hold back. “Shimmer, how can you do this to Mother?”

“How can *I* do *this* to Mother? You’re the one who’s murdered our brothers over a matter of opinion! Are you going to kill me next?”

“Opinion? I killed them over a matter of the *Bible* and our country! I saved us from gays and terrorists, and you’re *angry* about that? If I hadn’t done what I did, you’d be in a mosque right now with your *girl*friend planning to bomb the ‘infidels’! You should be thanking me for what I did. Happy and Flappy were hopelessly lost. And I’m beginning to wonder about you, as you try to erase God from the culture of all rabbits.”

“Beater, I *believe* in God! Some scientists are atheists, yes, and more power to them, but just like any group, there are almost as many different beliefs about the hereafter and the origins of the universe as there are rabbits who think! I see science as God’s very pawprint, proof that there is some great mind behind all that we see and experience in this limited three-dimensional plain. But I also see the value of leaving such musings to *religion* and keeping school purely secular. Church doesn’t teach science, and

school doesn't teach religion; that doesn't mean the two can't coexist. In fact, as a scientist, I see coexistence as a fundamental concern for our species and our world. For instance, I would love to coexist with the foxes, as you and yours do, but as a reasoning being, I can't let myself do that until they stop *eating* us.”

Beater huffed. “They only eat the rabbits who threaten our way of life. The gays and the terrorists, like Happy and Flappy. Our brothers chose their fate.”

“And what about me, Beater? What about the scientists? Aren't we a threat to your ignorant, small minded way of life? Don't we say the moon is *not* made out of cheese, the world is *round*, and rabbits did, in fact, evolve from primordial rodents?”

Beater Rabbit narrowed his eyes. “So be it, sister. You have made it clear that you are just as great a threat to this world as our brothers were. I had hoped this day would be put off by the outcome of the vote, but apparently you are determined to undermine our faith with your lies. Should you lose the vote, you will no doubt still continue to spread these lies about our origins and the state of our environment...and some rabbits will listen, as they always do. Some rabbits will be swayed and lose their faith...because of you.” Beater stood up.

“Wait!” Shimmer stood up as well. “Let us put it to a test. I will use science to defeat you, and you use faith itself to *kill* me.”

“That's not...”

“What? Don’t have the faith to back up your mouth, Beater?”

“Very well then!” Beater closed his eyes and prayed aloud. “I call upon Jesus and all the powers of Heaven! Send down a pillar of fire and consume this vile, blasphemous heathen atheist! Take her to Hell where you have long been preparing a place of everlasting torment for her cursed and rotten soul!”

Beater waited.

He opened his eyes.

Nothing happened.

Shimmer grinned triumphantly. “My turn.”

She hit a button on her shoulder and a giant machine unfolded from behind her back, buzzing and whirring. Buzz saws on swiveling stalks, and lasers with heat seeking targeting devices sprang up and zeroed in on Beater. Shimmer laughed, as she allowed the buzz saws to sweep past her brother, letting him feel the wind from their spinning on his face, shooting her lasers at his feet, making him hop into a corner, seeing the fear in his eyes as she brought her technological death machine closer and closer to his furry flesh. She ignited a small jet pack at her back and hovered towards him, keeping herself above him just enough to make him feel intimidated. “See, Beater? See what I *could* do? What sets us apart is the mind that I have...a mind that tells me that what I *can* do and what I *should* do are all too often not at all the same thing. I invented this machine for making furniture,

after all.” She giggled, in a way that said she was ready to put down the weapons and make peace. She held out her paw to him.

Beater swiftly pulled out a gun from behind his back and shot her in the face, blowing her brain and the back of her head all over the office wall. Her jet pack cut off just as her dead paw released the control. Beater hopped out of the way just before she fell over where he stood, her buzz saws cutting through the wall and sending her toppling three stories below, where she was impaled on a flag pole right through the heart.

As she slid down the pole, drenching the symbol of the Briar Patch nation with her blood and other fluids from within, one of her buzz saw stalks bent down and none-too-quickly decapitated what was left of her head. Shimmer’s head hit the ground and rolled a ways into the yard, as Beater watched and wept.

Just then Glitter walked into her office and saw Beater staring out through the hole that Shimmer had fallen through. A look of terror spread across her face. “Beater...what have you done?”

“Only what I had to do, sister! I am preserving the Briar Patch for the faithful. She was faithless altogether. She planned to spread her lies to the schools. To the innocent children. We were *created*, not evolved.”

“You...*killed* her over that? Beater...you make me sad. I’m only not tearing out your intestines and gouging out your eyes

right now, because I am a leader...I have to stay strong. I can't be like *you*. I fight with reason and diplomacy...not ignorance and blind hatred. I do not react in fear."

"I'm not ignorant or blind, Glitter! I have my eyes open wide by the blood of Jesus! I've saved the Briar Patch from gay marriage and homosexual indoctrination of our children!"

"Beater, no. According to statistics, at least 35,000 of your own offspring will probably be gay. It's about one in ten. You can't stop it. It just happens."

"Lies and blasphemy! If there are no adult gays to teach our children to be gay, then they won't even know about it. No gay marriage happens, our own families are saved! Because I was brave enough to stand up for my beliefs! Beliefs *you* tried to snuff out! You tried to suppress my freedom of expression!"

"I tried to stop hate crimes from continuing! Murder and terrorism are not covered under 'freedom of expression.'"

Beater's eyes went wide. "Then why did you protect our brother the terrorist?"

