

# CITIZEN EXPLORER: THE ADVENTUROUS LIFE OF ZEBULON PIKE

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cumulative distance, because he wasn't trying to get into Guinness or to prove anything..No matter. He was a future-focused, focused man. The past is for losers. No, wait, humility is for losers. "The past is the teat that feeds those too weak to face the future." Yes, that was the line from Zedd that Junior had stitched on a needlepoint pillow..So they had cooked up this project, math and mayhem, geometry of limbs and branches, arboreal science and childish stunt, a test of strategy and strength and skill-and of the scary limits of nine-year-old bravado..Joey couldn't raise his head, couldn't turn more directly toward her ... because his spine had been damaged, perhaps severed, and he was paralyzed.."Can't pay us as well as Losen does. But we could live," Otter argued..Although their apartments were above the garage, back to back, each was served by a separate exterior staircase. As often as either man entered the other's domain, they might as well have lived hundreds of miles apart..No. Not exactly then. Not at the sight of the coin or the detective. He had felt this way at Vanadium's mention of the name that he, Junior, had supposedly spoken in his nightmare..The two men detached and rolled up the pleated green skirt that hung from the rectangular frame of the graveyard winch on which the casket was suspended. Green, rather than black, because Naomi loved nature: Junior had been thoughtful about the details of the service..He doubted that the singer had been Victoria Bressler, dead nurse, but he believed this was the same voice he'd heard on the telephone, back on the twenty-fifth of June, when someone purporting to be Victoria had called with an urgent warning for Bartholomew..On this chilly January night, no campers or fishermen had staked claims along the lake. Because the trees were far enough back to be lost in the night, the immediate shore and the pooled blackness that it encircled appeared as desolate as any landscape on a world without an atmosphere..With a portion of his profits from Tammy Bean's stock picks, Junior had bought a second painting by Sklent. Titled In the Baby's Brain Lies the Parasite of Doom, Version 6, it was so exquisitely repellent that the artist's genius could not be in doubt..Having used his body as a clapper in the bell of the Dumpster, Junior had struck a loud reverberant note that tolled like a poorly cast cathedral bell, echoing solemnly off the walls of the flanking buildings, back and forth through the fogbound night.."When I couldn't get enough nightclub and theater bookings for my magic act anymore ... I turned to gambling." "Maybe because we didn't want to be called witches," said Obadiah with a smile, "and give folks one more reason to hang us."..against the operating table. The lights had grown painfully bright, and the air had..The window was French with small panes, so Celestina couldn't simply break the glass and climb out..The Book of the Dark, written late in the time it tells of, is a compilation of self-contradictory histories, partial biographies, and garbled legends. But it's the best of the records that survived the dark years. Wanting praise, not history, the warlords burnt the books in which the poor and powerless might learn what power is..judging by the evidence, the nurse was home alone, but Junior raised his voice above the music and called out, "Hello? Is anyone here?"..around a long time yet, but women outlive men by several years. Actuarial tables aren't wrong."..Occasionally, when Junior returned home from a day of gallery hopping or an evening at a restaurant, Industrial Woman-the artist's title-scared away his mellow mood. More than once, he'd cried out in alarm before realizing this was just his prized Poriferan..Among Junior's many gifts, his ability to focus might have been the most important. Bob Chicane, his former instructor in matters meditative, had called him intense and even obsessive, following the painful incident involving meditation without seed, but intensity and obsession were false charges. Junior was simply focused..On the fourth floor, at Dr. Klerkle's suite, the hall door stood ajar. Past office hours, the small waiting room was deserted..NOT IN A MOOD to garden, but wearing the proper gloves, Junior clicked on the foyer light, the hall light, the kitchen light, and stepped around the clubbed-smothered-shot nurse, to the range, where he switched on the right oven, in which an unfinished pot roast was cooling, and the left oven, in which the dinner plates waited to be warmed. He cranked up a flame again under the pot of water that had been boiling earlier-and glanced hungrily at the uncooked pasta that Victoria had weighed and set aside..Since dealing with Victoria and the detective, Junior had taken pride in the fact that he'd kept his equanimity and, more important, his lunch. No acute nervous emesis, as he'd suffered following poor Naomi's death. Indeed, he had an appetite..With the salt and pepper shakers, Tom walked them through the why-I'm-not-sad-about-my-face explanation that he'd given to Angel ten days previously..He slapped her hands, knocking the sharpener and the pencil out of her grasp. They clattered against the window, fell onto the window-seat cushions..Junior discovered more tears than could have been found in ten thousand onions. His wife and his unborn baby. He had been willing to sacrifice his beloved Naomi, but maybe he would have found the cost too high if he had known that he was also sacrificing his first-conceived child. This was too much. He was bereft..The sign