



Harvest Of Gold

Tessa Afshar

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Sarah married Darius, and at times she feels as if she has married the Persian aristocracy, too. There is another point she did not count on in her marriage-Sarah has grown to love her husband. Sarah has wealth, property, honor, and power, but her husband's love still seems unattainable.

Although his mother was an Israelite, Darius remains skeptical that his Jewish wife is the right choice for him, particularly when she conspires with her cousin Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Ordered to assist in the effort, the couple begins a journey to the homeland of his mother's people. Will the road filled with danger, conflict, and surprising memories, help Darius to see the hand of God at work in his life-and even in his marriage?

A hidden message, treachery, opposition, and a God-given success will lead to an unlikely bounty.

Harvest Of Gold Details

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From Reader Review Harvest Of Gold for online ebook

Virginia says

Tessa Afshar has done it again! Harvest of Gold is the sequel to her previous book, Harvest of Rubies. I have been so eagerly waiting to read Harvest of Gold ever since I've read the first book. I must say that the book was a very awesome and inspiring read. I really enjoyed it!

I really loved how Tessa Afshar developed the story of Darius and Sarah. At first it seemed that their love story wouldn't have an happy ending, but I'm so thankful that Miss Afshar brought about such a happy conclusion!

I really admire the heroine Sarah in Harvest of Gold. She is such an inspiration. She had such unmovable faith and a courage that couldn't be shaken.
A very perfect role model for me!

On the other hand, I also found the background story of Darius' life to be very interesting. In his younger life he went through many things that molded who he was and it really affected him greatly in his marriage to Sarah. It almost seemed as if he could only be an impenetrable wall. The background story of Darius really helped me to understand him a whole lot better. His story of being raised in a palace at a very young age away from his loving parents only to be introduced to a harsh, cruel, unloving world. It really touched my heart because he suffered so much bullying from his peers and he had to hide many of his feelings in order to grow into the man his family was expecting him to be. It was really moving how that God through Nehemiah helped Darius to overcome that struggle.

Nehemiah was also a key character in this book because in the story it shows the struggles and the victory of being able to restore the former glory of Jerusalem. Nehemiah, once a lowly cupbearer for the King, became a leader for the people of Israel. Though they suffered many things, they still were able to overcome many obstacles presented to them in either the form of criticism, their enemies and with meager supplies of food. To actually see the victory they won through God and with the help of Nehemiah was amazing!

There are some parts in Harvest of Gold that were just absolutely hilarious! In the book, there are two new characters, Lysander and Roxanna. Lysander a man who has many hidden qualities and Roxanna a very strong-willed woman with a mind of her own. I really liked Roxanna's character. She was a spy for the king. There many times in the book that she would seem very oblivious about the opinions the other characters would have about her. You would not believe the disguises that she wore in order to hid that fact that she was indeed a spy!

Both Lysander and Roxanna were both hilarious in the many situations they faced in the book. That is another quality that I love in Tessa Afshar's books is that somehow she has a way of adding humor to her stories. Many times I can't help myself from laughing out loud!

I really love the book cover for Harvest of Gold! All of her book covers they are so unique! The book cover of Harvest of Gold is no exception.

The only problems that I had with the book was that there were some parts in the story that I didn't feel comfortable reading. Yes, Darius and Sarah were a married couple, but there were some things in there I totally didn't expect to read in this story because in her past books she has pre-cautious about such things. Another thing is that even though the story was good, I thought it wasn't as good as her first book in this series, Harvest of Rubies.

Overall, I really enjoyed reading Harvest of Gold. It was such an amazing and heart-touching story until the very end. I'm eagerly anticipating any forth coming books by Tessa Afshar. She's such an inspiring author.

* I received a free copy of this book from Moody Publishers in exchange for my honest review. I received no compensation for this review,nor was I required to write a positive review.All opinions expressed are entirely my own.*

Jalynn Patterson says

My Review:

After hearing of one of the gardeners wives having a baby, Sarah can't help but want a child of her own but Darius doesn't seem to be all that in to her. Now it seems something has changed, he's been coming to her side with out even being requested. He catches her in the hallway just to kiss her. He comes to talk to her as she's just finished bathing. After Darius and Sarah head out on a two day trip, someone attacks them in the middle of the night. Darius awakens in enough time just to find the five invaders gagging and trying to tie his 4 guards. He jumps right in to action leaving Sarah sleeping were he was. After taking a few down, he wakes Sarah to hide her, who knows what these men would do to her. When he is finished with the fight and tying them up, Sarah runs to his side. Together they uncover the dark mission, these men were on. Which could mean death to them and the King Artaxerxes.

