

*The tree which moves some to tears of joy  
Is in the eyes of others only a green thing  
That stands in the way.  
Some see nature all ridicule and deformity. . .  
And some scarce see nature at all.  
But to the eyes of the man of imagination,  
Nature is imagination itself.*

*William Blake*

## *Introduction*

*It is only the first of November in the year of our Lord 1778, and the inclement weather is bitterly cold and snowy. Crystals of ice, which whisper of a brutal winter to come, encrust the frozen ground of my small village on the north bank of the Mohawk River in New York.*

*As a child, I once delighted in snowflakes and thought them to be merry of heart as they danced mischievously like sprites through the woodlands. In the ghostly shadows of my own death, I see it was foolishness to have such immature fantasies. Through my tears, the mythical creatures have lost their imagined beauty. Instead, snowflakes have transformed into tormenting spears of ice as if hurled to the ground by the devil's own spawn.*

*As the autumn leaves shrivel to a brittle brown refuse, my grieving heart has likewise hardened in its anguish. I, Abigail Sarah Bosworth, will be unjustly hung at sunrise in two weeks' time. The charge is treason. Upon this soiled parchment smudged with tears and ink, I plead my innocence.*

*An abomination of inhumanity toward a defenseless woman has taken place. Unless I recount the actions, which caused this travesty, no recourse remains. It requires faith every year to believe that spring will come again and renew winter's ravaged land. I believe the Lord my Redeemer will provide a miracle.*

*Without divine help, I will soon be walking to the gallows. If that is the only path remaining, I pray my eyes will open afresh in the land of the forgiven.*

A plainly dressed woman in a flax-colored muslin garment irritably scratched out the words *sprites through the woodlands* (too fanciful, she thought), crossed out *tormenting spears* (too dramatic, she decided), and then ran a crooked line through *abomination* and *travesty*.

Anyone reading this will conclude the writer has the vapors, Abigail groaned in despair. With discouragement, the tiny woman crumpled the ink-blotted piece of parchment and angrily tossed it into a grimy corner of the cramped jail cell.

*Jail cell?* It hardly seemed possible. Her amber gold eyes, which oddly matched her wildly matted, tawny blond curls, surveyed the filthy, lice-infested, hay-stuffed drafty shed masquerading as a jail. Sturdy oaken bars covered with splinters confined the woman to one decrepit corner of the otherwise wobbly structure (calling it a building would be too *dignified* for its skeletal framework).

It was certainly unfit for man, woman, or beast. In fact, Abigail's incarceration was unacceptable on so many levels. Why should her impeccable good works and longstanding reputation in the village be rendered null and void on the written testimony of an *anonymous* man? It was indeed a mockery of justice, but how could she prove her innocence when his words carried a greater weight?

Inspiration struck. Abigail impulsively stretched her hand across a scratchy bale of hay, which was serving as a wobbly desk. The woman grabbed another soiled parchment, which was her one amenity, and then dipped the pen in a nearly empty inkwell. She wrote—

*It is too late for resolution of my ill-fated circumstances. Yet I plead for innocent women in the future who experience miscarriages of the law. Justice cannot be served when one conflicting testimony is chosen over another, especially when the false testimony is from a conniving male seeking revenge.*

While contemplating the effectiveness of her newest and even angrier scribbles, the small woman forced her wan face into a deepening frown. No matter which way she tilted her head to look at the words, it still seemed as if something was amiss.

With growing disgruntlement, Abigail irately tossed a second smudged parchment onto a clump of loose hay in the grimy corner. Her chapped fingers distractedly scratched at the high-buttoned neckline of her coarsely-woven dress.

*Oh no, fleas—what else can plague me? Am I to be tested to my limits like the biblical Job? Panic swept over her entire body. I have to do something, but what? I must find an answer before it is too late!*

Rebelliously, Abigail began scraping a tin cup against the roughly hewn wooden bars. To her delight, it made an awful screeching sound like the chains of death were rising from the underworld to seize her soul.

“Now stop that right now, Miss Abigail,” a crotchety voice complained from behind a crude wooden partition. An elderly man named Ezekiel Padgett hobbled through a narrow opening from the tiny entrance area of the ramshackle shed. His uncombed mane of pure white hair flowed like tousled ribbons over the collar of his well-worn deerskin jacket.

Although a deficient wood burning stove sparked and hissed near the jailer's cot and rickety chair, there were no such comforts in Abigail's filthy cell. Without a cot to sleep on or even a blanket for warmth, every violent gust of November wind tore through the paper-thin walls of the swaying structure. Just thinking of her continual

discomfiture made Abigail shiver, but the woman resisted the temptation to retreat and burrow for warmth under the sparsely scattered hay.

