

JUST LIKE JONAH

*There's a
price to pay
when you
disobey*

WAIL TALES

by Cheryl Rogers

A photograph of a whale breaching the ocean surface, with a seagull flying in the background. The whale's tail and part of its back are visible above the water, creating a splash. The seagull is in flight, positioned to the left of the whale's tail. The background is a dark, overcast sky.

Just Like Jonah

Wail Tales

By Cheryl Rogers

Book Preview

© 2010 Cheryl Rogers, Tampa, Florida

All rights reserved.

Cover Image: Matthew Hull, Morguefile

This e-book preview may be shared freely in its entirety with others, but not sold.

To purchase this ebook, go to: <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/33935>

www.SongsfromtheWord.com

Contact: songsfromtheword@earthlink.net

Connect on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1120742090>

Just Like Jonah

WAIL TALES

by CHERYL ROGERS

Preface

Okay, so you're wondering just what are wail tales. Wail tales are fish tales, of a sort. They are fun and a little bit exaggerated stories of woe with a Christian message. The characters learn, just like Jonah in the Bible, that: 1) There's a price to pay when we disobey and 2) Even when we fall, God hears our call.

While some wail tales may contain another lesson from Jonah, they all focus on disobedience, the price of disobedience, a prayer of faith, and God's rescue.

So just dive in! Let the truth of God's word sink in as you read these wail tales about folks who learned lessons the hard way, just like Jonah.

If you want to write your own wail tale, I'd like to hear from you. Use your imagination and create a story where someone gets into a whale of trouble for doing the wrong thing. Need some ideas? Check the Ten Commandments. Not everyone has a mission like Jonah, but we're all told to be honest, honorable and loving. If we break one of these commandments, we're not listening to God, just like Jonah.

Have fun getting your character into – and out of – a whale of trouble! And be sure to submit your tale for possible inclusion in a blog or book update. Contact me on Facebook.

Special thanks to my son, David, whose enthusiasm for this book was contagious.

About the Author

Cheryl Rogers voraciously read Nancy Drew Mysteries as a child and decided she wanted to become a writer. She majored in journalism in college, graduated with B.A., and worked for 12 years in the newspaper industry before raising a family.

Although she went to church almost every Sunday, Cheryl never really knew God, not until she had a problem too big to handle, Environmental Illness. The disease is a severe immune disorder involving environmental sensitivities, which are much like allergies. Like many of the characters in *Just Like Jonah Wail Tales*, Cheryl surrendered her life to God and was healed.

She has dedicated herself to sharing the knowledge of God with others and encouraging them to seek God and stay connected to God's word. As a mother, Cheryl especially enjoys sharing with children and young adults, in hopes they will be spared wail tales of their own.



Table of Contents

Preface

About the Author

An Election Too Close to Call

Barry Gets it Right

Grace for Grace

Psssst! There are NO Secrets

Phil Faces “Hitler” in the Classroom

Evie’s Miraculous Transformation

An Election Too Close to Call

Steve stayed close to the basketball as his opponent was dribbling, his hands poised to snap it from under the other boy's control. The score was 30-30 and the two middle school teams were battling for the season championship. Steve was his team's top player, and all eyes in the auditorium watched as he slapped the ball away and began dribbling it toward his team's basket. With an ease that comes from long hours of practice, he gracefully flung the basketball through the hoop as the bell shrilled, signaling the end of the game!

The crowd's cheers were almost deafening as Steve's teammates carried him around the court celebrating their team's victory. He held his arms upwards with clenched fists yelling "B-L-A-Z-E-R-S, blazers are the best!"

Steve had practiced every day after school, sometimes with the team and sometimes with a friend or two. He'd been playing regularly since third grade and it showed. Coach Billy relied on Steve for those tough plays, especially when the pressure was on to perform. Steve seemed oblivious to the pressure. It was almost as if the basketball, hoop and Steve were alone in the auditorium, his concentration was so intense. Naturally outgoing, he enjoyed the glory that came to him after sinking the tough shot, over and over again.

Steve's success on the basketball court spilled over into other areas of his life. The girls recognized him as a winner and frequently crowded around him to praise him for the team's latest victory, and his contributions to it. Even the teachers seemed to keep up with the team's accomplishments – and Steve's.