Disclosure This book was sent to me free of charge for my honest review from CFBA.

Lorraine says

SUMMARY: In Harvest of Gold (Book 2) the scribe Sarah married Darius, and at times she feels as if she has married the Persian aristocracy, too. There is another point she did not count on in her marriage-Sarah has grown to love her husband. Sarah has wealth, property, honor, and power, but her husband's love still seems unattainable.

Although his mother was an Israelite, Darius remains skeptical that his Jewish wife is the right choice for him, particularly when she conspires with her cousin Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Ordered to assist in the effort, the couple begins a journey to the homeland of his mother's people. Will the road filled with danger, conflict, and surprising memories, help Darius to see the hand of God at work in his life-and even in his marriage?

A hidden message, treachery, opposition, and a God-given success, will lead to an unlikely bounty.

REVIEW: This is my first Tessa Afshar Biblical fiction novel, and it certainly won't be my last. I wish I had read Book 1 first as this book gave away a bit of it; but I think I will enjoy it just as well.

Afshar's historical research fills this book with rich detail. Her characters are deep and intense. The hero, Darius, for most of the book, is an endearing jerk whose past affects his relationship with Sarah until he realizes how he has to change. Sarah is a strong, independent woman especially for that time period. The plot line is interesting and riveting as Darius and Sarah try to determine who is behind the plot to kill the King and at the same time assist Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Afshar definitely keeps the reader's attention and pulls them into the time period.

FAVORITE QUOTES:

"Sometimes the heart goes through such a deep valley that the Lord is overshadowed by its darkness. The trick is, when you feel God has let go of you, you don't let go of God. Cling to Him anyway. And you will find that He never abandoned you--He remained near all along."

"What do you think destiny is? A smooth path that never jostles you?" No. When you walk in your destiny, you will crash and fall more times than you can count. But the secret is to hold on to God's vision for your life--and for the lives of those He puts under your charge. No matter how many times you fall, crash, and fail, you get up. You get up and face your obstacles."

"During the past weeks of separation, the Lord had shown her that she could not expect Darius not to make mistakes. Not to hurt her, even unintentionally. After all, he was only a man. But surrendering her life into his keeping meant that she trust God to work out the details. She trust the Lord of heaven and earth to cover her husband's insufficiencies, and provide for her needs in the midst of them."

Christian Fiction Addiction says

"Harvest of Gold" is a delight to read, filled with fascinating historical details, captivating characters, and splendid adventure. I thoroughly enjoyed the first book introducing the characters of Sarah and Darius, "Harvest of Rubies", and have been eagerly anticipating this sequel. I was certainly not disappointed! The prose is impeccable, and Tessa has woven a tale that is utterly rich in faith and actually moved me to tears in one scene. Although the aspect of the plot dealing with the assassination attempt of King Artaxerxes made for some absorbing reading, it was actually the scenes focusing on Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem that deeply moved me. Nehemiah has many scenes that will long stay with me, moments where he stirred people on to greatness and displayed a wonderful trust in God. I was struck anew by the fact that he prayed without ceasing for four-and-a-half months before God answered his prayer to be able to speak to the King and be given the opportunity to travel to Jerusalem and lead his people to rebuild the walls. There are times in all of our lives where we can grow impatient in prayer, and this is a wonderful reminder that God answers prayers in his own timing, and that though the answer may not always be what we are looking for, it always results in good. I am definitely planning to read this book over again to mine the deep truths contained within its pages!

If you are looking for a book filled with romance, intrigue, and ancient wisdom, then "Harvest of Gold" is for you! I highly recommend this book and award it 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Book has been provided courtesy of the publisher and Christian Fiction Blog Alliance, for the purposes of this unbiased review

Michelle Jones says

It's been awhile since I read Harvest of Rubies, but I remember it fondly--I remember debating between 4 or 5 stars for it. Unfortunately, I didn't think that Harvest of Gold was up to its standard.

The book starts off quickly as Sarah and Darius become embroiled in an assassination plot. This was easily my favorite part of the book, but the mystery ended too early, and too easily for my taste. The historical research, Nehemiah, and his faith are all interesting and well-written. My main issue with the book is that Sarah and Darius just didn't hold my interest; a lot of their issues in this book didn't seem very realistic.

