

Abigail, Queen of Natronia

A Fairy Tale

Darrell Case

Illustrated by Nina Mkhoiani



Proverbs 11:30
Leaning Tree Christian Publishers
Post Office Box 6124
Terre Haute, IN 47802

Abigail, Queen of Natronia
Copyright © 2018 by Darrell Case

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means—electronic, mechanical, photographic (photocopying), recording, or otherwise—without prior permission in writing from the author.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: Enter number here

For more information, visit www.darrellcase.com

To my young readers

May you always be fascinated
by the world of books.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each time I produce a book I am amazed at the dedication of those around me, people who work behind the scenes encouraging me to push on to completion.

First and foremost is the Lord Jesus Christ, who guides me through life, not just in my writing.

To my wife, Connie, who is always there and has been through 39 years of marriage. To Mary Ellen Spurlin, my editor, who works with me every step of the way to make sure the words fit the story. And to you my readers, who share the journey as we explore new worlds together.

Forward

When children discover books, they find a fascinating world where they can develop their imagination. In the wonderful world of books, they can fight monsters, discover new lands, talk with animals and sail pirate ships. In books they can make friends with people who lived hundreds, even thousands of years ago. Perhaps most importantly, they can expand their minds to embrace the uniqueness of each individual and see the good in themselves and others.

To this end was *Abigail, Queen of Natronia* written. Loved by her parents yet spurned by others, she sees beyond their hostility and finds the good in life. The stories she pens bring positive change, not only to her village but also to the entire kingdom in which she lives. It is my hope that the message of this story will stay with you all your life and you will find the good in those around you.

Abigail, Queen of Natronia

Her name was Abigail, Queen of Natronia. Her beauty is legendary among the people of her country. Her wisdom was a marvel and as well-known as her compassion and love for the people of the kingdom.

She was born in the natural way, but Abigail's appearance at the time of her birth was anything but ordinary. Her bright red lips were huge, her ears equally so; her nose lay flat against her face; her eyes, though brilliant blue, were small and squinty. Her head was too large for her body; her arms, hands and legs looked more like those of a scaly reptile. The nurses attending her mother covered their faces, then baby Abigail's, fearing she would frighten the other patients.

Despite her appearance, Abigail's parents loved her. As a baby, then a toddler, Abigail rarely was seen in public. If her mother took her out at all, she would put a veil over Abigail's face. Her parents consulted many doctors to see if there was anything they could do for the little girl. The doctors performed every test known to the medical field at that time but could find nothing physically wrong with the child. Telling her parents they could only hope she would somehow outgrow her repulsiveness, the doctors sent Abigail home.

