

Caleb Vigilant

Chronicles of the Nephilim

Book Six

By Brian Godawa

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This book continues the story begun in *Joshua Valiant*.

CHAPTER 30

(Continuing from the last chapter of *Joshua Valiant*)

The two men that entered the tavern to eat their afternoon meal looked suspicious to Rahab. She had been an innkeeper in Jericho long enough to be able to spot real danger amidst the rowdies, roughnecks, and rabble-rousers who frequented her establishment.

These two were clearly foreigners. They kept to themselves in the corner and seemed to have the disciplined posture and movements of mercenaries. They were not very good at hiding it.

But they were both rather intriguing.

And she was not very good at hiding her fascination with them. They quickly noticed her observation and waved her over to them.

She swallowed and patted her dress to make sure her secret dagger was available.

She strode over, swaying her hips and playing the seductress. It always helped to distract even those with nefarious intentions. It gave her the advantage—over swine.

The younger more handsome one with a ruddy complexion watched her like a puppy in her hand. But the other one, the older one with intense eyes, glanced away as if he were fighting his desires. Or maybe he had unnatural lust for men. That would be more difficult for her to work with.

“How can I help you, travelers?” she said. “Are you looking for some pleasure? Women? Men? I do not do children here, or animals.”

The handsome one spoke. Obviously doing the bidding of the older one, the real leader. “Are you Rahab, the innkeeper?”

She looked suspiciously at them. “Who wants to know?”

They looked at each other. The older one nodded.

The younger one spoke, “I am Salmon and this is Caleb. We seek information and were told this was the place for it.”

They took a chance. They told her their real names. They knew that if they wanted to gain her trust, they would have to risk being vulnerable.

She looked closely at them. They were telling the truth. She could spot a liar across the room through just his eyes. And most all men were liars.

Then she said with a touch of surprise, “Semitic names. Are you Habiru, from across the river?”

They both looked around nervously, hoping no one heard her.

Caleb stepped in, “We will pay plenty.”

Rahab decided to try for the old one. The ruddy one she already had. This one was a challenge. She always wondered if she could turn a Sodomite.

She stepped uncomfortably close to Caleb, and dragged her hand across his hair. He was very nervous and would not look her in the eye.

“Well, you know,” she said, “You two are not very good spies.”

Caleb and Salmon looked at each other. Was it that obvious? Caleb was particularly discouraged because he had earlier chosen the young Salmon for his skilled espionage against the city of Edrei in the Transjordan. Salmon was able to gather intelligence on the city and its army of giants that enabled their victory over Og of Bashan. How was he able to get away when he was now such a poorly disguised spy?

Rahab whispered to Caleb as if she had read his mind, “Actually it is you who is the obvious one. But if you want to do this right, you have to play the game or everyone is going to know why you are here. So, let us go up to my room and give the impression to everyone that you really are just a couple of oblivious lustful—reprobates.”

She smiled at them.

They had stopped breathing.

She was sexuality incarnate.

Caleb turned away again. She took his chin and pulled him back to look into her eyes.

When he did, she shuddered. It was like looking into pools of intense purity. And she suddenly felt very dirty. She had never seen a soul like that before. This one was strangely attractive to her, and strong, even though he was old enough to be her grandfather.

She pulled away from them, grabbing Caleb’s hand and leading them both up the stairs into her loft.

They followed her awkwardly, and the patrons of the bar that night were all envious of these two foreigners who were about to discover just how lucky they were to be with Rahab the harlot.

One of those patrons was in disguise that evening in the other corner of the tavern. It was Jebir, the Chief Commander's Right Hand. He watched them closely. He was not sure if he should trust his instincts about them. Or maybe he was just extra sensitive because of his own envy of their privilege of company with the woman to whom he could never reveal that he was secretly in love.

He decided to trust his instincts, and left immediately.

Caleb and Salmon examined Rahab's room. It was on the very roof of the inn with a window on the outer wall of the city as well as access to the rooftop. She had a large beautiful bed with satin sheets and a mirror on the ceiling and on the wall at its head.

She sat on those satin sheets like a goddess. Salmon was practically drooling.

But she stared at Caleb.

Salmon said, "How old are you?"

She said, "Are all you Habiru so vulgar? You do not ask a woman such things."

She was only twenty-nine, but her experience made her an old soul far beyond her years.

Caleb could see it behind her ravishing eyes.

She kept staring at Caleb. "Well, what is it you want to know? And how much are you willing to pay?"

Caleb reached in his cloak without a word and tossed a pouch onto her bed with a twinge of disgust.

She opened it and looked inside. Her brows rose with great interest. There was gold in the pouch. A lot of gold.

"You must want me to remain very quiet indeed," she said and gave a flirty glance at Salmon who could not take his eyes off her breasts barely covered by her flowing dress.