“Has thou no sympathy for the draftiness of my cell, Ezekiel,” she admonished. “Can thou not even spare an extra blanket for my solace?” Abigail observed the jailer had both a comforter made of coarse beaver pelts and a woven Indian blanket piled high on his untidy cot.

“It will be over soon enough, Miss Abigail,” the aged man said with forced politeness. “It is not important if thou catches thy *death of cold* if thou catches my meaning.”

The man surprisingly tittered at his words, and there were gaps in his mouth where teeth should have been. Instantly, his jovial expression was replaced with a pain-filled grimace, which carved deep grooves on his weathered face.

He had known the quiet, unassuming spinster since the woman was in her early twenties. A pretty little thing she was upon arriving with her parents, he recollected. Everyone always remarked on her odd shade of amber gold eyes. Some called them bewitching as they were so solemn and resolute.

*Perhaps the woman is a witch like some say, Ezekiel mused. It is not my business! Besides, she is not long for the world. A true witch would find some manner of escape. One thing is certain! I will never let her bewitch me!*

Though his memory was fading as well as his eyesight, Ezekiel could still picture the hot, muggy day Miss Abigail and her bedraggled parents noisily arrived with several wagons in the villages of Mohawk and eventually their destination, Stone Arabia. The entire area was known as the Mohawk Valley and sometimes mentioned in the same breath as *The Noses*, which referred to steep rock formations along the Mohawk River.

Emotionally, the jailer rubbed his weary eyes in the hopes of making his gentler memories vanish. But his mind’s eye still pictured how mesmerizing the tiny young woman was that first day with her tawny unkempt hair as curly as an unshorn sheep in the humidity.

Abruptly clearing his throat to stop any more favorable reminiscences of the now thirty-something-year-old spinster’s entrance into the close-knit farming community, the man curtly growled, “I have not been given any extra supplies for thy wellbeing, Miss Abigail. Thou must admit a warm blanket will not be needed for thy destination, and that is the truth.” His rebuke was scathing!

Abigail’s reputedly golden eyes flung wide open in anger. *Is Ezekiel Padgett actually implying my final resting place will be amongst the flames of hell? How dare he assume I am guilty of the charge of treason and unredeemable!*

The elderly man’s outspoken words continued unabatedly. “Would it not be best to pray for thy soul’s salvation in thy remaining time rather than complain about

thy cell's inconveniences?" Muttering under his breath about his charge's lack of contrition, the jailer abruptly limped away. "In all my days, I have not heard of a respectable woman doing what thou hast done."

Abigail's eyes flashed like golden flames doused with lard. Until recent events, her reputation was above reproach. The woman was known as a churchgoing, charitable woman, and it was her compassionate nature and knowledge of herbs that the village relied on for healing. Instead, the jailer's unemotional acceptance of her incarceration and his self-righteous assumption of her guilt made the woman's blood boil.

"*Ezekiel!*" Abigail railed much louder than she intended. The man's filmy eyes widened. He seemed shocked the once reserved assistant in the local apothecary was no longer meek and mild, but a scolding woman like his wife had been. "Thou hast known me many years now. Did thou forget I nursed thy wife Martha day and night through her final bout with the grippe?"

"And what of Emmett Parker? Can thou not remember when I delivered the little redheaded brat into this world? And what of my volunteer work helping the wounded on the battlefield? I have always tried to help others in their time of need.

"Yet I am to face the gallows in a public spectacle for doing the same thing—helping someone. Thou knows as well as I that none of my actions deserve the gruesome penalty I have been accorded.

"I want more than a blanket from thee. If thou has any mercy in thy soul, Ezekiel, unlock this cell at once that I might flee this injustice, or my blood will be on thine hands."

Her recitation of truths felt as if a mule kicked Ezekiel Padgett in his remaining teeth. The old man grabbed his mouth with a trembling hand, and in confusion, he stared at the distressed woman through cloudy eyes. The jailer did remember the love and compassion she had given his dying wife.

Deliberately, the man kept his expression as cold and hard as granite. As he shuffled away, his leaden footsteps and hunched shoulders betrayed him. The man kept repeating in his mind, *I must not show any sympathy!*

At the time of the woman's conviction, Ezekiel had not grasped the full implications, but admittedly he had thought death by hanging to be an unusually cruel punishment. As the trusted jailer of the village, the man could not help her. He just could not!

"I am truly sorry, Miss Abigail. If thou escapes, I will be hung in thy place, and it is not my desire to die in such a grisly way. Thou should have considered the consequences of thine unseemly actions." Pretending to turn a deaf ear on any further complaints, the old man retreated behind his partition.

“I will pray for thy soul, Ezekiel,” the disheveled woman shouted. “*Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven* the Bible says in Luke 6:37. Thou has not shown mercy nor forgiveness,” she cried out with futility, delivering a parting shot.

