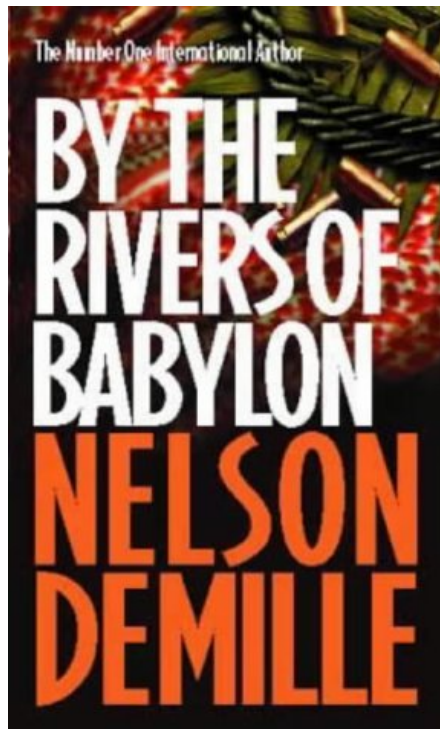




By the Rivers of Babylon

Nelson DeMille

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By the Rivers of Babylon Nelson DeMille

They were forced to meet by the rivers of Babylon...In Israel, two Concorde jets take off for a UN conference that will finally bring peace to the Middle East. Covered by F-14 fighters, accompanied by security men, the planes carry warriors, pacifists, lovers, enemies, dignatories - and a bomb planted by a terrorist mastermind. Suddenly they're forced to crash-land at an ancient desert site. Here, with only a handful of weapons, the men and women of the peace mission must make a desperate stand against an army of crack Palestinian commandos - while the Israeli authorities desperately attempt a rescue bid. A story of compulsive excitement, rich in personal drama and political tension that must rank as one of the greatest of our times.

By the Rivers of Babylon Details

Date : Published 2001 (first published July 7th 1978)

ISBN : 9780751531237

Author : Nelson DeMille

Format : Paperback 460 pages

Genre : Fiction, Thriller, Mystery, Suspense

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From Reader Review By the Rivers of Babylon for online ebook

Corey says

A tensely entertaining tale! Even though it was written by DeMille, it felt more like a Tom Clancy novel. *By the Rivers of Babylon* is one of DeMille's earlier works, and you can certainly tell, with the writing style and the time-period.

2 Concorde aircraft take off from Israel heading for a UN conference that will bring peace to the Middle East. But one of the planes ends up bursting into flames while airborne, and the second aircraft is forced to crash-land at an ancient desert site. It turns out an explosive device was planted on both aircraft by a terrorist mastermind. Armed with very few weapons, the survivors of the aircraft make a desperate stand against an army of Palestinian commandos, who are converging on the crash-site, while the Israeli authorities attempt to rescue the survivors.

Tended to drag in some places, and there were a lot of characters. But a great book, great action sequences, and great setting!

Rob Hood says

The first part of the book dragged, but after that the book was can't put down, awesome!

Cody says

Entertaining airplane read... nothing special.

Kim says

By the Rivers of Babylon is just what I've come to expect from a Nelson DeMille novel: suspenseful, action-packed, and nuanced with shades of politics and character complexities. That it was written over thirty years ago doesn't make it any less compelling, and in fact, despite any changes in the Middle East since then, *By the Rivers of Babylon* still provides an insightful glimpse into the hearts and souls of the people residing in that part of the world. DeMille is especially adept at highlighting the conflicts between peace and safety, the importance of history and faith, and the damage war's displacement has had on Jews and Arabs alike.

Paul says

PLOT OR PREMISE:

Peace in the Middle East is almost assured and two concordes fly to New York with delegates for final negotiations. Terrorists try to derail the peace conference by planting bombs on board and taking the passengers hostage. After one plane is destroyed, killing all on board, the second plane is forced to land near Babylon. At the last minute, the hostages manage to escape to the top of a small hill from which they attempt

to defend against the terrorists through several days of sorties, knowing that the military probably doesn't know where they are and therefore can't swoop in and rescue them.

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WHAT I LIKED:

Long before there was Clancy, there was DeMille. This book takes the international realm and stands it on its ear -- there is (excruciating) details of the relations between the characters on both sides of the peace conference who are forced to work together to fight the terrorists. In addition, the battle tactics are first-rate, the writing is almost perfect, and the story is superb as the "hostages" fight in small groups with every weapon they have -- gas bombs from the plane's fuel tanks, sounds from a war movie blasted over speakers to simulate larger weaponry, etc.