That said I plan to read more by Afshar, and would even read a sequel (especially if it had more with Lysander and Roxanna).

April says

Having just finished Harvest of Gold, I have to tell you that I was a little disappointed. While it was good and did have some solid biblical truths in it. It just felt lacking overall. I was not as engaged, and esp. towards the end did a lot of skim reading. If you are looking for a really great biblical fiction book about Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall, I highly recommend Lynn Austin's first book in The Restoration Chronicles, Return to Me (Book 1). All that said, will I read another book by Tessa Afshar? Yes, absolutely! My favorite by her is still Pearl in the Sand, excellent!

Margaret says

I enjoyed this second of the series, it had some really interesting moments that pulled me in and yet lagged in other areas, a little inconsistent for me. I always appreciate this author's perspective in regards to the Lord and spiritual aspects of her writing, well worth it just for that fact.

Tasha says

This book answered a lot of questions for me concerning Darius' relationship with Sarah. For one thing, I understood that while they definitely developed a bond in "Harvest of Rubies", he still didn't love her. When I finished the first book I misunderstood the manner in which he passionately pursued her and learned to trust her and assumed that it meant he loved her. This was not the case. Darius' passion for Sarah was partially due to ignored affection (which were the building blocks of love but not evidence of it) and partially physical gratification (which is a reflection of love but not a guarantor of it). The book isn't sexually explicit at all, but Afshar makes it clear that Darius and Sarah share a very satisfying sexual relationship. My misinterpreting good sex for a good marriage opened my eyes to the role of sex in fulfilling a godly marriage. Its not just the fact that you're having it frequently and experiencing pleasure but its also about the "why". Why are you doing it? Is it ONLY to gratify yourself? Is it to express love or to supplement love? At one point, I thought Sarah was lucky b/c her husband couldn't keep his hands off her and he often seemed concerned for her, like I said I assumed that love was lying dormant and would arise in time. I was mistaken. Darius predetermined that he would not love Sarah, which says a lot. His lack of love for her was evident in the manner in which he defined their relationship, which was heavily based on earned trust and respect. The

slightest indiscretion on Sarah's behalf and Darius was most unforgiving. His anger and resentment would abate in time, but his unbelievable standards remained. Darius had yet to realize that a relationship's success is not wrapped in the completion of one's duty, but rather in the giving and receiving of unconditional love. I also disliked how Darius selfishly demanded all of Sarah while with the same vigor felt justified in withholding the most important part of himself. He couldn't get enough of hearing her say "I love you" yet he expected her to be satisfied with the outward affections he gave her (concern, lovemaking, protection, etc). He also wanted her to trust him completely but he didn't realize that she couldn't do that until he gave her security. I like how Afshar showed that without God, such a love is impossible. Like Darius, none of us could feel safe enough to open our hearts to another and offer up the understanding and compassion that accompany unconditional love. The irony of the story lies in the fact that while Nehemiah set out to erect the wall around Jerusalem and fortify the holy city, God set out to demolish the wall around Darius' heart so that He could fortify his marriage to Sarah. In the words of Switchfoot, the "beautiful letdown" of the situation is that we ourselves have to remember that God is our protector, not our insecurities, fears, bitterness, resentment etc. By depending on His strength, we are free to do the most vulnerable thing there is to do which is to love.

Mei says

This is a sequel to Harvest of Rubies. The actions takes place exactly when Harvest of Rubies finishes.

So, Sarah and Darius now have a real marriage, but things are not perfect. Darius has trust issues and doesn't concede his love to Sarah - he's in deep denial! Sarah, on her part, has also her issues, and so the marriage has its problems.

This is as much a story of their marriage as it is a story about Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem.

I must say that I preferred the Harvest of Rubies more than this book.

Please do not misunderstand me: this is an excellent and interesting book, but much of it was about Nehemiah and Sarah religion and faith. I would have liked it much more if it has concentrated more on the mystery part, on Sarah's and Darius's marriage and love, on The Babilonian brothers, on Roxanne and Lysander. There were so many interesting characters that I felt were left on their own while the story was incentrated on Nehemiah preachings. Not that they were boring, but there was just too much of them for my taste.

