

## Hiking in the Gilboa November, 2005

Preface: Yaeli Li-Or- is a strikingly “yofi” beautiful, 55 year old “gingy” (redhead) who was herself in the IDF- Israeli Defence Force when her fiancé was killed in the Yom Kippur war. He was a dream of a man. She never married, never had kids, but has had an amazing life... and she’s been with some amazing men ever since. Some of them quite “famous” in certain circles. I am very close to her because we made a connection when she looked after kids in our Kibbutz when I was last here. She had been a Special Units training officer in the Army for a number of years and even trained Dov Goldvwan who lead the successful raid on Entebbe Uganda. She and another girl were born on the same day and were the first two grandchildren born on this Kibbutz to parents who were offspring of founders from 1922. She is a true Sabra - slang for Israeli born. Prickly on the outside tender inside, just like the desert plant here. “Li-Or” means “Light comes from me” or “Radiant one”, an apropos name as you will see.

### **The Hike**

Seven of us, three of the guys that saved my ass in '73, Avi, Dov, Nitzi and four women, Dani, Maera, Ofra, and Sharon, took two old army jeeps up to the Gilboa at the eastern end of the Yisrael Valley overlooking the Jordan river... to a spectacular desert oasis in the middle of bunch of hills. We hiked up and were so happy not to see anybody. No tourists, no

soldiers. No one. It’s very hot and sunny and the rest of the gang headed along an easier waddi which gets to the oasis quicker. Near the end I say I feel like taking a slightly longer route through some rare eucalyptus trees on a small ridge on the valley edge... I like the view and I know no one ever comes that way. I wanted to be with myself for a half hour anyway so I head off alone.

I see another red fox mom with two kits (as in the orchard story) and slowly continue staying out of site. As I come along a narrow ledge I see a red fox, probably male, laying on a larger, beautiful Jerusalem coloured stone and creep closer to take a photo. Then the main of gingy hair is tossed side to side brushing over the stone. It’s a woman I realize and hesitate because I realize she’s topless on the other side of the rock. “Li-Or Golani! Is that you?” I say, because somehow in all of remote Israel, I know it is by the hair toss. “Yes Read, (she knew my Canadian Hebrew accent) I’m naked but come on over anyway”. This is not a problem for me as you may imagine.

She has been to Vancouver twice to stay with her sister in Lynn Valley. She’s been once to Wreck with me as a guide and once alone. We have never been lovers. Just very close.

Anyway Li-Or and I are sitting there naked and it is just glorious, in fact I sit on the rock and play with her hair. She notice my ‘Thingy’ and says “When and where did he get the

nose ring?” And I say, “Early July, London, Camden Market”.

Now Camden Market is sort of the recent version of Carnaby 1960’s. I’ve only been once in my life and so has she. I’ve not seen her for 6 years. There are numerous piercing places there. She says, “Who did it?” I say, “Some guy named Clem and I’ve never actually known a Clem!” She says, “And he’s Austrian. Funny name for an Austrian?” I say, “How do you know that?” She says, “He pierced my tongue two years ago July?” I said, “Your tongue? Isn’t that a sexual piercing?” She says, “Your Prince Albert? Isn’t that a gay sex thing?” I said, “Touché... then lied “I didn’t know that until naked with all my gay friends later and they got excited.”

Of course all of this is in biblical Hebrew which must sound pretty funny to the god of Abraham up in the hills of Gilboa.

We were having such a good time catching up when I suddenly said the others would be missing me. She said, “Where are they?” I told her at the spring by now. She picked up her Cobra two way, and called her buddy, Fonz who was there sunning and swimming, and told him to tell the rest we were lost and to forget about us.

Then she pulled out a small flask of some Sabra ‘cactus’ liqueur took a swig and handed it to me. Then she offered me a stub of some weed to which I said, “Naaa, I’m high just being

here in the Gilboa and with you AND Myself!”

Mystically, which I’m used to with her, she said, “You need to smoke this and tell me who is your very bright ‘buxomish’ blond haired friend from far away, maybe Canada, who has just made a career altering change in her life”.

Pretty quickly, I figure it must be Cosima, who was the mother of my son’s best buddy Jeff and was married to the biggest asshole Nathan Davinsky asshole UBC Math asshole. She divorced him, left Vancouver and went back to help run her family winery in Germany. Jeff is very good with his mom leaving his dad.

Then Yaeli says, “She is very athletic and that mental stamina is going to be very important where she is going. She has the physical toughness to endure, but she must begin to realize that she needs to learn to draw on the mental stamina when needed in a different way because it is not the same as when she was fired up physically. Then the mental stamina followed but where she is going is very different”.

Now Cosima is very bright, but she is not athletic. She is not going anywhere, she’s been there for a while. I said “how buxom?” She said, “average bigger. But she’s a little skinny”

I said, “How blond?” She said, “Dirty blond, light brown”.

Cosima’s hotmail is something

like norma\_jean38E and she has Aryan blond hair so it can’t be her I thought.

If it’s not Cosima, I’m thinking, who could it be. She said, “Smoke. It will come to you”. We put on our sandals and began to walk towards the oasis. When we got there everyone was laying around, smoking hash or swimming naked so we just took off our sandals and joined them.

Gawdess declare I love these guys, not ‘cuz they saved my ass... but because they have done so much with their lives since then. Avi was the first guys jew to come out for the army. The kids tell me he is a great teacher too. Dov, well the Entebi thing says it all. Now he’s an organic herb gardener and his wife runs a great herb restaurant on Kibbutz Safar. Nitzi is retired Army but is still actively involved in everything at Kibbutz Ginegar and loves to fly his small plane.

I just took a look around at all the love, took a toke and dove into the cool spring pond. It is so delicious to dive down and gulp clear spring water. Not everyone is comfortable doing so, and I have to concentrate just a little, then suddenly I thought, “Jabbs is going away! she got a posting! I wonder where?” Jabbs is Karen Abbs, captain of our women’s rugby team for 12 years, who helped my daughter break into the team and a kindred soul mate of mine.

Li-Or, is just one of those rare people I know, like my long

gone great-gran, who has a gift. Over the years she has told me things immediately I come across her. When she got off the plane 6 years ago, Cath had just told me, 4 hours before, we were splitting up. No one knew. I was too embarrassed to call my family and was ignoring her boxing day, final solution that we split after 20 years, “knowing” it would pass. Yaeli walked up, put her pack down, hugged me and said, “I’m sorry about Cath and you but the pain will pass.”

I picked Li-Or up for her sister plus she wanted to go straight to Wreck. Yes! Her first time to Wreck naked was a nice warmish 12 degree boxing day noon. It was glorious; she had just come from 20 degree Israel and her nipples as she said were a bit perky as I recall.

A later response when I sent this to Karen ‘jabbs’ Abbs was, “I’m in Germany training to do field work with Medicine Sans Frontiere in India”. I gave Karen the message from Li-Or. How Li-Or knows these things I know not. I just know she has this gift. This is Israel.

Amazing woman. True story.

p.s. Her fiance was my commanding officer who was blown away as he lead us from the copter during ‘73 war. I was left at 21.5 to command.