Steve seemed to know instinctually that hard work paid off, and he applied the principle to his school work as well, earning good grades most of the time. He also inherited his father's handsome visage, which he noted with pleasure every time he carefully combed his thick wavy brown hair in the mirror. He'd smile at himself and say, "You handsome devil you," as he put his comb into his pant pocket to save it for later.

For a seventh grader, Steve was remarkably successful, making him the envy of some of his male classmates. Things were especially keen when he beat Ken Sanderson for class president a couple of days ago. Ken got excellent grades and was known for starting the school's first chess club. Some people said he'd demonstrated his leadership abilities and smarts, and that he was the natural choice for president. They'd even made some completely unjustified remarks about his not being a dumb jock. There was no way you could say Steve was a dumb jock, not with his As and Bs. Even if he didn't get all As like Ken, he was a lot more well rounded.

Steve was really just a popular all-around good guy, whose accomplishments were noted over and over. It happened so often that Steve was beginning to believe he was invincible, on the basketball court, and off.

Shortly after his victory as class president was announced, Ken came up to him to congratulate him.

“Hey Steve, I am happy for you man,” Ken said. “It couldn’t happen to a nicer guy. Well, except for me, of course.”

Ken smiled awkwardly. “You know Steve, I don’t mind helping out – if you want me to, that is,” he continued. “I’ve got lots of ideas I hoped to try.”

“Yeah well thanks, I have other officers,” Steve said. He threw his sweater over his shoulder and strode down the hall, without a second glance at Ken.

Ken was stunned and he wasn’t the only one. Ms. Gable, the student council moderator, who was quietly watching the conversation from inside her classroom, was stunned as well. She approached Ken, hoping to help him deal with the rejection she knew he was feeling.

“Would you mind stepping into my classroom for a minute, Ken,” she asked. “I want to talk to you about something.”

Unbeknownst to the candidates, the election was actually close, very close – so close Ms. Gable had not been sure she should announce the outcome. She had decided to trust her volunteer counters and give Steve the victory, even though he’d won by 10 of 150 total votes. But she was disturbed by what she had just witnessed – very disturbed.

“It is not customary for us to reveal the vote counts in the Student Council elections,” Ms. Gable began. “But I want you to know you did very well. I hope you are not discouraged by the outcome. I hope you are not discouraged from running for office again, or from helping the Student Council.”

She smiled.

“I guess you just saw what happened,” Ken replied. “I appreciate what you are trying to do, but do you really think my help is wanted? I have the feeling if I lived on another planet it would not be far enough away for SOME people.”

“Ken, I am in an awkward position. I did see what happened and I don’t believe you were treated properly. I will deal with Steve later, but right now I want to know your thoughts. I think you behaved admirably in offering your services. I believe you demonstrated the kind of quality leadership we need at Clark Middle School,” Ms. Gable continued. “I wish I could say the same for Steven.”

“In my role as moderator of the Student Council, I not only am responsible for overseeing the fairness of the election but the integrity of its members. Do you promise to keep what I tell you a secret, just between us, until I say differently?”

Ken was shocked. Ms. Gable was talking to him like an adult. Taking him into her confidence? What could this be about? The only way he could know was to agree to her terms.

“Of course, Ms. Gable,” he blurted out. “What is it?”

The words came tumbling out. Ms. Gable could scarcely contain herself. The election had been close, so close, that she had almost demanded a recount. But it was late and there was no reason to distrust the verdict delivered by the vote counters.

“Perhaps I made an error, Ken. I don’t know how to go back now unless ... you want a recount. I realize this is putting you on the spot, but if you want it, I could ask for a recount.”

“Uh.” The room was silent as Ken contemplated the decision he was being asked to make. It didn’t seem like a decision a seventh-grader going on eighth grader should have to make.

“Let me see if I get this straight. You want ME to decide if I want a recount,” he asked in disbelief.

“I want you to understand something here Ken,” Ms. Gable continued. “This is not like some political election where you can demand a recall or anything like that. This is between you ... and me. I think I made a mistake here. It may not affect the outcome. I really don’t know. But if it does, I would like to make it up to you. I want to know if you still want the job – if you really won, that is.”