Anyhow, I hope Ms. Afshar will continue to write about Sarah, Darius and all the others! I will certainly like to read more!!! :D

Mesu says

Engaging. Inspiring. Heart- stopping and heart- rending. Harvest of God takes readers on a journey from ancient Persia to the broken-down walls of Jerusalem, re-building our hope as Nehemiah's story is woven through a complex plot with multi-layered characters we love and hate and then love some more. A fabulous biblical novel that sent me straight back to God's Word!

Julia Reffner says

I believe this is the first book I have read which takes place during the time of Nehemiah. Having participated in a year long small group study covering this book of the Bible I was particularly interested in Harvest of Gold. And of course I was excited to read this book because Afshar has become my favorite biblical fiction novelist since the release of Pearl in the Sand. Combine this with a healthy dose of cover love and I couldn't wait to get my hands on this book!

Afshar's strong background in religious and historic studies shines through in her fiction. Her accurate use of historical detail and her gift in writing descriptions make her fiction come alive. Harvest of Gold is a beautiful exploration of the full meaning of marriage and its value as an example of God's love for us. Also, the topic of spiritual warfare is explored in depth through the building of the wall and in the individual character's lives.

I believe this book would provide valuable bibliotherapy for those dealing with a miscarriage or even for those dealing with marriage issues. I can't wait for Afshar's next release!

I was provided a copy of this book from the author. My opinions are entirely my own.

Shantelle says

Unknown to me until I began to read it, *Harvest of Gold* is a sequel to *Harvest of Rubies* by Tessa Afshar. –Continuing Darius's, and Sarah's, the once scribe, story. Nehemiah, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, also finds a prominent place in *Harvest of Gold*. I was a little upset at first, since I couldn't bring everything from *Harvest of Rubies* to remembrance, but I caught on quick enough for the most part, at once recognizing Sarah and Darius's names.

I read *Harvest of Gold* at a slower pace, becoming a little confused and lost at the parts where Nehemiah was main character. I guess I just didn't get into that part of the story as much. However, Darius and Sarah's was a story of beauty and redemption, of bringing ashes to life. Lovely.

So while not one of my favorites, *Harvest of Gold* held some unforgettable scenes and was an interesting, Biblical rendition of when the King Artaxerxes bestowed favor on Nehemiah and let him go back to Jerusalem, to build up the Jew's homeland once again.

Wondering if perhaps there will be a book to tell Roxanna's and Lysander's wild story... :)

Rel says

Tessa Afshar has taken my breath away with the beauty and depth of her latest novel, *Harvest of Gold*. Continuing the story of Sarah and Darius, whose marriage got off to such a rocky beginning in *Harvest of Rubies*, Tessa parallels their marriage journey with the rebuilding of Jerusalem under the direction of Sarah's cousin, Nehemiah. Tessa peels back the layers of Biblical history to provide a fascinating account of the fate of Jerusalem and her people as they struggle to take back what they lost following the destruction of their city. As fear and strife interfere with Nehemiah's progress, Darius and Sarah experience the same damaging effects in their own marriage. While Darius has come to value his Jewish wife he cannot return her deep love and devotion, which wears on Sarah and leads to unspeakable heartache for them both. Tessa exposes the frailty of Darius' heart, an otherwise courageous, honourable, and compassionate man, penning some tender

and evocative scenes between husband and wife. This is a gripping story of loss, love, and forgiveness with many an arresting moment that caused me to think deeply about my own marriage as well as my devotion to God. Despite the serious subject matter, Tessa infuses the tale with tender romance and light-hearted humour. Minor characters, Lysander and Roxanna, stole many of their scenes and would suit a story of their own! Harvest of Gold is simply captivating and I recommend it not only for the beautiful storytelling but also for the incisive lessons to be learned. Tessa has cemented her place as one of my most favourite authors.

Andi says

My Thoughts: This book is one to be savored, slowly. Sarah and Darius are great characters that pull you right into the story. When Darius really see's Sarah, his wife, it is beautiful. Tessa Afshar is becoming a favorite of mine. I highly recommend this book! Pick it up and travel to Jerusalem without leaving your home.

Rachel says

Harvest of Gold was one of my anticipated to-read books this year, since I had fallen in love with the character of Sarah in Harvest of Rubies. The sequel left me with mixed feelings, especially since I found that I didn't care so much about our lead pair by the end of the novel. I think that this was what surprised me the most.