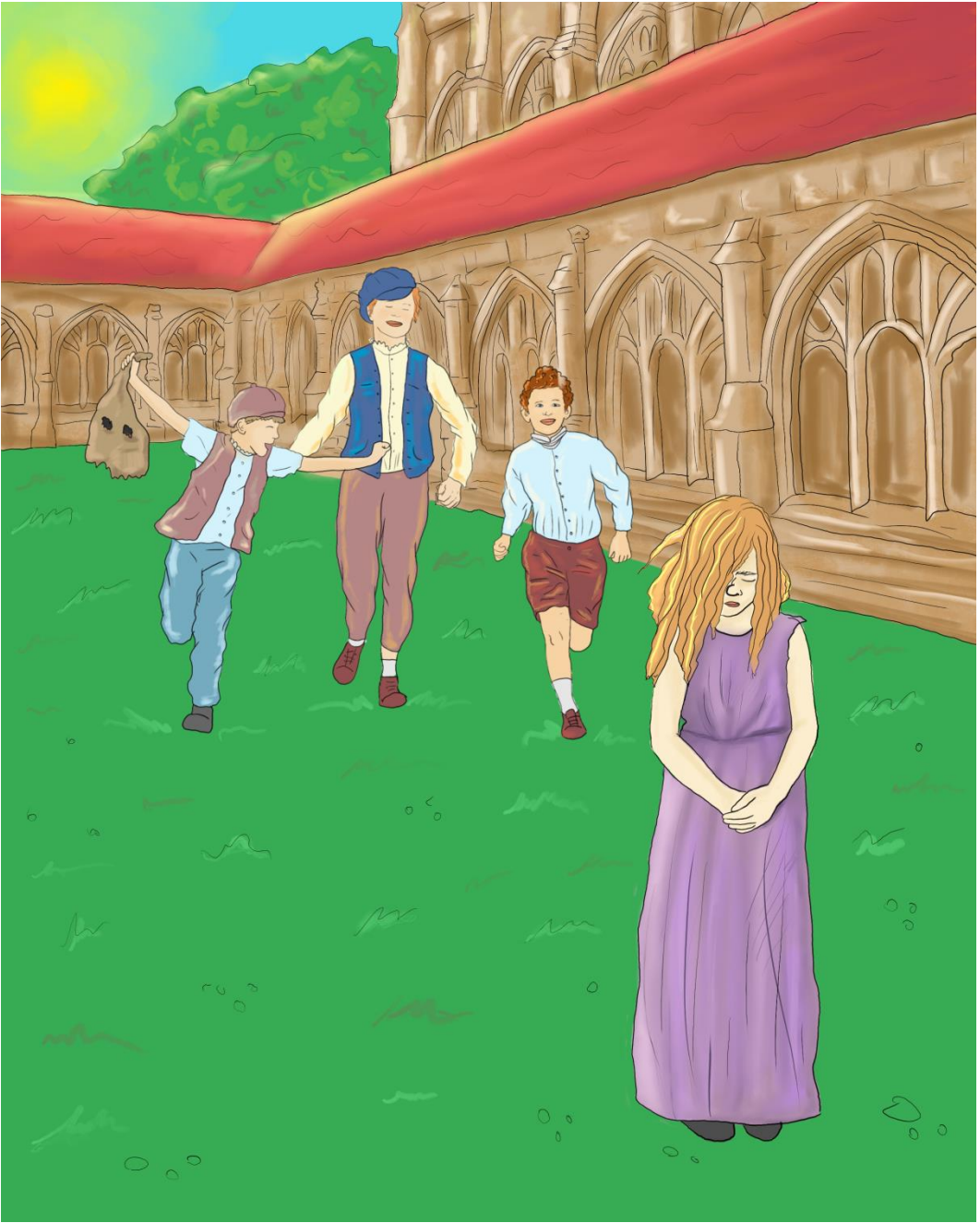


When the time came for Abigail to go to school, her mother fashioned a cloth sack to cover her head. However, she could do nothing about the little girl's body. The children were curious as to why Abigail wore the strange hood. When they discovered the truth, they began to make cruel remarks. The boys made a game of trying to snatch the sack from Abigail's head. If one of them succeeded, he would run away laughing while holding the bag high like a victory flag. Then he would hide it.

Once, at recess, the children joined hands and danced in a circle around Abigail, taunting the weeping girl. When the bell rang and her classmates went back inside, Abigail wandered the school grounds looking for the sack. Finally giving up, she entered the classroom, trying to hide her face behind her hands while the children giggled and laughed. Disgusted with their behavior, the teacher stopped the lesson, scolded the students and made the boy who hid the sack go and retrieve it. Class would not resume until it was back on Abigail's head.

Even with all the unkindness heaped on her, Abigail's pure heart remained loving, sweet and kind. However, the children's cruel taunts and even some adults in the village heartlessly shunning her cut Abigail to the bone. Personally, she was glad to wear the bag over her head. That way, the others could not see the tears running down her face. The cloth barrier gave her a sense of privacy from the unkind world.

As time went on, Abigail grew more sensitive to her appearance. She refused to look in a mirror. Each time she left her bedroom, she wore the sack over her face. She wore loose-fitting clothes to disguise her body and gloves to conceal her hands. As she got older, Abigail's one joy was writing stories about love, justice and compassion. All the emotions the outside world denied her were expressed in those stories.



As she wrote, she perfected her language skills and her stories took on a dreamy, poetic air.

The day came when Abigail accidentally left one of her fairy tales on a bench outside the bakery. Hurrying by, the baker noticed the sheaf of papers lying there. He sat down on the bench and began reading the anonymous author's folktale. He was so amazed by the story he couldn't put it down, and only when customers began to pound on the bakery shop door did he remember his urgent errand. That night he gave the tale to his wife to read, who in turn gave it to a friend, who gave it to another, and so forth and so on until the entire village had read Abigail's yarn. In every shop and home, people spoke of the story and wondered, who was this brilliant writer who could charm the whole countryside with such magical words?