“But before I tell you anything, you never answered my question. Are you Israelite Habiru?”

They looked at each other again to decide if they should tell her.

“Yes,” said Caleb. “We come from across the Jordan.”

Caleb could see that Rahab’s countenance changed almost instantly. She smiled like an excited child.

Salmon kept staring at Rahab’s breasts.

Caleb continued, attempting to be discreet about his true intentions, “We want to know about the land and the people here. What is the governance; independent cities or territorial warlords? Would there be a hostile reaction to new settlers?”

She butted in, “This is a military post. We only have a thousand soldiers. The Chief Commander of the fort is Alyun-Yarikh. He relies too much on infantry and does not value his archers enough. And we are not due for reinforcements or replacements for another few months. Unfortunately, our walls are strong, and I am not aware of any weaknesses in its defense.”

Caleb realized his description as “new settlers” was an obvious deception to her. Their intentions were also transparent.

“Are there any giants?” he asked. “Anakim?”

“Alyun has a bodyguard of five Anakim. Those are the only giants I know of.”

Rahab got up and carried the pouch over to Caleb. Salmon watched her behind and its lovely swaying curves. Only because he could no longer see her breasts. He almost moaned.

Rahab got right up into Caleb’s face and handed him the pouch back with an air kiss.

“I do not want your money.”

Caleb was confused.

Rahab turned and faced Salmon who finally looked into her eyes instead of every other body part.

She began to recite the words of the secret Habiru poem that she had memorized. She said the words with a loving passionate caress. She even started to sing the words with a slight harmony,

*“I will sing to Yahweh, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.
Yahweh is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my god, and I will praise him,
my father’s god, and I will exalt him.*

Then Rahab turned back and faced Caleb again, and recited,
*Yahweh is a man of war;
Yahweh is his name.”*

The men were stunned. They stared at this woman of ill repute—considered unclean by holiness standards—a Canaanite singing the praises of Yahweh.

Salmon blurted out, “That is the Song of Moses. How did you...?”

She continued, “Amorite traders across the Jordan. I know that Yahweh has given you this land and the fear of Yahweh has fallen upon Canaan. I have read how Yahweh brought you out of Egypt and dried up the Red Sea before you. I have heard of how you defeated the Amorite kings of the Transjordan, Og of Bashan and Sihon of Heshbon. How you devoted them to destruction. As soon as I heard this, my heart melted within me. Your god Yahweh is god of the heavens and the earth and I want to join you. I want to become an Israelite.”

Caleb was no longer surprised with her bluntness. “We cannot take you with us. It would be too dangerous.”

“I do not need to go with you. Just swear to me by Yahweh that as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will deal kindly with me and will not put me to the sword.”

Caleb said, “I swear it.”

Rahab said, “And my family as well.”

Caleb nodded.

“My mother and father, and sisters and brothers.”

Caleb raised his brow.

“And all that belong to them. Promise me.”

Caleb repeated, “And all that belong to them.”

“Oh, and that you will not rape us or put us into slavery.”

Caleb was about to respond.

“Or leave us in the desert to die.”

“Rahab,” said Caleb, trying to interrupt.

“And also if you change your mind, or fail to fulfill your vow, that Yahweh would curse you.”

“Rahab, I am the Right Hand of the Commander of Israel. I promise you on my life that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”

“Good,” said Rahab with surprise, “Then you are the perfect person to sign this.”

She walked over to a trunk and pulled out a piece of parchment. She brought it over to Caleb and handed it to him.

He looked at it. “What is this, a treaty?”

“I made it, hoping for this very day. I have been planning for a long time.”

Caleb read some of it. He looked up at her, impressed with her determination and thoroughness.

She said, “I *am* the owner of a business.”

Caleb shook his head and said, “Let me look this over in my room. Salmon?”

“Uh, I will stay here,” said Salmon with a guilty look.

Caleb turned and glared at his compatriot. “Salmon, your weakness is unbecoming a soldier of Yahweh.”

“She is not a temple prostitute,” said Salmon. He was referring to the fact that the Law of Moses proscribed a penalty for temple prostitution, but not for profane prostitution.

Caleb said, “Just because there is no legal penalty does not mean it is not sin.”

“I am sorry, Caleb, but we cannot all be paragons of holiness like you and Joshua.”

Caleb rolled his eyes and sighed. He said with contempt, “suffer your own consequences,” and left them.

It was one of those sins that the men of Israel too often and unjustly turned a blind eye toward.

Rahab watched Caleb leave, offended at his condescension. She had never met a man who could turn away from her like Caleb did. She was not going to capture that one after all. But she knew she had better increase her chances of favor by endearing herself to Salmon.

He was the better-looking one anyway.

She turned and gave him a seductive dreamy look. “Well, Salmon, what do you suggest we do with our time while we wait for your commander?”