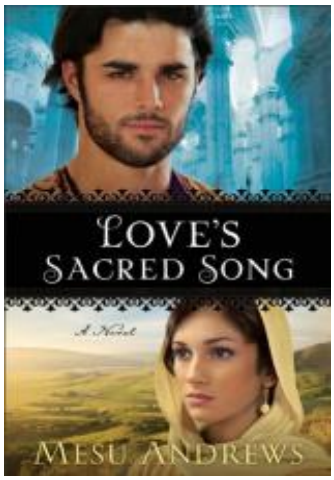
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Love's Sacred Song

by Mesu Andrews



About the Book

Wisdom came as God?s gift, but sacred love was forged through passion?s fire

Standing in the shadow of his famous father, young King Solomon wavers between fear and bravado, longing for a love that is true and pure --- a love that can be his cornerstone.

A shepherdess in the northern city of Shunem, Arielah has known since she first laid eyes on Solomon that it was her destiny to become his bride. When her father secures a promise from Solomon to marry Arielah as a treaty bride to help unite the kingdom, it seems her dreams will come true.

But how can this simple shepherdess live as part of Solomon?s harem? Can Solomon set aside his distractions to give himself completely to just one woman? Or will he let duty, deception, and the daily routine divide his heart?

Mesu Andrews expertly weaves the words of the Song of Solomon into this touching story of the power of love from a master storyteller.

Discussion Guide

1. The northern tribes accuse King David of playing favorites with the tribe of Judah, and Jehoshaphat?s sons charge Arielah with stealing their abba?s love. When God chooses to bless someone while withholding blessing from another, is He playing favorites? Why or why not?

2. We often think of the unique challenges a woman experiences as a wife or concubine in a king?s harem, but consider the perspective of a child. How would the outlook of a prince or princess be different on marriage, work, and family?

3. At various points during the story, characters are forced to wait. Jehoshaphat must wait to announce Arielah as Israel?s treaty bride to the northern elders. Arielah must wait while her abba travels to Jerusalem to negotiate the marriage. Solomon must wait for his bride. Consider how each character responds to their imposed wait. Whose ?waiting temperament? do you most resemble, and why? Is it good or bad?

4. Solomon allows Naamah, his Ammonite wife, to worship the pagan god of her native land. Is this a compassionate decision? Why or why not? He then allows subsequent foreign wives to worship their gods while teaching them of Jehovah. Is this a wise decision? Why or why not?

5. Scripture confirms that King David recognizes wisdom in Solomon before God bestows a supernatural measure of it at Gibeon. However, both the fictional story and Scripture agree that Solomon makes some wrong decisions and poor choices. What does this teach us about wisdom --- even godly wisdom?

6. Jehoshaphat makes a conscious decision to obey Jehovah regarding his children and to trust Jehovah to work through the consequences in their individual lives. Does he make the right decisions for Arielah? Igal? Kemmuel? What decisions have you had to make that allowed God to work through the consequences?

7. Arielah is repeatedly faced with the choice to forgive --- her brothers, Solomon, the old women?s gossip --- and each time she shows mercy. Is she too lenient? Does she seem weak? Or does her forgiveness emanate from a place of strength and purpose? Explain.

8. During their wedding processional, preparation day, and ceremony, Solomon and Arielah experience extreme emotional highs and lows (as do many brides and grooms). They, like us, have a choice on which details they would dwell. Consider the story from the moment Solomon arrives in Shunem to collect his bride until they enjoy yichud. What are some of Solomon?s highs and lows? Arielah?s highs and lows? What are some of the positives in your own life on which you can dwell? What are some joys you?ve missed due to distractions?

9. Many of Solomon?s bad decisions seem directly tied to feelings of guilt. Other emotions also tend to skew his judgment. What are some decisions he makes in which his godly wisdom is overshadowed by human emotion?

10. Bathsheba confronts Arielah with a hard truth: if she truly believes her marriage is ordained by Jehovah, then she must learn to love Solomon through Jehovah?s wisdom and strength. In the next scenes, Arielah both rebuffs Solomon and pursues him. What does this tell us about loving according to Jehovah?s wisdom and strength?

11. Why does Solomon refuse to see Arielah right after her beating? Why does he find it more difficult to venture into her presence with the passing of time? What finally convinces him to see her? Does Solomon love Arielah?

12. What good comes from Arielah?s wounds? For Sekhet? For Solomon? For Israel?

13. What changes Solomon?s heart, enabling him to recognize Shunem?s brotherhood and the deceit of the Daughters of Jerusalem?

14. What lessons of love have you learned from Love?s Sacred Song? In your human relationships? In the relationship with your eternal Bridegroom?

15. In order to remain true to the facts of Scripture, the author wrote the epilogue to provide a plausible explanation of why Solomon married seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines after experiencing the depth of love described in the Song of Solomon. What other explanations can you think of?

Author Bio

Mesu Andrews? deep understanding of and love for God's Word brings the biblical world alive for her readers. Her first novel, LOVE AMID THE ASHES, won the 2012 ECPA Book of the Year for a Debut Author. Her three subsequent novels --- LOVE'S SACRED SONG, LOVE IN A BROKEN VESSEL and IN THE SHADOW OF JEZEBEL --- all released to great reader enthusiasm. Mesu lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband Roy.

Critical Praise

"Stunning in its depth and scope, LOVE'S SACRED SONG is a story of love and passion, faith and flaws, that will haunt you forever. Mesu Andrews crafts characters that will capture your heart with prose that will stir your soul. Masterful."

--- Roseanna M. White, author of JEWEL OF PERSIA and LOVE FINDS YOU IN ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

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