But like the lovely words of grace spoken by Darius in the Harvest of Rubies, 'Your account is with me', I was glad to have a similar line to take away from this read 'You don't have to win that which is already yours'. It is another lovely way to consider both divine as well as earthly love. In this sense, this novel met my expectations of genre fiction in that I was inspired and blessed by this piece. That is one gold star for this work.

The second star is definitely for the obvious historical research evident in the detailing of the Persian setting. This detailing can become clunky with characters suddenly being expository devices. But there are also fine uses of Afshar's research such as in the scene where Nehemiah's cousin Hanani is incredulous at Nehemiah's toilette in his capacity as cupbearer. Nehemiah is acutely embarassed, leading to a subtle setting of the context of Jerusalem's poverty and deprivation

I'd give another star for the improvement in the dialogue in Harvest of Gold, which is in fact much better written than in Harvest of Rubies, where I often found myself jarred by a distinctly modern register in the banter between Sarah and Darius. But I'm refraining from my gold star generosity because at times the literal translation of modern idioms to various ancient counterparts was overkill. (eg. a millstone hanging from one's neck becomes a stone olive press, keep your pants on morphs into keep your beard on, and the like).

Afshar began with the intriguing set up of Darius and Sarah literally waking up embroiled in an assassination attempt against the king along with Nehemaiah's burden about the defenseless state of Jerusalem. This was a novel rife with exquisite possibilities. That's one reason I want to give a star and deduct one at the same time (I liberally wallow in my discontent on this issue in the paragraphs to follow. So be warned).

The seamless way in which narrative threads of romance, mystery and Bible history intertwine till Darius and Sarah find themselves as part of the convoy to Jerusalem is worth mention. I think that one reason things went downhill after that is that the narrative marginalizes Sarah from the mystery solving enterprise, leaving

Darius to follow it through.

The development of the assassination plot began to lose steam once the team led by Darius stops investigating on page and instead Afshar lets the investigation proceed based on the reports of action that happen elsewhere. That move just wasted so many characters with great potential, not the least of which are Artaxerxes's Immortals like Mandorius and Roxanne (though the treatment of Roxanane suggests a sequel in the offing). What was more weird was that suddenly halfway through the novel, the plot is unraveled and one of the most toothless villains/ instigators I have ever encountered in literature is captured.

Eh? I mean what was the point of this foray into mystery? As in the case of Harvest of Rubies, the digression into mystery is probably to make a faith related observation. Here it is just so that Sarah can testify once to Darius about God's hand at work. The ineffectual plotting weakens Sarah's testimony.

Narratively, the gradual awakening of Darius's faith is in Jerusalem and through Nehemiah. Had Afshar concentrated on developing their relationship, keeping Darius in the Jerusalem strand from the beginning it would have made Darius's character development stronger, added much more depth to the relationship with Sarah and redeemed the Nehemiah sections from being the more boring parts of the novel.

What was so riveting about the previous novel was that we got to see the fiercely intelligent and resourceful Sarah at work, both as a scribe as well as a wife working against the odds to aid her husband. It was such a tragic waste of her character to reduce her for the larger part of the novel to a Mills and Boon miss.

This brings me to the development of her relationship with Darius. One of my quibbles with the previous novel was Darius's dogged belief that Sarah deliberately humiliated him at their wedding. This then was drawn out interminably as a foundation of mistrust on which their marriage was built.

To be fair to Afshar, she takes pains to demonstrate that Darius is a product of a particular historical Persian upbringing which valued self control and restraint as well as a code of conduct which prized honesty. But that in no way explains Darius's frequent attempts to distance himself from his wife. For a good part of the novel, I was scratching my head over the fact that Darius found his wife a physically attractive, charming and capable companion but was driven by the need not to give into his feelings for her. This just made him a confused character. After all there is only so much leeway that one can give the theory that men are unusually obtuse when it comes to relationships.

Perhaps the main reason that Afshar developed Darius in this fashion was because of the demands of the generic romance formula sarcastically summed by Mycroft (in the BBC series Sherlock) as, 'The promise of love, the pain of loss, the joy of redemption'. One needs some tension or crisis between the couple so that readers can root for the couple as they earn their happy ending. In this case, their crisis was so totally engineered by a decision of Sarah's which was completely illogical that it is hard to be in charity with her.

In sum, I guess that while I don't think reading this novel was a total waste of time, let's just say you won't find me buying a ticket for the sequel train.

*This review is on response to Netgalley.com who gave me this chance to review the book.