It was tempting to childishly run her tin cup over the wooden bars again. Instead, Abigail resignedly dropped to her dirty knees in the scratchy hay. Her plight was hopeless. In frustration, the woman harshly shook her matted curls, which were cascading in uncombed mounds down her back.

In the dimly lit corner of the shadowy cell, Abigail’s flowing hair formed a golden halo around her as she began to pray. *Heavenly Father, hast Thou also condemned my actions along with thy godly representatives on this earth? If my actions were compassionate, not sinful, please rescue me from my execution, just as Thou has rescued those who have loved and trusted Thee throughout the ages. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

After finishing her prayers, Abigail knew reality was sometimes an inconvenient friend as was truth. Deep-down, the woman knew she felt no contrition for those actions deemed treasonous, only regret for getting caught.

Clutching her arms tightly for warmth, the shivering woman sprawled lengthwise across the enclosure in an attempt to retrieve the writing materials. They were her only connection to the outside world. Then hugging the dwindling sheets of parchments and pen close to her chest, she huddled in a tight ball amongst a pile of loose hay. Before long, her eyes, which were swollen from tears, painfully closed, and the convicted woman on death’s watch drifted off into a troubled sleep.



*Life is divided into three terms –  
That which was, which is, and which will be.  
Let us learn from the past to profit by the present,  
And from the present,  
To live better in the future.*

*William Wordsworth*



*Observe good faith and justice toward all nations.  
Cultivate peace and harmony with all.*

*George Washington*

## PART ONE

### *Chapter One*

German Palatines they were once called, Abigail Bosworth wearily remembered in a restless, somewhat incoherent sleep. The woman rolled over to seek comfort in the frigid hay, but finding none, her thoughts aimlessly returned to the family's heritage and its history of struggle. *Am I only following my parents and grandparents' example by standing up for my beliefs?*

Once wealthy, her maternal grandparents experienced widespread famine and frequent French military attacks in the middle Rhine region where they were born. Eventually, England came to the rescue of the German Palatines and resettled many Christian refugees not only in the homeland, but in Ireland and the American Colonies as well.

In the early 1700s, Abigail's future grandparents, whom she would never meet, and the little girl, who would one day become her mother, joined the mass exodus of more than ten thousand Germans to Great Britain.

Her mother's parents settled in the seaport city of Liverpool, and her grandfather, Otto Hoffmann, became an assistant to a wealthy British shipping magnate. According to her mother, Abigail's grandfather was extremely articulate with excellent bookkeeping skills and business acumen.

In time, he became a valuable and trusted employee. Upon the owner's sudden death of a heart attack, Otto Hoffmann was temporarily thrust into a senior leadership role. Because some of his former wealth was intact despite immigrating to England, Otto Hoffmann purchased the shipping business outright from the remaining shareholders, and that led to a future fortune far beyond his dreams.

Otto and Ilse Hoffmann doted on their only child, Madalyn, who, when she was in her late teens, fell in love and married the son of a local apothecary owner. The young man's name was Garrett Bosworth. While Garrett's skills and interests seemed to lean more toward mixing potions for ailing patients, his new father-in-law convinced his daughter's husband to become his business partner for his vast shipping holdings.

A few years after Madalyn's marriage, misfortune struck! Otto and Ilse Hoffmann drowned in a ferryboat accident along the foggy Dover coast. Madalyn was inconsolable and staying in England only brought more despair along with constant reminders of her beloved parents.

Her husband Garrett, who yearned to please his wife and make her happy, decided to sell nearly half the shares of the family's shipping holdings. Garrett and Madalyn Bosworth, who would one day become Abigail's parents, migrated to the American Colonies to make a new life. If the truth were known, her future father was up for an adventure and thinking about opening his own apothecary rather than running the shipping business he inherited.

Wisely, however, he maintained fifty-one percent of his shipping holdings as a silent partner and sold the remaining forty-nine percent of the prosperous business to several eager investors, who agreed to manage the company in his absence.

With his and Madalyn's financial security guaranteed, Garrett secured passage to the American Colonies on one of his own ships in 1746. After much discussion, their destination became the city of Philadelphia in what would one day become the state of Pennsylvania.

In the early 1700s, the population of Philadelphia grew to nearly two and a half thousand people. The inhabitants were mainly a mixture of European cultures including English, Irish, Dutch, and German. There was also a smattering of other cultures.

Originally, the newly developing city was an important trading center with the West Indies. When trade with the West Indies was blocked during Queen Anne's wars with the French in 1702 and 1713, Africa and the British Isles became Philadelphia's main trading partners.

