

The Peasant King

Tessa Afshar

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In Tessa Afshar's captivating Christian romance novel *The Peasant King*, an archeress and a renegade prince join forces to help fulfill a prophecy.

Jemmah's Judean mother, Keren, is the Persian king Cyrus's chief scribe. She's summoned to court but is abducted en route. Asher is a weapons manufacturer who disguises himself in hopes of evading his father, King Astyages, who never recognized him and who rivals King Cyrus. Imprisoned for refusing to arm Astyages, Asher meets Keren. When Jemmah, loyal members of her household, and Jemmah's adopted sister set forth on a rescue mission, Asher is swept into their plans; he escorts them into Babylon. They have faith that God will provide.

The cast includes a spy prone to clever transformations and King Cyrus himself, who is an unconventional, capable leader confronted by daunting odds. Herein, strong women warriors whose skills are borne of necessity go on dangerous adventures. They are agile and bold when confronting their enemies, and they form dynamic cohorts.

As the novel continues, Jemmah learns to handle her anxiety; she becomes more courageous. Asher intrigues her: his half-Judean roots and seeming contradictions fascinate her, propelling their romantic connection. And when Asher realizes how often Jemmah forsakes her own needs to help others, including him, he is moved. They face situations that require them to trust one another. He welcomes her into his weaponry workshop, and they undergo a trek through mountains. At a gradual pace, they develop deeper understandings of their respective burdens and learn to shed their painful memories.

Rich with themes about God's presence even in dark times, *The Peasant King* is a historical romance novel in which a couple refreshes their faith in times of peril.

KAREN RIGBY (November / December 2023)

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