Abigail kept silent, fearing ridicule if they found out it was she. For the next two years, she sat alone in her room every evening, writing her tales of hope, joy and love. Sometimes she wrote until the wee hours of the morning. In her stories, she let her imagination guide her words. She became the princess rescued from the dragon by the knight in shining armor. Or she was the damsel lost in the forest, then found by a handsome prince who instantly falls madly in love with her and insists she marry him. In truth, while others were living their lives, marrying and having children, Abigail existed only in her daydreams.

Every few weeks she would slip out of her bedroom window just before dawn. Keeping to the shadows, she would make her way to the town square. Fearing detection, she left each new story in a different place. If it was windy, she weighed the papers down with a stone. If it was raining, she would shove them under the door of a shop.



It became an unspoken understanding among the people of the village that whomever was fortunate enough to find the tale would hurry and take it to the print shop. A jolly man, the printer would make copies for everyone in the town. Soon the demand for the stories became so great the printer bound them into small booklets. He hired an apprentice just to help print and distribute them. You would have thought the man would have to charge for the little books. But he didn't. Even so, the people were so enthralled by the stories they insisted on giving the printer gold and silver coins. Already living a comfortable life, the printer saw no need to increase his wealth. Therefore, he used his newfound riches to expand his shop and hire more workers to print the stories. Now Abigail's fairy tales spread throughout the entire kingdom. Mothers read them during the day and again to their children at bedtime.

It seemed the stories were changing the villagers. They wanted more of them. Remarkably, they were becoming kinder and more compassionate toward one another. In her bedroom, the young lady Abigail smiled. While her appearance terrified little children, her stories brought comfort to their hearts. To the adults, they ministered hope and pleasure.

Now, King Billwick was well advanced in years. His son, Phillip, was a handsome young man, but shy, preferring the company of horses to that of people. No matter how hard the king tried, he could not convince Phillip to find a proper wife and take his proper place in the kingdom. The king would hold many feasts, festivals and balls which all the lovely young ladies would attend. But they never got to dance with the prince. He would ride his steed into the forest before the music started. As the years passed, King Billwick began to despair.



One spring day, the king discovered his footman reading a booklet. The servant was so engrossed he did not notice the monarch approaching—a grievous error. One of the king’s bodyguards raised a whip to bring it down on the man's back. A kind man, the king stopped the officer from hitting the footman. He asked the footman to loan him the book. Grateful to have escaped punishment, the man gave the booklet to the king. That night, King Billwick couldn’t sleep. He kept thinking of the white knight in the story, how brave he was to rescue the damsel from the dragon’s clutches. He yearned for Phillip to share the same traits as that courageous knight. The next day the king left the booklet open on Phillip's steed’s saddle. Curious, Phillip read the first paragraph. He never took his morning ride. As a matter of fact, he didn’t take a morning ride all week.

For days, the prince walked aimlessly around as if in a trance. Calling the Royal Mandarin, he commanded him to find the book’s author. This being the first order his son had ever uttered, the king was quite pleased. The official immediately sent runners to every corner of the kingdom, with no results. No one seemed to know who the author was. Some of the villagers believed the stories came from an angel named Jerome. Others thought they came from an old woman who lived in the forest. The only thing they all could agree on was that the author must be a brilliant person to write such marvelous stories.

Now, as I said before, Abigail never looked in a mirror. In fact, she had removed the mirror from the vanity in her bedroom, since that was where she spent most of her days and nights. Any time she ventured into the rest of the house or outdoors, she wore the bag and loose clothing. The look of her hands distressed her, so unless she was writing, she wore gloves. Wanting Abigail to live a normal life, her parents cried for her.



Distressed by the Royal Mandarin's lack of success, Prince Phillip began searching the countryside himself. Having acquired and read all the booklets, the prince was convinced that the author of such wonderful tales must be a beautiful woman. In a bold move, he declared his love for one he never saw. If his assumption was right and the writer was found to be a woman of marriageable age, the prince intended to ask for her hand.