Because it was a major seaport, the city appealed to Abigail's future father. It gave him a possible option to open a new branch of the shipping business and temporarily shelve his idea for an apothecary. Not long after their arrival, their new daughter, Abigail Sarah Bosworth, was born in June of 1747.

Garrett Bosworth's arrival in America turned out to be fortuitous. It was like the golden goose in Aesop's Fables had unforeseeably come to life, and Abigail's father could not turn down the unfettered opportunities landing in his lap for opening a branch office of his Liverpool shipping company.

Filled with excitement and determined to watch the goose lay an enormous golden egg in the port of Philadelphia, he immediately dispatched a letter about his plans to his partners back in England, who agreed with his assessment of the business climate.

Within a few years, lucrative shipping contracts came pouring into the new branch, and Garrett Bosworth grew so rich that he and his small family moved to a mansion in an exclusive neighborhood of the growing city.

Like many big cities, Garrett Bosworth discovered Philadelphia was not as picture perfect as it appeared, and there were many serious issues underpinning its multicultural fabric.

Some of the issues were historical in nature such as a depression in the 1720s and 1730s, which impeded Philadelphia's growth and caused widespread unemployment that lasted for years to come. When the region finally developed agricultural products and began exporting the products to Europe, the depression began to lift.

Yet there were other knotty problems that resisted being solved. Because the city was known for religious tolerance, immigration increased at a fast pace. Not only was the city overcrowded with criminals and streets were littered with garbage and animals, the resulting melting pot was overflowing with political tensions and conflicts between religious and ethnic groups.

Still, in the midst of its problems, Philadelphia was special, and residents took pride in it. In spite of its flaws, some neighborhoods were magically transformed with paved streets, twinkling gas lights, and new structures such as Christ Church and Independence Hall, hinting what the city could be like in the future.

There were also many services for Philadelphia's residents. As early as the 1720s, one of the largest libraries in the colonies was created. Then one of Philadelphia's most famous citizens, Benjamin Franklin, founded a fire department.

When Franklin later served as the city's postmaster general, he organized postal routes between Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, which greatly improved communication. A legend in his own city, he also helped build the first hospital in the colonies and established the College of Philadelphia.

Other services in Philadelphia included the first newspaper being published and the organization of several batteries for defense. Militias were recruited during the French and Indian War in 1754, and the city remained safe.

For Abigail and her parents, Philadelphia became their home, and the advantages of living there far outweighed its disadvantages. They were content to remain there for many years. One day, however, the political climate would abruptly change, and the disheartened family would be forced to leave.

*When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight,  
It concentrates his mind wonderfully.*

*Samuel Johnson*

## *Chapter Two*

Knowing the execution would be soon, Abigail fidgeted and struggled to rollover in the loose clumps of hay. It felt damp and chilling to the bone! Her approaching death cruelly mocked the life she desperately longed to live.

*How is it possible to feel life so vibrantly in such a time of peril?* Abigail had never felt more alive, yet her very breath was about to be mercilessly snatched away.

*Has a spiteful hoax been played on me? Am I a pawn in someone else's game?* It still seemed inconceivable to Abigail that she was awaiting execution. Without any foreknowledge, she had been arrested, convicted, and jailed. All that remained was God's abundant forgiveness through Christ. Like a predator, even the piercing frostiness of the icy November air sank its sharp teeth into her crumpled body.

The woman shuddered helplessly. *Is fear debilitating me, or is it something else?* Abigail's life-and-death situation seemed stunningly hopeless in the solemnity of the decaying prison cell. Startlingly, the comfort of confessing her sins to a clergyman had not yet been offered.

Abigail could go no lower in the opinions of others and was now an infamous pariah and traitor in a village, which once revered her. It truly disappointed her that friends and neighbors now thought her wicked and unrepentant. No one sought her out with kindness or consolation. Except for God's everlasting comfort, Abigail was completely alone.

Though she was forced to remain silent at her trial, there was some truth to the evidence presented against her. In her brief life, there may have been some things for which she was contrite, but the so-called seditious act that resulted in her condemnation of death was *not* one of them.

Over and over again, Abigail asked herself the same definitive question. *What would Jesus have done in my place?* In her heart, she knew He would have acted as she had.

Hoping God agreed with the spiritual defense for her actions, Abigail sighed. *Everything seems lost, especially my honor.* With so little time left, the best course was simply to trust the omniscience and mercy of the everlasting God. Only He could bring about a miracle to save her life. His will would be done regardless of her earthly failings.

A smile slipped across her icy lips. Wryly, the woman pictured herself pleading at the pearly gates and objecting to the injustice of her death. Yet everything was in God's hands, not hers.

