

An Excerpt From “Peaceful & Confident: A Women’s Devotional”

by Deb Bronson-McGrath



If Abigail’s life mirrored the romantic tales Abba had spun years ago, while she had nestled in his strong arms, tickled by his beard as he spoke; the king would appear any moment. Straight from his day’s work, David would join her in this private corner of the women’s palace garden. Talking about their day, they would kiss, hold hands and the lonely ache in her heart would be soothed.

Abigail prayed, “Let my husband remember me”. She sat still as stone, hoping to hear David’s steps on the pebbled path.

The sun dimmed, the moon rose and the vulnerable flower of hope in her heart shriveled into a tight, cold, kernel. Feeling numb in both body and spirit, Abigail stood, then made her way towards the royal harem.

Amber lights glowed warm in the cool night air. A confetti of sights, sounds and smells accosted her as she entered the great hall. Excited laughter, girlish voices, heady perfume, colorful silk – Abigail felt tears prick her eyes. She knew all too well what this sort of chaos meant.

Iris stepped out of the shadows, gently laying her hand on Abigail's arm and observed the deep sadness smudging her mistress's beautiful face. Both women watched Nava, a concubine, busily threading jeweled bangles on her arms and allowing others to fuss over her hair and cosmetics.

"She is aptly named," Abigail's tone was unusually harsh. "When did the King arrive?"

"Yes, she is pretty, but her attention span is that of a fly. Nava is still a novelty. The King arrived this afternoon and sent for her a short while ago."

The tears that had shimmered in Abigail's eyes dried instantly with searing heat. "As if seven wives were not enough, David collects concubines like bees gather pollen." Abigail briefly squeezed Iris's hand and left the hall for the seclusion of her room.

Iris sighed. Gifted with intelligence, passion, leadership and incomparable charm, Abigail was most like the King in abilities, spirit and strength.

Although adored by thousands for being a good and just king, respected by warriors of great valor, and beloved by those who knew him well, the King habitually failed as a husband and father. He was often remote or careless with the hearts of his wives and the love of his children. He won great victories on the battleground, adored Jehovah, and yet abdicated from shepherding a large family desperate for his love, attention and wisdom.

With a vivacious smile and a few quick hugs, Nava bade the women still fluttering around her a good night and flanked by the King's guard, left to spend the evening with Abigail's husband. Iris suddenly felt old and shuffled off to her narrow bed, in an alcove outside Abigail's room.

In the quiet of her sanctuary, a storm raged within Abigail. She lay curled in a ball, wiping away a stream of tears. Angry, she prayed for dreamless sleep. After so many years, why did she still yearn for a marriage like her parents had? She roughly scrubbed her face. "Enough. I will focus on Daniel, our son."

She wanted to be the best mother possible, which meant no more futile romantic dreams for herself – they drained her energy and darkened her days.

Another pair of tears ran swiftly down her cheeks.

Little One, talk to Me. Let Me quiet your heart with My love.

Abigail paused. Jehovah. He was very near. She knew from experience that His comfort and peace were available, should she but ask.

“My heart is too bitter to talk,” she answered.

Bitter and broken, yes?

The infection in her heart was lanced with His piercing question.

“Yes! Is it so wrong for me to want a husband who knows and cherishes me? If I had never seen the love and devotion that Abba had for Ima, perhaps I would not feel the loss of all my hopes with David so keenly. When I was married to Nabal, I tolerated his cruelty and boorish ways – learning to never expect love or kindness from him. I poured myself into running our household well. You were my greatest Friend.

I remember, Beloved. Am I still?