promised topless dancers. Although Junior had been in San Francisco for over a week, he had not yet sampled this avant-garde art form..Never had the familiar red Bicycle design of the U.S. Playing Card Company looked ominous before, but it was fearsome now, as strange voodoo veve or satanic conjuration pattern..The hospital was eerily quiet, except for the occasional squeak of rubber-soled shoes on the vinyl floor of the corridor..Junior hurried out of the kitchen and along the hallway to the front door. He ran silently, landing on his toes like a dancer. His natural athletic grace was one of the things that drew so many women to him..Edom marveled at Agnes's ability to rise above the past and to transcend so many years of torment. She was able to see the house as simple shelter, whereas to her brothers, it was-and always would be-the place in which their spirits had been shattered. Even living within sight of it would have been out of the question if they had been employed, with options..At home, after phoning her folks, Celestina made a ham sandwich. She ate a quarter of it. Then two bites of a chocolate croissant. One spoonful of butter pecan ice cream. Everything was without taste, more bland than Phimie's hospital food, and it cloyed in her throat..This Dry Sack-assisted effort at recollection, however, brought back to him one thing in addition to all the sweet lubricious images of Seraphim naked. The voice of her father. On the tape recorder. The reverend droning on and on as Junior pinned the devout daughter to the mattress..In the top drawer, in addition to the expected items, Tom Vanadium found a gallery brochure for an art exhibition. In the hooded flashlight beam, the name Celestina White seemed to flare off the glossy paper as though printed in reflective ink..What good was she to anybody, what good could she ever hope to be, if she couldn't even save her little sister?.This was the same woman who had been stripping the second bed when Celestina arrived earlier. Now she was here to remake the first..Simon Magusson, lacking family, had left his estate to Tom. This came as a surprise. The sum was so considerable that even though Tom was on a dispensation from his vows, which included his vow of property, he was uncomfortable with his fortune. His comfort was quickly restored by contributing the entire inheritance to Pie Lady Services. They had been brought together by two extraordinary children, by the conviction that Barty and Angel were part of some design of enormous consequence. But more often than not, God weaves patterns that become perceptible to us only over long periods of time, if at all. After the past three eventful years, there were now no weekly miracles, no signs in the earth or sky, no revelations from burning bushes or from more mundane forms of communication. Neither Barty nor Angel revealed any

new astonishing talents, and in fact they were as ordinary as any two young prodigies can be, except that he was blind and she served as his eyes upon the world..Babies of unwed mothers-especially of dead unwed mothers, and especially of dead unwed mothers whose fathers were ministers unable to endure public mortification-were routinely put up for adoption. Since Seraphim had given birth here, the baby would be-no doubt already had been-adopted by a San Francisco-area family..During the course of this momentous day, he had employed Zedd learned techniques to channel his hot anger into a red-hot rage. Now, without any conscious effort on his part, rage grew into molten-white fury..At the front door of the funeral home, as Panglo was showing him out, Jacob leaned close. "Joe Lampion didn't have any gold teeth." On this morning in March, minutes after the pie caravan had departed, Edom got his Ford Country Squire out of the garage and drove to the nursery, which opened early. Spring was drawing near, and much work needed to be done to make the most of the rosarium that Joey Lampion had encouraged him to restore. He happily contemplated hours of browsing through plant stock, tools, and gardening supplies..Koko skidded to a halt, perplexed, looked left, looked right, floppy ears lifted slightly to catch any sound of Mistress Mary..That evening, he was filled with a greater sense of adventure than he'd felt since arriving in the city from Oregon. Consequently, he treated himself to three glasses of a superb Bordeaux and a filet mignon in the same elegant hotel lounge where he had dined on his first night in San Francisco, almost three years earlier.. "Sure they do," Barty said. "But I think Maria embroidered the birds just because they were pretty." His request felt like an assault. Agnes almost rocked backward as though struck.. "It was. But maybe that's not the whole story. Anyway, we know the usual poses these guys strike, the attitudes they think are deceptive and clever. Most of them are so obvious, they might as well just stick their willy in a light socket and save us a lot of trouble. This, however, is a new approach. Tends to make you want to believe in the poor guy." Otter was reluctant to answer. He had to like Hound, but didn't have to trust him. "Shape-changing," he mumbled at last.. "I mean it. You have a lot of responsibilities here. Barty. Pie Lady Services. People who depend on you. Friends who love you. When you came on board with me, mister, you bought into a whole lot more than you can walk away from." "Who...who're you?" Junior rasped, still badly rattled by the nightmare and by Vanadium's presence, but quick-witted enough to stay within the clueless character that he had been playing..Opening his eyes, still not daring to meet Victoria's gaze, Junior