“Heck yeah, I want the job. I ran for it, didn’t I? If anything, I want it more now to knock that guy off his throne,” Ken said. “I still can’t believe what he did.”

“Alright, Ken. This is what we are going to do. I will recount the votes personally and if there is a change I will talk with Principal Holcomb. He must agree if the results are to be overturned. In the meantime, mum’s the word, okay?”

“What if I blab,” Ken asked, eliciting a stern look from Ms. Gable.

“You’d look like a sore loser for questioning the election results, which already have been announced,” she said crisply.

“Gotcha.” Ken left the room, leaving Ms. Gable to her duties.

She shook her head from side to side sadly, wishing she’d recounted the votes the first time. If Steve were the true choice of the student body, she’d be battling his ego all next year. Luckily, she’d kept the ballots. She opened her desk drawer and removed a box containing the votes and began counting. As she approached the final votes, she felt excitement and dread. The outcome was Ken, 46; Steve, 45; Marie, 32; Justin, 15; and Karen, 12. She quickly recounted the votes, returned them to the box, and headed to see Principal Holcomb. He was as disturbed as Ms. Gable when he learned the news.

“Ms. Gable, I do wish you had done a recount before all this happened. But I understand you had no reason to doubt the outcome of your volunteers. You promised a recount to Ken and I stand by you on that,” Principal Holcomb said.

“I wish we could just declare there was an error, but I don’t think it is fair when the difference is one vote. We must have a runoff election – as distasteful as that may be.”

“A runoff for eighth grade president,” Ms. Gable asked rhetorically. She was almost as stunned as she had been when she overheard Steve and Ken’s conversation. “We’ve never had a runoff as long as I’ve been here.”

“Nor as long as I have been here. I’ll make the announcement at the end of the day,” Principal Holcomb concluded. “The final election will be in one week. We will not tell anyone how close the election was. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes, of course,” Ms. Gable replied.

“If one of the candidates wins by 10 or less votes, you Ms. Gable, will decide who the winner is. And no more is to be said of it. Understood?”

Ms. Gable sighed in relief, looked straight into Principal Holcomb’s brown eyes, and said: “Yes sir. Thank you very much.”

The campaign was especially heated considering the turn of events, but Ms. Gable cautioned both candidates they must not resort to name calling, insults or anything which would tarnish each other’s reputations. Failure to do so, she warned, would result in immediate disqualification. So the days passed by with many promises being made, more than any eighth grader could ever deliver, no matter how well intentioned. When the verdict was in, Ken had made a resounding victory, apparently garnering many of Marie, Justin’s and Karen’s votes.

Although Steven had many fans from helping his team win the basketball championship, the memory of the team’s victory had faded somewhat. The school’s Chess Club had recently been named first place in the district’s contest. It was heading towards state competition and there was quite a bit of excitement about that, at least among some of the students.

Steve had a hard time adjusting to his status as a loser, but Ken offered to let him run the Fundraising Committee.

“I’d like to try to raise money to redo the gym floor,” Ken explained. “I thought you might have a special interest in that.”

Steve remembered, with remorse, how he’d treated Ken. Now Ken was offering him a job, when he wasn’t willing to do the same for Ken. And he was even giving him an opportunity to help the Basketball Team. Steve hesitated. He felt like an ant. Maybe an ant whose legs had been squashed.

“Na. It is nice of you Ken, real nice. But the student body has spoken. They don’t want me, so they’ll just have to do without me.”

“Suit yourself,” Ken shrugged, walking off and wondering whom else he could

recruit for the job.

Just as before the conversation was overheard, however. Word got around that Steve didn't want to help the basketball team and his popularity waned. When Steve tried to talk to the girls, they gave him the cold shoulder. It hurt the most when he was preparing to join Katie in the lunchroom, only to find Ken seated next to her, intently discussing her assignment as President's Advisor. They never had a President's Advisor before, but they sure did now, and Ken was making full use of the position to get to know Katie better. It sounded like she was advising him about the seventh grade class's first dance! He walked by quickly and settled in with some other friends, who finished eating quickly and left him sitting by himself. He was having that feeling of being an ant with squashed legs again and he didn't like it. So he decided he better study his math. He hadn't been doing so well at that either.