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WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE:

There are a LOT of characters at the start of this book and it is hard to keep track of them all. Up until the end, there are too many small sub-plots -- some are good, and necessary to flesh out the experience, but not all of them. There are fewer characters by the end though and it helps speed up the plotting. However, the ending is a little over-the-top, resembling a scene from a Die Hard movie more than keeping with the slightly more realistic tone of the rest of the book. As well, there is a meeting between the hostage-leaders and the terrorist-leader that is absolutely surreal. The likelihood of both parties treating it like a military battle with truces, etc., is virtually nil but it was at least interesting to read.

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BOTTOM-LINE:

DeMille is the master of the game

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DISCLOSURE:

I received no compensation, not even a free copy, in exchange for this review. I am not personal friends with the author, nor do I follow him on social media.

Pamela McLaren says

Two Concorde jets are flown into Israel to carry Israeli officials to a peace conference in New York. Security is tight but everything checks out and the planes take off with a contingent of F-14 fighters. But it is not enough and almost before anyone knows it, the planes have been kidnapped and forced to crash-land in the desert.

While this would not usually be a book for me, and it started slowly with a whole lot of detail I was not interested in, I was quickly drawn in and had a hard time putting this down. The excitement never stopped and I was swept along. A very riveting story that will keep you from putting it down.

Hella Comat says

A little long, but then maybe because this was only my second digital book I've read on my iPad (I make the font so big that the book has LOTS of pages). The premise is: 2 Concord jets (if it has airplanes in it, I have to read it) take off with Israelis headed to a peace conference in New York. They are set up by a terrorist who has planted bombs in the tails of the jets when they were first manufactured. Part exciting, part suspended credibility, and part 'I just want to see what happens'.

Henri Moreaux says

By the Rivers of Babylon was Nelson DeMille's first hardcover novel and was written in 1978. Often ~40 year old thriller novels are laughably out of date or simply no longer relevant to the world as it sits today giving a poor reading experience, not so with Rivers of Babylon. It is as relevant today as it was in 1978.

The plot principally revolves around lead up to & the (successful) Palestinian terrorist plot to hijack a Israeli plane filled with diplomats; and the aftermath including their fight for survival.

Plenty of atmosphere, development and tension. Definitely worth picking up if you see it in a secondhand book store and enjoy a good action novel.

Marcie says

I really enjoyed this book, and I almost didn't make it through the first 50 pages. I'm so glad I stuck with it. Premise: two Concordes take off from Israel full of diplomats and dignitaries on their way to the UN in NY to an unprecedented conference to finally bring peace to the Middle East for good...oblivious to the bombs planted in the tails during plane production.

My main gripes about the first 50 pages:

1. Had to make notes in order to keep the characters straight, I couldn't keep my Chaims, Ephraims, and Moshes straight. Gave up after 16 characters, and then they started dying off, boiling down to the ones I needed to remember!
2. Felt like I had read the same book before, an airplane disaster book he wrote called "Mayday." If the plane blows up at Mach 2.2 at 15,000 feet, everyone gets brain damage, yada-yada.
3. Felt formulaic like disaster movies from the 70s. DeMille was quick-cut editing every three paragraphs to another character and his situation. Characters felt flat and stereotypical once I began taking notes and assigning one-word adjectives to them (ultra-religious, cocky, sly, bleeding heart, nervous, etc.) Predictable!

Then the story took an unexpected left turn!.. exactly the same time as the plane, when the hijacked passengers decided to fight back last minute and land the plane not precisely where the hijacker demanded. The setting is fantastic – between the Tigris and Euphrates, on the archaeological ruins of Babylon, near modern Baghdad. We're talking ancient Mesopotamia.

The question becomes: Can a group of 50 very intelligent and resourceful, untrained PEACEMAKERS with a few professional warriors and a few weapons defeat a group of 150 well-trained, heavily armed, "baby Tigers" (the war orphans raised in the Islamic training camps) led by an insane terrorist. The choice of site is ingenious, considering the primitive, low-tech weapons, tactics, ruses, and strategies the diplomats fashion to defend themselves, once they begin searching their memory banks for every detail of every historic battle they could remember. I delighted in all the creative uses they devised for common things found on a plane.

Besides a military history lesson, you know we're in for an exploration of what it means to be someone who worships God, Allah, or Pazuzu throughout the ages. Fascinating stuff about the history of Judaism and the different "sub-groups" of Jews, such as the remote tribe who still have not left Babylon, or the "fifth wave" descendants who came to Israel with their money and education before WWII and the Holocaust.

Definitely one of DeMille's best. Gosh, what a page-turner. We lost electricity the night I finished it by flashlight.

Cphe says

My favourite book by this author. I read this years ago and enjoyed it even more the second time around. A group of Israeli delegates are on a Peace Mission enroute to New York. Their plane is sabotaged and they are forced to make a crash landing in the desert. There they make a stand against impossible odds.