"Flappy wasn't a terrorist! He was a good rabbit trying to better his community and make an overture of peace for us all!"

Beater didn't swallow a word of it. "That's what your Islamic masters want you to tell us, isn't it? They want us to think they're the victims!"

Glitter pointed out, "When you threaten *their* way of life and blow up *their* building, they *are* the victims! Leaving them alone

doesn't mean you have to become a Muslim, it just means that we can all coexist if we *all* agree to it!"

"Lies! I've seen it all on the news, how you support terrorists, how you weren't even *born* in the Briar Patch!"

"Beater, we were born at the same time. We were both born in Mother's magical shoe, less than four blocks from where we stand now."

"Show me the birth certificate, Glitter!" Beater shouted triumphantly. "Show me the birth certificate!"

"What? Beater, you're insane!"

"Can't do it, can you, Glitter? You're not even a citizen, and you're our *leader!*"

"I don't just carry my birth certificate around with me all day every day...do you?"

"That's beside the point, Glitter! The point is that God didn't start striking at the Briar Patch until the gays started to get treated like they were *normal*, religion started to get pushed *out* of public schools, and *women*, like you, started to gain power in our country! It's *all* against the Bible!"

"No, Beater...God didn't strike the Briar Patch...*terrorists* did! Rabbits with their own agenda of intolerance that doesn't strike me as being too far off from your own. And where *is* your Bible, Beater? I haven't seen it on you in some time. Not even on TV."

Beater paused. “I don’t know...I must have set it down somewhere.” He realized. “I set it down...in Happy’s house.”

“It’s just as well, since you never read the thing anyway!” Glitter pointed out.

“I don’t need to read what God puts in my heart! The Bible tells me who God’s enemies are.”

“Then, Beater, you have missed the point.”

“No! Stop your blasphemous lies! If we hadn’t elected a woman to lead us, maybe God wouldn’t have allowed us to be so vulnerable to the terrorists!”

“Beater...you *are* the terrorists! You and those fear-mongering foxes that you’re in league with!”

“That’s it! No more, Glitter! Make your choice. Are you going to hold on to your unpatriotic lies, your Muslim faith...your terrorist regime, your gay agenda, and your rampant atheism?”

“Wait...so I’m a Muslim *and* an atheist?”

“Shut up, blasphemer! Are you going to hold on to all of that, or are you going to do the right thing...the Christian thing...and step down from your office, get married, and have some more babies, for the love of God!”

She growled. “Oh, that would help the overpopulation problem *and* the economy! We just need more women to focus on having babies. Beater, you insane *maniac*! I’m not stepping down. *I will not bow to terrorism!* I’m the chairrabbit! What are

you gonnna do? Herd all the women in power off to the foxes like you did the gays and Muslims?”

“If I must.” Beater said not another word, as he deftly spun around, unsheathing a sword from behind his back and lopping off his sister’s head. As it thunked to the floor, he could swear he saw her mouthing the word “maniac” just before the life went out of her eyes. Her body fell only a moment after her head, and Beater was arrested yet again.

A media circus ensued. A fox became the new Chair of the Briar Patch. Beater was released as a patriot and a hero, a rabbit of unshakable Christian faith, thanks to the fox news network. The scientists *and* the women in power all were rounded up and taken to the foxes, who sold their fur and gorged themselves on their meat.

Time passed, and more and more groups of uncooperative rabbits were rounded up and dealt with by the foxes. After not as much time as one might imagine, a knock was heard on Beater Rabbit’s door. It was the first sound he’d heard in his house since he’d been forced to surrender his wife and all 350,000 of his blasphemous children to the foxes. What a sad day that had been. But it had been a necessary thing to preserve their way of

life, their faith, the stability of their country. Beater Rabbit knew nothing of regret.

He opened the door and welcomed in three of his fox supporters. “Beater,” the head fox said, “have you noticed something different about your studio audience of late? About the Briar Patch itself?”

“Such as?” Beater asked. “I mean, other than the silence, I’ve noticed nothing out of the ordinary.”

“You’re the last one,” the fox said, looking to his companions, as they licked their chops. “You are the last rabbit in the entire Briar Patch.”

“I am?” The magnitude of that fact hit Beater as if he’d swallowed a large boulder. “I’m the last faithful rabbit...the last one on the proverbial mountain top. Who knew that it would come to this? God has been truly merciful to me.” He thought of his poor sainted mother, who had died from grief just after the necessary death of her daughter Glitter.

“Indeed,” said the fox, with a suppressed giggle that he passed off as a cough. “We found this, during our search for mea...er...more rabbits.” He nodded to one of his companions, and the fox threw a book down at Beater’s feet.

It was Beater’s Bible. He picked the book up and noticed that it was still covered with his brother’s dried blood. As he took in the memory of how that blood had gotten there, a thought occurred to him, and if it could have done, the color would have

drained from his fur, as he looked up, caught the foxes' hungry stares, and barely breathed out the words, "I'm the last rabbit."

The foxes nodded solemnly, as they grabbed him, held him to the ground, and savored every morsel of his flesh as they ate; and not a soul in all the Briar Patch was sympathetic to his screams.

About the Author

Glenn Slade Clark, Jr. is the author of nine books, including the novel *Cry, Wolf: Shadow of the Werewolf*, the short fiction anthology *The Great Debate*, the Gothic horror series *The Chronicles of Nightfire, Texas*, and two fantasy series: *Metrognomes* and *The Legends of Nod*. He lives in Dallas, Texas, where he is currently hard at work on his next book.

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