

Four Folds:
Pride, Perseverance, Principle and Perception
By K. D. Harris

FOUR FOLDS:

Pride

Principle

Perseverance

Perception

By K.D. Harris

Copyright 2018 K. D. Harris

Smashwords Edition

Smashwords Edition, License Notes

This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This eBook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to your favorite eBook retailer and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[All That Matters: Pride](#)

[For If They Fall...: Perseverance](#)

[Kevin's New World: Principle](#)

[Turbulence: Perception](#)

[About the Author](#)

All That Matters

Derrick walked down the desert road. His tanned neck and arms stung from sun's rays. Sweat rolled down every part of him. The occasional passing vehicle brought a welcomed movement of air that, while still hot, gave his body a subtle reprieve. He stretched his arm toward the road, thumb erect. Several cars zoomed by before he heard the sound of tires crushing the gravel behind him.

"Where you headed son?" said the old man.

Derrick scanned the old man's face: *shades, a scraggly beard, and bad teeth. He's definitely not a cop. But, there's something about his smile. Doesn't matter, "Yucca Valley."*

"Hop in, I'm headed that way."

Derrick lowered his pack, opened the latch of the old Caprice, and sat. "Thank you." Though it was faint, the skunky aroma of Indica invaded his nostrils.

The old man nodded and accelerated down the highway. "What's in the bag?"

Derrick looked down at the pack he carried, and then back to the old man.

"I suppose it's not my business. I'm Aaron."

"Derrick."

"Nice to meet you. We're about forty-five minutes out."

The old man paused and scanned Derrick's face before turning his attention back to the road. "You want a joint?" Aaron reached into the breast pocket of his loud colored shirt to produce a spliff. He braced the steering wheel with his knees, reached down to the ash tray, grabbed the lighter in his hands and brought the spliff to life.

Derrick watched the old man inhale, exhale, and hold back a cough. The smell was like a Siren's song to him. Intoxicating. It called him. His body trembled as he resisted and looked away. "No thanks."

"Suit yourself." Aaron returned his hand to the steering wheel and continued to drive in silence.

It was evening when the two pulled up to the Circle K next to a motel that had clearly seen its better days long ago.

"Thanks for the ride." Derrick shook Aaron's hand, stepped out the Caprice, and shut the door. The car sped off. *Only a few blocks left.* He had a few hours to kill before starting the last leg of his journey. He crossed the street. Franky's was empty save the waitress, cook, and two men at the bar who had already fixed their gaze on him.

"Sit anywhere, Honey." The waitress motioned to the booths that lined the front facing windows of the diner. "Be right with you."

Derrick sat, reached into his pocket, and pulled out a photograph.

"Pretty lady." One of the men, previously at the bar, now stood just over Derrick's shoulder.

Derrick breathed deep, but said nothing.

"The things I'd do..."

"Stop, Grady," the waitress said.

"What's in the pack?" Grady grabbed the pack from the booth. His actions triggered a violent response.

Derrick rose, photograph in his hand, and punched the man who smacked his head on the bar as he fell.

The second man at the bar rushed to Grady's side.

"Get out of here!" The waitress ran to the diner's phone.

Derrick grabbed his pack and sprinted out of the door. His heart pounded. He looked at the photograph one last time. *I'm coming baby.* He rushed down the street.

He could hear the sound of children growing louder as approached the decorated house. Pink and silver balloons with "Happy Birthday" written across them lined the walkway. Derrick rang the doorbell.

A woman answered. "Welcome..." As she looked at Derrick her smile waned. "You look like shit, D."

"Daddy!" A little girl pushed pass the woman, arms stretched toward Derrick.

"I wouldn't miss my baby girl's birthday for the world." Derrick knelt and hugged her. He let her go and grabbed his pack. "I have a present for you."

The little girl's hands covered her mouth and her eyes widened.

He pulled out a blue teddy bear.

She grabbed the bear and squeezed it tight. "Thanks Daddy."

"Go show everyone your present, Baby," said Derrick. The sound of police sirens grew in the distance.

The little girl darted from the doorway back to the hustle and bustle of her balloon filled extravaganza.

"Those are for your aren't they? D, your such a screw up." The woman said.

"Tell my baby girl I love her." Derrick turned and walked away from the house.

The woman scowled at him. As he walked further from the house, and the sirens grew closer, she said, "I will."

For If They Fall...