Forcefully shutting her eyes to block out the eerie shadows spilling into the cell, the plain-dressed woman began searching her fading memories for happier times. It would be far better to dwell on times of joy than the unknown mysteries of the future.

As a little girl, Abigail thought of herself as frail and homely with a thatch of unruly blond hair. Her mother, however, sometimes described her as delicately beautiful with porcelain-like features. The truth was probably somewhere in between.

As Abigail got older, it became obvious to her parents that their daughter lacked the stamina to run, jump rope, or play tag with the neighborhood children. Instead, their only child preferred indoor activities and imaginary games with dolls.

On the rare occasion when Abigail was allowed to play outdoors, her parents observed that she frequently panted and gasped for air with any physical exertion or experienced coughing spells.

To protect their only child, the young girl was usually confined in her parents' home during harsh Philadelphia winters, which could be damp and brutal. In spite of the extra precautions, Abigail was often sick and bedridden with colds, coughs, and sore throats.

Constant illnesses made Abigail's childhood more isolated than other children her age, and her life revolved around activities that could be done in the comfort of her own home. The young girl was homeschooled by her well-educated mother and came to be well-versed in literature, history, and her Christian faith. Due to the advantages of her parents' wealth, Abigail also had private music tutors.

One problem with living in Philadelphia was that Abigail's health remained an issue. From his early experiences working in his father's apothecary in Liverpool, Garrett Bosworth suspected his daughter had asthma. He believed her condition was exacerbated not only by strenuous exercise and exposure to communicable diseases, but by the unclean air of a crowded city.

Although Abigail's parents did everything they could to alleviate their daughter's medical problems, it seemed logical to remain in Philadelphia. While city life might have been part of the problem, it was hard to give up the many opportunities the city offered, including the thriving new branch of the shipping business.

One of Abigail's most vivid memories of Philadelphia was a hot summer day in June. She had just turned six and could still remember the bright sunshine and anticipation of going shopping for a birthday present with her mother.

Proudly, Abigail tucked her tiny hand in her mother's gloved hand, and the young girl's shiny black Mary Jane shoes danced along the red brick sidewalk.

There were so many shiny glass windows filled with trinkets on Broad Street in Philadelphia. All at once, Abigail tugged her mother to a complete stop and breathlessly asked, "What is that?"

In a huge shop window shimmering in the sunlight was a gloriously honey brown curvaceous piece of wood. It had rounded slits on its smooth body and long strings, and next to it sat an enormous wooden bow with a shank of horse hair. More than anything, Abigail longed to touch the glossy wood.

"Why, I do believe that is a violin," Abigail's mother said with an indulgent smile of delight. "I do not think I have ever seen one up close. Shall we go in and have a peek?"

"Oh, Mother, I think it is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen." Impetuously, young Abigail began pulling her mother's hand through the heavy wooden door of a very unusual music shop.

Inside was a wonderland of fine musical instruments perched here and there as if on thrones in a magical kingdom. Each one was hand-carved and shinier and more splendid than the last. To Abigail's innocent eyes, it was a feast more delicious than the finest food.

"My daughter would like to see the violin in the window," Abigail's mother said politely to the proprietor of the shop, Antoine Montrose. The rather plump man with a bushy black moustache smiled and with a slight accent said, "Thy daughter has good taste, Madam."

Obediently, the heavysset man shuffled across the roughly hewn wooden floor to the window display, and with the gentleness one lifts a newborn baby from a bassinet, he tenderly cushioned the violin in his arms and lifted it and the bow from the display. The man proudly held it up for his wide-eyed customers to revere.

"This is an original Antonio Stradivari violin, a most beautiful sounding instrument. It is made of spruce and willow on the inside and maple for the neck and back. Alas, it was slightly damaged in recent transport from Italy." The man's wide finger ran along a barely visible flaw. "Thou can see it has a slight scratch on the surface, which cannot be completely rubbed out.

"I must assure thee, however, that the deformity does not affect the pure tones in the least. It does mean the instrument has been drastically discounted. It is not often I have a legendary Stradivari to display. Thou will soon see that it has the sweet sound of the angels in heaven and would be perfect for an angelic young lady. Would thou like to try it, Miss?" he purred in a beneficent full voice like an operatic tenor.

Abigail could still remember the joy of being allowed to touch such a treasured instrument made by a world-famous violinmaker. "Could I, Mother?" she whispered reverently. Her mother nodded.

Before long, the shop owner had the fine-looking instrument in young Abigail's slender arms, and he tucked it under her fragile neck with a thick white woven cloth. The man patiently showed her how to grasp it properly and curve her small fingers around the strings, and then how to pluck the strings and make a few sounds.