knew she had registered and properly interpreted his response to her seductive spooning. She had frozen, the utensil in midair, and her breath had caught in her throat. She was thrilled..She figured that she could stay home, devoting herself to Barty, for perhaps three years before she would be wise to find work..After a while, a voice broke the vacuum-perfect silence. Bob Chicane. His instructor..In his mind's eye, Junior saw the coin in transit of the blunt fingers, moving more swiftly than previously because its passage was lubricated by blood.. "If I ever get there, I'll be back," she promised the gathered family. "Imagine how much we'll have to talk about. Maybe I'll even get some new pie recipes from Over There." Maria Gonzalez brought rice casseroles, homemade tamales, and chile rellenos. Daily, Jacob made cookies and brownies, always a new variety, and in such volume that Maria's plates were heaped with baked goods each time they were returned to her..Junior poured half the vodka over the corpse, splashed some around other parts of the kitchen, and spilled the last on the cook top, where it trickled toward the active burner. This was not an ideal accelerant, not as effective as gasoline, but by the time he threw the bottle aside, the spirits found the flame..He traveled prairies and mountains and valleys, passed fields rich in every imaginable crop, crossed great forests and wide rivers. He walked in fierce storms when thunder crushed the sky and lightning tore it, walked in wind that skinned the bare earth and sheared green tresses from trees, and walked also in sun-scrubbed days as blue and clean as ever there had been in Eden..Instead, her father asked, "Is this emotion talking, Celie, or is this brain as much as heart?" "When you cut Naomi's string, you put an end to the effects that I her music would have on the lives of others and on the shape of the future. YOU struck a discord that can be heard, however faintly, all the way to the farthest end of the universe." The ninth card was a jack of spades. Maria called it a knave of and at the sight of it, her bright smile dimmed..The white padded eye patches rebuffed her, and she realized how profoundly the boy's double enucleation would affect how easily she could read his moods and know his mind. Here was a littler loss until now shadowed by the greater destruction. Denied the evidence of his eyes, she would need to be better at noting and interpreting nuances of his body language-also changed by blindness-and his voice, for there would be no soul revealed by hand-painted, plastic implants..2000, the Year of the Dragon, gives way without a roar to the Year of the Snake, and after the Snake comes the Horse. Day by day the work is done, in memory of those who have gone before us, and embarked upon work of her own, young Mary is out there among you. For now, only her family knows how very special she is. On one momentous day, that will change..Being blind had few consolations, but Barty found that not being able to look at his uncles' files and books was one of them. In the past, he never really, in his heart, wanted to see those pictures of dead people roasted in theater fires and drowned bodies floating in flooded streets, but a few times he peeked. His mom would have been ashamed of him if she'd discovered his transgression. But the mystery of death had an undeniable creepy allure, and sometimes a good Father Brown detective story simply didn't satisfy his curiosity. He always regretted looking at those photos and reading the grim accounts of disaster, and now blindness spared him that regret..This guy was spooky. Junior was beginning to think that the detective's unorthodox behavior wasn't a carefully crafted strategy, as it had first seemed, but that Vanadium was a little wacky..Glancing at the plump pie in Edom's hands, the gentleman replied to Agnes in a musical yet gravelly voice worthy of Louis Armstrong: "You must be the lady Reverend Collins told me about." "Sure. That's how it works with everything. Everything that can happen does happen, and each different way of happening makes a whole new place." "I think we could wind up as crazy as he is, if we tried long enough to puzzle out his twisted logic." In addition to these scavengers, another presence was here, unseen but not unfelt. The chill of this invisible entity pierced Junior to the marrow: the stubborn, vicious, psychotic, prickly-bur spirit of Thomas Vanadium, maniac cop, not satisfied to haunt the house in which he'd died, not ready yet to seek reincarnation, but instead pursuing his beleaguered suspect even after death, capering--to paraphrase Sklent like an invisible, filthy, scabby monkey here on this city street, in bright daylight..Reverend White's murder received significant coverage throughout the nation, especially in West Coast papers, because of its perceived racial motivation and because it involved the burning of a parsonage..As though Amelia Earhart, the long-lost aviatrix, had reached out of her twilight zone and snared the two bits, no tumbling coin glinted in the air above the desk.. "I'm a healer, not a prosecutor. I'm not in the habit of making accusations, especially not against my own patients." He closed his eyes to know the kitchen as Barty knew it. The fine aromas, the musical clink of spoons, the tinny rattle of pans, the liquid swish of a stirring whisk, the heat from the ovens, the women's voices: Gradually, denying himself sight, he was aware of his other senses sharpening.. "Three hundred and ninety-six of the dead were children under the age of ten," Jacob continued. "A passenger train was tumbled off the tracks, killing twenty.