With a turn of a knob, Nick Jonas was silenced mid chorus and replaced by the sounds of squeaking brakes, several honks, and a man three cars away screaming at who knows what. *Is this it?* The leather crunched as Derrick gripped the steering wheel tightly and let out a long sigh. The green exit sign that normally marked relief gave him no comfort. After pulling into his driveway he placed the vehicle in park, laid his head against the head rest and closed his eyes. *I can't do this anymore.* Taking a deep breath he lifted the door handle and exited the vehicle. Derrick's saunter to the front door was halted when the image of a small box on the porch came into view. His eyes were glued to the box as he closed the door. *El Paso.* He only knew of one person from El Paso, and that person was dead.

He used his keys to cut the tape just enough to rip the lid open. Inside, there was a ring and a card which read, *It was his most favorite thing. Regards, Sarah.* It was modest by Naval Academy standards. The ring was comprised of a white gold band and a mother of pearl stone flanked by two diamonds. Inside there was a portion of a scripture which read, "For if they fall... Eccl 4:10." He began to breathe heavily. His cheeks and ears became hot and his nose began to sniffle. He clutched the ring tight in his hand and his watering eyes stared off in the distance as an explosion of memories filled his head.

Angel Mendez was one part troublemaker, two parts loyal friend, but a leader in every way. His charismatic nature and relentless work ethic earned him the respect of his fellow Marines. Upon his discharge, Angel was accepted to Baylor University. On the eve of his departure, Derrick met briefly with him.

"You've come a long way," said Derrick.

"Thank you sir." Angel began to smile.

"Life isn't so regimented on the outside and you'll have to be strong to survive." Derrick looked down at the ring on his hand. "You don't know much about me. Like you, I came from a pretty rough background. I decided that I wanted more in life." He slipped the ring off his finger and placed it in the palm of his hand. "This ring represents my journey. Effort and hard work pays off. It wasn't easy. In fact, it was downright hard. But, I did it. I want this ring to symbolize that for you. Don't ever give up!" Derrick handed the ring to Angel.

Angel gazed at the ring. His blinking increased and the smile that had previously been so prominent transitioned to him biting his lower lip. Angel took the ring and held it in his

fist, raising it to wipe his wet cheek. Placing the ring on his finger, Angel said, "I won't let you down Sir."

"I know you won't." Derrick extended his hand and Angel shook it. "Now go. Do big things!"

"Thank you sir, for everything." Angel turned, picked up his two duffle bags and placed them in the trunk of a waiting taxi. He looked back one last time, and after a deep breath, he smiled.

Derrick's memories continued.

Once he was discharged, he remembered the late nights spent tutoring Angel through Chemistry and Calculus via Skype.

"I can't do this Sir," Angel said.

"Yes you can. Now, let's run through this problem again." Derrick refused to let Angel give up. No matter how many times Derrick tried to get Angel to call him by his name, he refused.

"You'll always be, Sir, to me," Angel said.

Angel was in his third year at Baylor when it happened. While visiting his cousin, he pulled out a 9mm pistol and shot himself in the head.

Derrick snapped back to reality. His breathing returned to normal. *For if they fall, one will lift up the other.* His grip loosened and he put the ring on. He began to smile. *I can do this.* He looked up and in a whisper said, "Thank you Angel."

Kevin's New World

"Damn it, Tony. We're obligated to do this." The bottle of Captain Morgan shook and slid a few inches as Dr. Kevin Moran's hands slammed down on the small glass table. His face grew more and more red. "If we don't act now, you know what they'll do. Einstein, Nobel, Galston, Oppenheimer, the freaking Wright Brothers, all of them contributed great things to society and all of their contributions were quickly turned into weapons used to show who has the bigger stick. We can't just sit idle and let history repeat itself." He flopped down in the patio chair, relieved the top button of his fitted white shirt, and loosened his tie.

On the opposite side of the table, Dr. Anthony Santos sat captivated by the bottle of white rum now resting and still. This wasn't the first time he had seen Kevin's anger flare. He once watched Kevin knock a Program Manager's block off for referring to test subjects as pin pricked monkeys. That was Kevin: never afraid of a fight and always preferring fisticuffs to diplomacy. However, this time, Kevin wouldn't be using his fist. Moreover, the target of his anger wouldn't be the meaty flesh of a cheek.

"Tony?" Kevin's eyebrows rose, relieved of their tension. He lowered his eyes to the bottle of Captain Morgan and exhaled deeply. "Tony, we started this together. I need you with me on this."

In the distance, parked cars lined the curbside of the steep hill named Macross street. The glow of the setting sun crowned the top of the street like a halo. Tony rose from his chair. He broached the glass doorway into the hotel room and stopped short of the mirror mounted across from the bed. Turning back toward the patio entrance he said, "I promise to work for a better world, where science and technology are used in socially responsible ways."