While the young girl was attempting to play a few notes, the man ran the bow, which resembled a narrow spear covered with taut horsehair, over a curved chunk of resin. Then he secured the bow in Abigail's unused hand, showed her the proper grip, and delicately glided it back and forth over the strings like a graceful gazelle prancing across a meadow. Abigail was mesmerized by the pure sounds, and her mother was elated to see her housebound daughter so enthusiastic.

It was one of Abigail's most joyous days in her childhood and a birthday to remember. She returned home with a priceless violin, marred or not, and it completely changed her quiet, sedentary life. Music soon became the pathway to beauty for Abigail, and the young girl eagerly began traversing the somewhat rocky path of learning an intricate instrument that was nearly as big as she was.

Antoine Montrose turned out to be an extraordinary violin artist, and Abigail began lessons with him in her home the following week. Over time, she became his favorite protégé, and he became her beloved mentor until his death when she was eighteen.

Because their daughter excelled in music, Abigail's parents also purchased an ebony black grand piano, which was a new invention combining the best attributes of a harpsichord and a clavichord. It took up a dignified corner in their drawing room. For many years, Abigail and her mother both took lessons from a former German concert pianist.

Although Abigail enjoyed playing piano, nothing replaced her love for the violin and its haunting melodies. Every night before going to sleep, Abigail would play the rich strains of violin compositions by the great masters of Europe, such as Joseph Haydn and Johann Sebastian Bach. Unknowingly, music became a lonely young girl's thread of communication with God and a private way to worship His divine beauty.

*And love's the noblest frailty of the mind.*

*John Dryden*

### *Chapter Three*

The silence in the jail cell was deafening. Abigail's memories sadly reminded the woman of all that was lost, and few tears began rolling aimlessly down her cheeks. Abigail awkwardly shifted in the filthy hay. Before becoming too maudlin, she would have to think of something more cheerful.

Remarkably, it was easy to conjure up the memories of a bustling street with horse-drawn buggies and tousled children playing ball. It was the original street where her immigrant parents had their first house in Philadelphia, and within its modest walls, Abigail was born.

While Abigail's young life revolved around homeschooling and experimental medical treatments for her asthma, there was one winter when she had a spell of good health for three straight months. For the first time, her parents eased their stringent rules and allowed their five-year-old daughter to go ice skating at a nearby pond. It was a day of blessings for Abigail as a neighborhood boy, Algernon Brown, saved Abigail's life after she fell through the ice. From that day forward, the two became best friends.

There were many obstacles standing in the way of their friendship. With her father's financial success came change, and Abigail and her parents unexpectedly moved uptown and away from the congested area of uneven red brick sidewalks and narrow row houses.

Even though the family now lived in a mansion with several servants, the simple bond between Abigail and the kind ruffian of a boy from the old neighborhood managed to survive. Although the young girl guessed her parents would have liked the mismatched friendship to end, they always welcomed the boy to their new home.

For a few years, Algernon Brown's presence was a regular occurrence, though admittedly his visits seemed further apart as they both grew older. Abigail often missed him when they were teenagers and wondered if her friend had found someone else of the female persuasion that he liked better.

Abigail tried to look at it pragmatically. If Algernon had lost interest, she at least had her memories. One particularly hard-to-forget memory was his first visit to her new home when they were both seven. While her parents were outside enjoying the carefully manicured English garden, Algernon ran wildly through the hallways and rambunctiously slid down a mahogany curved banister in the foyer. Abigail had never seen such a daredevil.

Through the years, Algernon continued to be a scallywag with street smarts. In spite of being Abigail's complete opposite, he was somehow endearing. When she was a teenager, Abigail envied his dodgy energy and gusto, and how he grabbed at every opportunity to better himself. Sadly, her friend usually came up emptyhanded. When Algernon's parents died, Abigail watched his hopes and dreams shatter.

Her most painful memory was the day they clumsily parted. Algernon stood tall before her tiny figure with the stocky muscular body of a grown man, an unruly thatch of coarse brown hair which had been distinctively his since childhood, and a whimsically curved smile. They both had unshed tears.

At the time, Abigail had no idea that she and her family would hastily leave Philadelphia the next summer. If she had known, the young woman would have realized that it was probably the last time she would see Algernon.

Abigail and her friend's sudden good-bye came on a cold and blustery October day. Algernon had urgently requested to meet Abigail in the old neighborhood where he still lived. Because of their long friendship, she felt obliged to trek back to the place of her earliest memories. Leaves were swirling around them as they stood facing each other on a rutted red brick sidewalk. A block of row houses provided the backdrop for their parting.

Algernon did not seem to sense Abigail's discomfort at being in the rundown neighborhood, nor did he notice how the young woman kept glancing nervously over her shoulder. Crime was rampant in this part of town, and Abigail knew her mother would not have approved her being there.

