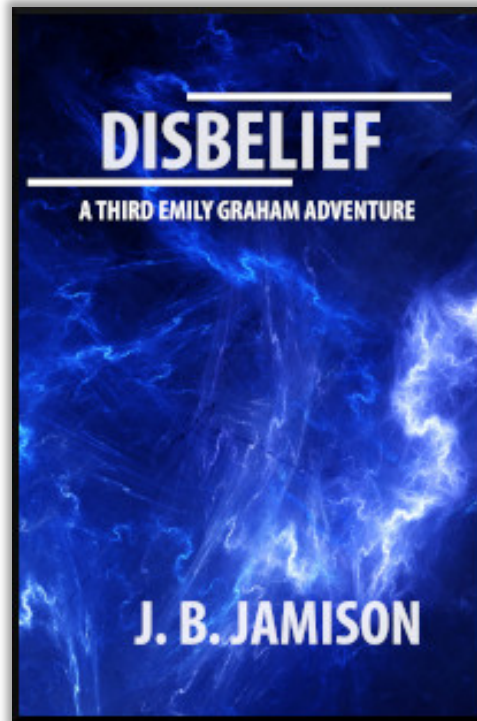


Disbelief

By J. B. Jamison

Discussion Questions



NOTE: This material will include information about the story. We recommend using this material after you have completed reading Disbelief.

We recommend first discussing the questions presented and then looking at the following pages where you will find J. B.'s response to each question.

More about Disbelief and J. B. Jamison at:

Website: johnbjamison.com

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Discussion Questions for Disbelief, by J. B. Jamison.

How realistic are the risks of the attacks that take place in the story? Do you think these are actual risks we face today? If so, what could or should be done about them?

What are your thoughts about the religious beliefs that are behind the attacks carried out by the radical groups?

What are your thoughts about the Senator and others from the political world regarding their role behind the attacks being carried out?

Is there a specific scene in Disbelief that stands out in your mind? What is that scene and why is it memorable for you?

After reading Disbelief, are there characters that stick in your mind? Which characters? What about those characters is memorable to you?

What are your thoughts about the group of powerful people in the VanHollings Group?

What other thoughts do you have about the story, the characters and the overall reading experience of Disbelief?

J. B.'s Responses to the Discussion Questions for Disbelief:

How realistic are the risks of the hacking attacks that take place in the story? Do you think these are actual risks we face today? If so, what could or should be done about them?

As I did research for Disbelief, I read a long list of documents from government sources, corporate sources, military sources, and had conversations with people in various roles related to the risks. Based on that research it appears that every situation described in the story is at least technically feasible. Some of the activities have been carried out by groups seeking to demonstrate the risks that do exist in the attempt to see that changes are made to make the world more secure.

I do stress that this story is "fiction", and the things that happen were possible because the attackers had unlimited time and resources. But based on the research I did, it appears that real risks like those in the story do exist.

What are your thoughts about the religious beliefs that are behind the attacks carried out by the radical groups?

It was not my intent to write Disbelief as any type of attack or criticism of anyone's religious faith. However, during my research, I came across groups who currently hold the same beliefs as the group led by Klass VanHollings. And, while none of the characters in Disbelief are based on real people, some of the behaviors and stated beliefs are based on materials created and openly presented by real people today.

What are your thoughts about the Senator and others from the political world regarding their role behind the attacks being carried out?

As I said, none of the characters, including Senator Murena, were based on any real person, living or dead. However, my research did show that people holding some of the same beliefs as some characters do exist and are taking part in various political roles in today's world. While no character is "real", the character "type" is, and their personal beliefs are the guiding force in how they perform their role.

Is there a specific scene in Disbelief that stands out in your mind? What is that scene and why is it memorable for you?

If I had to pick, I would go with two: the chapters about the death of Emily's father and Ronnie's Grandfather. It may be in part because I have experienced the loss of my father and grandfather, or perhaps it is because these were two people in the story who seemed to have real value to someone else. That kind of caring relationship is quite a contrast to the lives of the VanHollings and others.

After reading *Disbelief*, are there characters that stick in your mind? Which characters? What about those characters is memorable to you?

*As I researched and wrote *Disbelief*, I was increasingly alarmed by Klass VanHollings. One of my writing practices is to think of my characters as “real” people, and in Klass’s case, that became more and more disturbing. This was partly because much of Klass’ world view was based on materials I had found in newspapers and other sources as beliefs being openly expressed by others today. While Klass was not real, he represented a way of thinking I began to understand is very real indeed.*

What are your thoughts about the group of powerful men?

*In answering this question for *Disruption* I said that I’ve never been one of those “conspiracy theory” kind of guys, but that as I’ve watched the real world unfold over the past couple of years I am believing more and more that a group like this does exist. After writing *Disbelief*, I am even more convinced in the existence of groups who present a very real threat to the stability of what we have known as a democracy.*

What other thoughts do you have about the story, the characters and the overall reading experience of *Disbelief*?

Fear is a powerful thing. Fear can turn into frustration and then into anger. The result is that people feel less trust in others and in what they might do or might say. Fear can lead to the need to identify those who are believed to be a threat and to see them as “others”. Fear can also cause people to doubt what is true and what is fact, especially when those wanting the fear have the ability to manipulate the facts.

Fear empowers the few who feed the fear and destroys everyone else. Those who seek power and control, use fear to divide, while those who seek to encourage and enable others, work to overcome fear. We see both of these groups active in our world today. Unfortunately, some of those are groups proclaiming to be people of faith. Faith and fear are incompatible. Faith destroys fear and does not feed it.

To overcome and destroy fear we must ask the difficult questions, demand real answers, and have the courage to call a lie a lie. We must recognize those who benefit from the fear and shine the light of truth on them to show them for what they are. To overcome fear, we cannot follow those who feed it. We must think for ourselves.

We must think.