"I remember the Oath, Tony..." Kevin looked down and away. He clenched his fists and stood up.

"...I will not use my education for any purpose intended to harm human beings..."

"All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Kevin snatched the Captain Morgan from the table and turned to face his old friend. "We don't have much time."

"Kevin, we created the nanites to give movement to those who are paralyzed: to eradicate the notion of being physically handicapped. But, you want to use it as a weaponized form of telekinesis. How is this any different than what the government

intends to do?" Tony's voice was more stern. The lines in his forehead became more prominent. He turned away from the mirror and focused on Kevin. "Maybe we opened Pandora's Box. Maybe the nanites should be destroyed. Maybe that would be better for mankind instead of we, the select few, playing god."

"No. No. Tony, we could use the nanites to guard the world against all those who seek to use science and technology as a means to threaten it. We could still give movement to those who are cripple. Hell, we could eliminate fossil fuels. With the nanites we could unleash a power the world has never seen. We could break the cycle, but we have to act now."

Tony walked back to the patio doorway. "The government would use all of its military might to bring you down. They're probably scrambling to figure out where the nanites are at this very moment. Innocent people would be hurt, Kevin. How could we live with that?"

The glow from the setting sun disappeared giving way to street lamps a few miles away. Tony stood in front of his friend and placed his hand on Kevin's shoulder. "I understand the reason for your fight, but there has to be another way. There is already too much suffering in the world. We don't need to cause more."

Kevin's eyes returned to the Captain Morgan in his right hand. He shook his head in silence for a few moments. "Please, Tony?" His voice was broken and barely above a whisper.

Tony squeezed Kevin's shoulder just a bit tighter. "Brother, I can't."

"I understand," Kevin replied. He lifted his head up revealing a slight smile. "Let's have a drink before we go," he said, lifting the bottle of white rum into the air.

"Sounds like a plan," Tony replied.

Kevin walked toward the mini bar located just beneath the Television, grabbed two glasses, and walked back toward Tony who stood inside the room beside the bed. He handed the glasses to Tony, twisted the cap off of the bottle, and poured a round into both of the glasses. He twisted the cap back onto the bottle and tossed it on the bed. He grabbed a glass from Tony.

Tony raised his glass and said, "To friendship."

Kevin raised his glass in return and said, "To a better future."

Tony placed the glass to his lips and swallowed the rum in a gulp.

Kevin lifted the glass to his mouth but stopped short. *I'm sorry, old friend.*

"What did you...". The glass became too heavy to hold. His arm fell to his side and the glass dropped to the floor, bouncing on the carpet. *What's happening?*

"This won't kill you. I was afraid you wouldn't come, but I know you'll see things my way in time. When you wake up, the world will be new. Sleep, old friend."

The darkness spread engulfing Tony's vision. He could hear Kevin. However, when he tried to speak his lips wouldn't move. His attempt to step forward failed and his body collapsed to the ground. For what seemed like an instant, the world faded to nothing; no sound, no sight, no feeling. A scream pierced the air. Tony's eyes opened. His body, still sluggish from the drug, stood up. Though his mind was still a bit cluttered, he headed to the open patio door. Fires were burning across the landscape like red squares on a checker's board, the black darkness in between. Armed military personnel moved swiftly from street to street gathering civilians at gun point. Cars burned. *A new world. Damn you, Kevin. Damn you.*

Turbulence

Three rows up, in the seats closest to the concourse window, a young man sits with his arm across the back of his lover's shoulders. He pulls his blond haired partner close. They kiss. She rests her head on the man's chest and he squeezes her more firmly.

Three rows back, Kevin exhales deeply. His head drops back against the seat before turning to Jason, eyes rolling, and head shaking. "Look at them," Kevin whispers. "Can you imagine what all these people will think if we kiss like that right now?"

Jason's eyes meet Kevin's and he smiles. Mickey Mouse ears are slanted on his bald head, a memento from their vacation. He shrugs and opens his mouth moving his tongue rapidly in and out like a snake which culminates in him licking his lips and laughing.

"You're such a butt-face," Kevin says.

Without a word, Jason smiles and turns his attention back to the concourse window to watch the planes taxi, park, take-off, and land.

Kevin laughs, but he doesn't turn away. It isn't a chiseled body or superior intellect that makes him appreciate his partner. Those things faded long ago in a battle lost to fried chicken, World of Warcraft, and too many pints of Stella Artois. It's the way Jason communicates with Kevin without speaking, his protective nature, and the way he looks at him; that look that always says I love you.