Another train with tank cars got smashed around, and oil spilled across the flood waters, ignited, and all these people clinging to floating debris were surrounded by flames, no way to escape. Their choice was being burned alive or drowning." He stepped to the front door, which was framed by curtained side lights. He drew one of the curtains aside and peered out.. "Maybe I won't have to try as hard as I think, because you make it so easy, Barty." Since the cops believed that Junior accidentally shot himself while searching for a nonexistent burglar, he was already in their book as an idiot. If he tried to explain how Vanadium had tormented him with the quarter, and how a quarter turned up, of all places, in his cheeseburger, they would figure him for a hopeless hysteric.. Tom Vanadium checked the small wastebasket next to the sink and discovered a wad of bloody Kleenex. The crumpled wrappers from two Band-Aids.. Eleven years later, a few months after marrying Agnes, Joey mysteriously invited Edom to accompany him on "a little drive," and took his bewildered brother-in-law to a nursery. They returned home with fifty pound bags of special mulch, jars of plant food, and an array of new tools. Together, they stripped the sod from the side yard, turned the soil, and prepared the ground for the rich variety of hybrid starter plants that were delivered the following week.. Although the piano was at some distance and the restaurant was a little noisy, Kathleen recognized the tune at once. She looked up from her veal, her eyes full of merriment.. A sense of fellowship in extraordinary times drew everyone closer, to hug, to touch, to share the wonder. For a long moment, even in the symphony of the storm, in spite of all the plink-tink-hiss-plop-rattle that arose from every rain-beaten work of man and nature, they seemed to stand here in a hush as deep as Tom had ever heard.. They had not come to Junior yesterday in their grief, if in fact they had thought to grieve.. The first time, she required a pencil, paper, and nine minutes to calculate the number of elapsed seconds since an event that had occurred 125 years, six months, and eight days in the past. Her answer differed from his, but while proofing her numbers, she realized that she had forgotten to factor in leap years.. Once, he had been a superb driver. For the past decade, his performance behind the wheel depended on his mood.. Frequently, these days, she found herself explaining aspects of life to Barty that she hadn't expected to discuss for years to come. She wondered how she could make him understand this: Life can be so sweet, so full, that sometimes happiness is nearly as intense as anguish, and the pressure of it in the heart swells close to pain.. He ran gasping, praying, feet slapping the concrete sidewalk, frightening birds out of the purple brightness of blossom-laden jacarandas and out of Indian laurels, terrorizing a tree rat into a lightning sprint up the bole of a phoenix palm. The few people he encountered reeled out of his way. Brakes shrieked as he crossed intersections without looking both ways, risking cars and trucks and rhinoceroses.. ANGEL WAS DRESSED in as much red as the devil himself: bright red shoes, red socks, red leggings, red skirt, red sweater, and a knee length red coat with a red hood.. Paul set the nightstand down but waited, ready to shove the furniture into the stairwell if the swaddled gunman dared return.. "Veal fit for kings," said their waiter, delivering the entrees, and one taste confirmed his promise.. 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All the pies, all the things you do-that's betting on life. And now you've just been given the great blessing of being able to place larger bets." The verdant hills to the east lay like slumbering giants under blankets of winter grass, bright in the morning sun. But when the shadows of clouds sailed off the sea and gathered inland, the slopes darkened to a blackish green, as somber as shrouds, and a landscape that had appeared to be sleeping forms now looked dead and cold.. The boy never mentioned what he'd done, and his mother ceased worrying about him falling out of bed.. Paul was a dear man, different from Joey in appearance but so like him at heart. She shocked him by insisting they go at once to his house, to his bedroom. Red-faced as no pulp hero ever had been, Paul stammered out that he wasn't expecting intimacy of her so soon, and she assured him that he wasn't going to get it so soon, either.. "You can't take much of anything by mouth for a few hours yet," said the nurse. "Nausea is too great a risk. Retching might start you hemorrhaging again." Using a three-step folding stool, he was able to get near enough to one of the vent plates in the living room to determine whether it might be the source of the song. just then the singing stopped.

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