As fate would have it, on the very day Prince Phillip arrived back in the village, Abigail was discovered. Arriving early at his shop, the butcher spotted a shadowy figure leaving a stack of papers on a bench. He followed Abigail back to her home. When he saw her climb through her bedroom window, he rushed off to spread the news among the townspeople. For hours, the people argued over whether or not to tell the prince. After all, Abigail's appearance went beyond homeliness. No one in Natronia would want a queen that ugly.

Dressed in the hooded garb of a traveling gypsy, Prince Phillip entered the town hall. The debate among the townsfolk was so heated no one noticed him. After listening for several minutes, Phillip stood to his feet to shout over the crowd. "It would seem our author friend's true beauty comes from the heart," he declared with a confident smile. He surprised himself by speaking up so boldly. Before reading the stories, the prince would never have dared to voice his opinion. Thinking he was a mere vagabond, the people began to laugh and call out cruel remarks. Some even threatened him. Unafraid, he strode to the front of the room. Some shouted at the audacity of this stranger. Turning to face the crowd, the prince removed his disguise. With a collective gasp, the people bowed. Fear ran through their hearts over what Phillip would do to them for threatening a member of the royal



family. Taking no notice of their discomfort, the prince offered a reward to any person who could bring the author's name to him at the inn by three o'clock that afternoon.

Having made his announcement, Phillip exited the building, leaving the people to a different argument. Each one wanted the reward, but no one wanted to tell Phillip that the woman he sought was a monster.

By four o'clock, the prince gave up waiting. He mounted his horse and wandered through the streets.

Aware of the meeting and the announcement, Abigail dared to peek through her bedroom window. Just as she drew aside the heavy curtains, Phillip trotted up to her home. He glanced up and their eyes met, the young woman looking through the eyeholes of a sack as the future king of Natronia gazed up at her. Her heart pounding, Abigail dropped the curtain, hoping he had not seen her.

A knock at her cottage door the next moment made her heart plunge and soar at the same time. Entering the home, the prince demanded to meet the girl in the bedroom. Aware of the consequences of refusing a royal command, her parents summoned her.

Covered from head to foot, Abigail slowly came into the parlor. She trembled as she knelt before the prince. Gently taking her by the hand, he brought her to her feet. Terror gripped Abigail's heart as the prince grasped the bag to remove it. She put her gloved hands up to stop him. Smiling, Phillip gently pushed them away. "No, my beloved, all is well," he assured her. Gently removing the bag, the prince gasped, as did Abigail's parents. Fearing the horror she would see in his face, Abigail nevertheless opened her eyes. The future king of Natronia stared into the face of the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Abigail's long, flowing, golden hair shone like a summer sunrise; her tender, loving eyes were



bluer than the waters of the deepest lake. Her skin, though pale from lack of sunlight, was nevertheless smooth and flawless. Tenderly, Prince Phillip removed her gloves. Bringing Abigail's hands to his lips, he kissed each delicate finger. Then, taking her in his arms, he pledged his undying love for her. It seemed that, as Abigail wrote her charming tales, the love in her heart came through until it transformed

her body. To Phillip, she was beautiful from the first time he read her stories.

Carrying Abigail to his steed, Phillip set her before him. Reigning the white stallion around, he paraded his future queen through the streets, then rode at a gallop with his bride-to-be to the castle.

Three weeks later Phillip and Abigail were married. They wanted to be wed sooner, but the king and queen persuaded them to wait. After all, time was needed for everyone to prepare for the greatest marriage feast in the history of Natronia.

On the night of the wedding, King Billwick went to bed assured that his kingdom would be secure in the hands of the future king and queen of Natronia, namely Phillip and Abigail.

The moral of the story, if there is a moral, is this: True beauty comes from the heart. When nurtured and allowed to grow, it always changes us, for the better.

The End.





From a child Nina Mkhoiani was creative. With an active imagination, she taught herself to draw. Her skills also developed into sculpturing, costume-making and crafts props. In 2014, she began using a tablet to draw digital illustrations. She has worked with several authors to bring their stories and books to life. Each story is precious to her. She puts her entire energy and imagination into each one. Nina works as a travel coordinator. Her passion is her art



Darrell Case is the author of 11 books.

He and his wife, Connie, live in central Indiana.