In the years leading up to their parting, it had become obvious to Abigail that she and Algernon were on divergent paths. He was serving as an apprentice in a machinist's shop for his dead father's former business partner. It was a job he loathed. Not only was his boss an alcoholic, but Algernon discovered he was all thumbs working with intricate parts of newfangled gadgets.

Abigail never quite knew what to say when Algernon bemoaned his lack of opportunities in life. He often railed at God for having forgotten him. At those times, Abigail felt guilty for her comfortable upbringing and her friend's constant struggle to put food on the table. She was positive, however, that a good God did not favor one person over another and hoped that one day, Algernon's life would also be blessed.

On this particular day, Algernon Brown's reason for meeting with Abigail was unexpected. Because he was at a crossroads in a job he hated with an abusive boss, Abigail's friend decided to make a life-altering change. After much soul-searching, Algernon enlisted in the Pennsylvania militia and was leaving for basic training near a town called Harrisburg.

Though Abigail did not realize it at the time, Algernon wanted to become a success and return to Philadelphia to seek Abigail's hand in marriage. Unsure what the young woman would think of that, he decided to only hint at his intentions.

"Once I make my way in the military, I hope to see thee again, Abigail, that is if thou would want me to," he murmured self-consciously as his cheeks flushed with embarrassment. "In the meantime, would thou consider writing me? Here is a local address which I was told will forward letters to soldiers." He handed the startled woman a crumpled paper.

Taking the scribbled note from his hand gave Abigail time to think of what to say. She felt a little flustered and unsure at his sudden departure.

"Algernon, I have cared for thee ever since thou rescued me from the icy pond near the library," she said gently. "It is often that I am thankful for the heroic person that saved me without regard for his own safety. Of course, I will write thee and also pray for thy safety."

"I thank thee, Abigail. It means more than I can say." All at once, the man shivered and clutched Abigail to his broad chest, which was wrapped in a threadbare woolen coat. Although signs of affection were rarely exhibited in public, Algernon's lips touched hers with enthusiasm, and Abigail welcomed his closeness.

It was her first kiss and everything she hoped it would be. It felt like a rite of passage, a milestone of sorts. Abigail smiled with sincerity and stared at her friend with mixed emotions. Algernon's continuing presence in Abigail's life had always been reassuring, and she would miss his companionship during his absence.

Perhaps when he returned, Abigail would convince her father to give Algernon a job in the shipping business. It was a tidy plan, logical and orderly, and she would write to him in the meantime.

Eight months after Algernon Brown's surprising departure, however, trouble began spilling over between the American colonists and the British, and it became unsafe for Abigail and her British parents to remain in Philadelphia any longer. Abigail could remember her desperate feelings. How would her lifelong friend find her again? How would she be able to write to him? Abigail still had not gotten a reply from her first letter.

All at once, a numbing pain shot through Abigail's right shoulder, and the woman rolled over in the foul-smelling hay of her jail cell. She moaned unconsciously and squeezed her upper arm, which was stinging. Suddenly, Algernon Brown's white face stared at her in the shadows of her mind.

"*No, Algernon, no!*" Abigail screamed as she burrowed more deeply in the frigid hay. Gratefully, a deadening sleep overtook her throbbing bones and growing torment.

*Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are  
Something to do,  
Something to love,  
And something to hope for.*

*Joseph Addison*

## *Chapter Four*

Before coming to America, Abigail's future parents were both British citizens. Her father was born a Brit, and her mother, along with her German parents, became British citizens a few years after immigrating to England.

Even though Abigail's parents moved to America, it was proving difficult for them to separate their political views from Great Britain. In their early years in Philadelphia, they continued to view life through a British lens.

Both the Bosworth and Hoffmann families were supportive of Great Britain's political and financial interests in the American Colonies, which extended back to the early 1600s and 1700s. Many other German Palatines also continued to remain loyal to Great Britain. They had been treated well by the Brits and were allowed to immigrate to America as well as to England and Ireland.

There was another group rarely mentioned which supported Great Britain and that was Native Americans. It was common knowledge how four Native American leaders journeyed to London in 1710 on a mission to visit Queen Anne. The Native leaders of the New World were honored as diplomats and had their portraits officially painted and hung in the palace.

Abigail remembered hearing the story during her childhood in Philadelphia. Three of the dignitaries on the famous trip were Mohawk chiefs or *kings* as they were considered by their own people in the Iroquois Confederacy. A fourth chief was a Mohican of the Algonquian, and a fifth died crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

The thought of having *kings* among the Native Americans caught Abigail's eye as it was a very British notion. Perhaps the existence of Native *kings* visiting a continent Abigail never knew made a loose connection to the grandparents she never met. Whatever the reason, Abigail had always been intrigued with colonial history and the continuing influence of the Mohawk tribe nearly seventy years after the *kings* visited England.