There is an excellent cross section of characters and the story is fast paced and action packed. Well worth a look at.

Will says

Peace mission Concorde hijacked to Babylon. An Arab-Israeli peace mission to New York is plotted against by Ahmed Rish, an ex-pat Palestinian who sabotages two Concordes bound for El Al during their construction in France. Hidden shaped charges are employed to hijack the Concordes once airborne and one of the birds is destroyed in midair to prove the point. The hijacked Concorde is led to Babylon by Rish in an accompanying Lear, where the bird crash lands upon a plateau that becomes the Israeli defensive fortress. While a mix of military, intel and politicians debate the near future actions of the Israelis, Rish demands surrender or face death from assault by his 150-man armed company. Jacob Hausner, security chief for El Al and among the marooned Israelis, takes command of the plane and begins preparing defensive positions around the plateau while aircrew members vainly try to repair the APU and radio for help. After repulsing the first assault, Gen Dobkin sneaks away to find help and, against all odds, finds a telephone in the midst of the Ashbals and calls Tel Aviv to inform them of his plight. The Israelis, led by Teddy Laskov, launch an Entebbe-type rescue mission and recover a majority of the Israelis after all chances for escape are exhausted.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

They've spelled the title wrong. It should be By the Rivers of Babble On. DeMille is a smart and thorough guy, but damn, this is boring! I'd rather sit and watch my bananas ripen.

Glenn Gray says

In 586 B.C. the Babylonian Empire overthrew Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple. The resultant desecration of the temple and the capture of the citizens into slavery in Babylon are among the most significant milestones in the history of the Jewish people and the entire Middle East. After Babylon was overthrown by Persian King Cyrus, 50,000 slaves were freed to return to Jerusalem and to re-build the temple.

This story is a fictional account of modern day mid-east intrigue that begins with 2 supersonic Concordes take off loaded with passengers representing Israel and Palestinian political leaders with their staffs, headed for a

mid-east peace conference at the U.N. Militants who want to disrupt the peace conference succeed in shooting down one of the planes and, through a series of ingenious piloting decisions, the second manages to crash land in the area that is the ruins of that ancient city of Babylon.

Readers who have an understanding of this mid-east history will especially appreciate this fictional tale because many of the characters are developed with reverence for the history of the landing site/battleground.

An enjoyable read, especially for those who appreciate mid-eastern history.

Kevin says

I love Nelson DeMille. This was his first novel and although it has a great story line it did not grab me like every other book I have read of his. It was still worth the read because you can see he has progressed very much as a writer.

Howard says

Recommended, and a definite must for any DeMille fan. His first hardback novel, and his first big breakthrough. Originally published in 1978, it could have been written yesterday, which is one point the novel makes - not much changes in Babylon over the millennia when it comes to Israel.

After their Concorde is forced down in the deserts of Babylon, a small group of Israeli diplomats, their aides, security force, and a El Al civilian flight crew attempt to fend off Palestinian guerrillas intending to capture them as hostages in order to disrupt upcoming peace talks.

A good, solid, engaging, and suspenseful adventure with considerable paramilitary small-arms action and technical battle strategy. Think 'The Flight of the Phoenix' on military and international intrigue steroids.

Val says

I've liked everything I've ever read that was written by Nelson DeMille -- this book is no exception. I'd recommend it to anyone who likes a good adventure with more than cardboard characters -- true, lots of blood and guts, but a fascinating background and multi-layered plot. I give it an A.

Rob Cohen says

For 1978 I am sure this was somewhat groundbreaking but I don't know that it holds up. It was slow, boring, too many characters, not enough action, and too much postulating and thinking and not enough actual drama. Too bad... but nice to see that Demille has certainly improved as an author and has developed a strong personality in his writing.

Nina says

A plane-full of Israeli Jews on their way to a peace conference in NYC is diverted by terrorists to land at the site of ancient Babylon. The ingenuity with which the hostages developed defenses was pretty incredible (but then, it is a novel) and the fight sequences were so breathtakingly tense that I flew through them. My only problem with the book was that I really, really didn't like the main character, who was a total a-hole. I did like the quoting of the Ravensbruck Prayer, which I had not heard before. The book would be ripe for a book club because there are so many moral dilemmas that face the defenders. Much to think about. What would I do?

Mike Worley says

I must say that I am a DeMille fan, but this book was not a good read. Not even mediocre, it was painfully bad. I feel I wasted my time reading this book. This is the only DeMille book that I have not liked, I have read most of his books and have enjoyed them, I will still look forward to reading any new books from DeMille.

Teri Pre says

A bit dated, but I'm old enough to remember when peace in the Middle East was a possibility, not just a dream. Loved it!!