Steve's life seemed to be unraveling in other areas as well. He was frequently angry and stormed off when people tried to talk with him. Impatience seemed to rule him and his chores were frequently left unfinished. The same could be said for his homework. Although his good grades from earlier in the year succeeded in carrying him through most of his classes, he wound up in summer school math. He was no longer allowed to spend as much time practicing his basketball. He was truly miserable and he did not know why. He wasn't sure what had gone wrong, or why. As he sat at the desk in his room trying to do his math assignment, tears began falling from Steve's eyes and he sobbed and heaved, uncontrollably. Steve's mom stuck her head inside the door.

"Steve, what is wrong? Tell me what is wrong." She entered the room, gave him a hug and waited for him to explain.

"Aw, mom. Everything has gone wrong in my life and I don't even know why. I was doing great at school, great at basketball, I had lots of friends, and then I had to go and run for student council. Once I lost that, everything seemed to fall apart."

"It's not about Student Council, you know that. Do you remember what I told you when you ran in the runoff? It's not about winning, it's about serving. If you didn't win there, you can always serve somewhere else."

She thought for a moment.

"Everything we have is a gift from God, Steve, and we need to give him credit for our successes. Have you prayed about this?"

"Well, no. I don't like to pray much. We go to church."

"You do know, I trust, that God can fix things for you. Don't you think he was behind things going so well before? Why don't you ask him if you did something wrong?" His mom left the room to give him time to think and pray.

Steve kind of felt warm inside as he guiltily remembered how he'd treated Ken when he'd offered to work with the Student Council. He remembered his mother's words about serving. To Steve, winning was another chance at power, to prove his value and make others like him. It had never been about serving. He also realized he'd taken credit for all the successes he had, after all he'd worked hard at basketball, and his studies. Well, heck, he even worked hard to keep well groomed, stopping to check himself in the mirror frequently throughout the day! But his effort had not been enough now. He couldn't even control his emotions like he used to. It felt like God closed the curtain on his life.

Steve decided to pray, like he'd never prayed before. He surrendered his life and circumstances to God and asked God to forgive him for not recognizing and crediting him for the successes he'd had in life. He ended with a declaration of trust that God would make things work out the best for him, whatever that was. He wiped the tears from his face and went to the bathroom only to see himself as a wreck in the mirror. He washed his face and carefully combed his hair. Just then the telephone rang and it was Katie, asking Steve if he would reconsider his decision not to head the Fundraising Committee.

“Steve, I hope you don't think I'm being too forward. Ken did say he asked you before, but I plan to be working closely with that committee and would really appreciate your help. We should have someone from the basketball team involved and you are the likely choice.”

“When you put it that way, Katie, how can I refuse?” Steve replied, putting aside his feelings of rejection. This job was starting to sound good, after all.

“Okay, I'll put you down. Talk to you later, Stevie.”

It was a start. Things weren't back to normal, but they were on the upswing and Steve had God to thank. He returned to his room and thanked God for what he was doing. Then he did his homework so he could play basketball later.

kkkkkkk

Also available on Smashwords are:

Fast Track to Victory, A Christian Guidebook, a 40-lesson devotions book aimed at new and young Christians. ***Fast Track to Victory*** teaches the biblical principles that set us free to live a victorious Christian life. You learn how to truly love and forgive others, why its important to set aside pride, how to deal with tragedy and death and lots lots more. *Fast Track to Victory* also will encourage you to spend time regularly with God, walking in his victory. Buy now at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/16757>

Making Choices: life is Like Acorns, a children's Bible study aimed at 5 to 10 year olds, is about a baby squirrel named Peepsy. Peepsy's mama teaches him

how to hunt for acorns; Peepsy learns sometimes acorns look good to eat, but they are rotten, or the shells are empty. He learns things are not always what they appear to be. Children learn God judges our hearts – and not by appearances. This book is intended to be read with a parent, grandparents, Sunday school teacher, or similar caregiver. Buy now at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/28634>

What You Should Know About Self Publishing is a primer for all interested in self publishing. ***What You Should Know About Self Publishing*** will help you develop your book idea into a salable book. It includes tips about book research, illustration, printing, and marketing to help you avoid costly mistakes. Buy now at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/32043>