Kevin's head leans towards Jason's shoulder but stops short. He straightens up and sighs as he joins Jason in plane watching. Though, his eyes keep returning to the couple, sitting and spontaneously sucking face. *I wish. I can't even touch my partner without the world's scrutiny and disgust.*

The passing thirty-two minutes eat away at Kevin's mental constitution. He tosses and turns in the uncomfortable chairs at gate twenty-three. The leather is loose and worn with no back support.

Because the seat bottom lacks rigidity, there is no way to lay across them. The boarding announcement from the flight attendant brings much needed relief. Kevin and Jason are one step closer to home.

"What seats are we in?" Kevin asks.

"24 A & B," Jason Replies. "Here we are." He lowers the collapsible handle on the couple's carry-on and places it into the overhead compartment.

Kevin makes his way into the window seat.

Jason sits beside him in the middle seat. "You sure you don't want to sit here?" Jason says.

Kevin replies, "Nope. The seat is all yours." He laughs. A pack drops into the empty seat next to Jason. Kevin's head snaps to the sound.

A tall man places his carry-on into the overhead compartment. He looks at Kevin and Jason briefly as he closes the overhead hatch. He releases the straps holding the top flap of his pack and takes out a bottle of water and the most current edition of the *American Conservative* and places them in the seat back in front of him.

Kevin's facial expression shifts. The lines in his forehead become more prominent and his eyes more focused. He turns to Jason,

then leans his head back against the head-rest. *Just great.* An elbow pokes Kevin's ribcage.

"It's okay." Jason moved his lips to form the words but did not speak them aloud. He nods.

Soon after, the plane is at cruising altitude. The seatbelt light disappears and a queue forms for the bathroom. Kevin fades in and out of consciousness. His head sinks forward only for him to wake mid fall and catch it. Jason's shoulder is a tempting resting place. However, he would not do it. Only one type of person reads a right winged magazine like that, and after such a happy vacation in the Magic Kingdom he has no desire to see the ugly side of anyone.

Eventually, Kevin places his forehead on the seat back in front of him and surrenders to the Sandman's embrace.

Following a ding in the cabin, the Captain's voice came over the intercom. "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, this is your Captain speaking. We are making our initial descent into Seattle. Unfortunately, the air at the lower altitude will be very choppy. For your safety, we will turn on the seat belt sign and ask that you return to your seats and buckle up. We thank you in advance for your patience. We'll have you through this in no time at all. Flight attendants, prepare the cabin for arrival."

The plane rumbles as it dips suddenly. Kevin's heart rate soars. *It's like a roller coaster. Think roller coaster.* The sudden drops increased in intensity and frequency. Kevin grips the arm rest tightly; the muscles in his arm flexing. His shallow breathing is heavy and apparent.

Jason places his hand over Kevin's, rubbing his thumb over his partner's. He says, "We're almost home, babe."

Kevin nods. He closes his eyes and takes deep breaths.

Releasing the arm rest, he grips Jason's hand; fingers intertwined.

He gave no care to what the man in the aisle seat was thinking. He gave no care to what anybody was thinking. In this moment, his partner is the only other person in existence. There is one final thud as the landing gear touches the runway. Kevin feels relief. He is still holding Jason's hand. He doesn't let go.

The seat belt sign vanishes. A chorus of metallic clanking fills the air as the passengers unbuckle their seat belts. Kevin releases Jason's hand and shifts his focus to their neighbor in the aisle seat.

"That was a rough one," says the man.

"Definitely," Jason replies.

"When I travel with my husband Stan, we avoid flying. Stan hates turbulence." The man says. "Couldn't help but hear that this is home for you two. Welcome home."

"Thank you," Kevin says. "Same to you."

About the Author

K. D. Harris is a novelist and screenwriter of Science Fiction and Fantasy. He holds a B.S.E in General Engineering from the United States Naval Academy and is currently pursuing a B.A. in Creative Writing for Entertainment at Full Sail University. Publications to his credit include "For If They Fall..." (*Down in the Dirty Magazine*, July 2018), and "Turbulence," (*The Corvus Review*, July 2018). He's served as an enlisted member of the United States Navy and a Commissioned Officer in the United States Marine Corps. He's currently a Fulfillment Center Manager at Funko, LLC. He believes in doing good for goodness sake and inspiring others to be the best version of themselves. A tattoo on his back pays tribute to the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "To know even one life can breathe easier because you have lived...". Follow K.D. Harris on twitter: <https://twitter.com/kazDhar>. Also follow his story *Reapers: The Apprenticeship of David Mancia* at <http://harrislegacy.com/>.