Because of Abigail's interest, she researched Native Americans at the Philadelphia Library as part of her homeschooling. One thing she discovered was that two of the original *kings* who visited London were of the Wolf Clan, but the most well-known was of the Bear Clan. He had the Christian name of Peter Brant.

Later on when Abigail and her parents moved to the Mohawk Valley, the young woman was surprised to find that the local folk hero of upstate New York was still a Brant. The prominent Mohawk military leader in the mid to late 1700s, Joseph Brant, was the grandson of the famous Peter Brant, one of the Native *kings* who had visited England.

While it seemed a strange notion, Abigail could not shake the odd synchronicity that Joseph Brant's grandfather was known and admired by her grandparents in England, and that Brant's grandson was now living in the same area of New York as she was.

In an odd way, their heritage had merged into one place, and that fact alone made her wonder if the crossing of their paths would have any implications for her future. Thinking her theories were farfetched, Abigail always kept silent about them.

The younger Brant along with the strong Mohawk alliance with the British eventually began dominating the news and creating havoc for the newly formed United States of America, which declared independence in 1776.

Although it was astonishing to see the continuing influence of the Brant family, Abigail wondered if one of the reasons for the current political turmoil went back to the Mohawk *kings* visiting England in the early 1700s.

Through her library research, Abigail found that one of the main purposes of the Mohawk *kings*' trip to England concerned religion. They were seeking Anglican missionaries to counter the influence of French Catholic Jesuits. Was it possible one of the root causes of the American Revolution was religion?

At the time, Queen Anne responded to the visiting *kings* by authorizing an Anglican mission in the Mohawk village called *Lower Castle*. It was in an area of New York which had been Christianized in the early 1700s. Eventually, the *Upper Castle* area, which was upriver at Canajoharie, became Christianized in 1769. To Abigail's surprise, the land for the Anglican Church was donated by siblings of Joseph Brant.

As Abigail grew older, she found that her parents sometimes had disagreements about religion. Although they were both devout Christians and read the Bible daily, they had each grown up in different denominations.

As Palatine Germans, Madalyn Bosworth's parents were strict Lutherans, who adhered to the original teachings of Martin Luther from the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s. Abigail's father, Garrett Bosworth, was an Anglican and an Englishman through and through who believed in *God, King, and Country* in that order.

His denomination was founded when the church in England announced its independence from Rome, and Queen Elizabeth I was excommunicated. This new church became known as the Church of England and was later referred to as

the Anglican Church from the root word Anglo from *Anglo-Saxons*, the original inhabitants of England.

When they were first married, Garrett and Madalyn Bosworth never viewed their religious differences as a divisive problem as they were both Christians. In order to please their respective families, they never completely separated themselves from either denomination.

When Garrett took over the shipping business after his wife's parents died, they both became Anglican for the practical reason that their shipping clients and business associates were Anglican. After their move to Philadelphia and the birth of Abigail, it seemed easy to remain Anglican with so many English-speaking residents in the city.

During the political unrest leading up to the Revolutionary War, a strange thing happened. American Anglicans made a name change to *Episcopal*. The reason for the change was that many American Anglicans preferred being called Episcopalians to avoid ties to England and the persecution that could come from such ties.

The word *Episcopal* simply meant *to have bishops*, but as Abigail's father once explained, the name change was *like the sleight of hand of a magician*. Episcopalians and Anglicans to most were still one and the same. In fact, the church Abigail's family attended in Philadelphia was named Old Trinity Episcopal Church.

The Anglican name change brought to the forefront a huge problem. While the American Colonies had always prided themselves on religious tolerance and freedom, British immigrants began to be persecuted for their Anglican faith and suspected of being loyal to the British crown. A dangerous undercurrent of treason settled like a dark cloud over anyone hailing from England.

When the Revolutionary War began, the Church of England in America, more than any other denomination, began to be persecuted for being *Tories* or *Redcoats*, and the denomination struggled for survival. Complicating the matter even more, the majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were on record as being Anglican laymen, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

The growing support of France for the Americans also muddied the waters. Abigail's mother, who originally was a German Palatine, recalled how the French persecuted the Palatines and caused her family to immigrate to England. It also became obvious to Abigail that the alliances for the Revolutionary War had been set into motion in the early 1700s. Anglican Mohawks, who were descendants of the *kings*, joined British Anglicans in Canada loyal to the Crown of England in opposition to French Catholics, who supported the American Patriots.

The state of New York would one day become a battleground for those deep-set alliances to play out. Time was gone! Implausibly, Abigail Bosworth had been caught in the crosshairs of history, and it appeared that her death was imminent because of it.