

DEFIANT ONES:

*Abigail
Adams*

The American Revolution's Bravest
Women - Patriots, Prophets,
Poets & Spies

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
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Abigail Adams

By Heather Blanton

A Beautifully Flawed Productions Original

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Abigail Adams was far more than the wife of a Founding Father – she was a force of conviction in a nation struggling to be born. She believed liberty came not from government, but from God Himself, and that men and women alike were created equal in His sight. Through firm but gently voiced opinions, Abigail kept these values before her husband as he worked to create the fledgling nation through diplomacy.

This story is dedicated to her and the women of quiet courage whose steadfast faith, unwavering values, and enduring strength change the world more powerfully than any weapon ever could.

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future. She opens her mouth
in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31:25-26

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Chapter 1

Weymouth, MA 1754

Abigail Smith crept up to the table in Father's library, where her brother William sat quietly working on his spelling words. She eased closer, but the wood floor squeaked, betraying her presence. William spun in his chair. Surprise quickly morphed into irritation as his eyebrows collided, making his eight-year-old face look much older. "What are you doing here?"

She raised her chin, offended by his tone. "I wanted to see what your spelling words were today. That's all."

He huffed and turned back around to the test. "Go away. Girls can't learn this stuff."

Master Falwell, sitting in the corner and calling out the words, chuckled, but waved Abigail away. "Go away, Miss Abigail. I'm not here to tutor you."

"Why not?"

William whirled on her again. "Cause he's not supposed to." He stuck his tongue out at her. "You're just a girl."

"What's that got to do with anything?"

"You're not as smart as boys." He returned to the test and narrowed one eye, staring hard at the half-written word before him. "H-o-u—"

"Miss Abigail," Master Falwell rose from his seat, the blue primer in his hand. "I don't have time for this. Please, go play. If your parents wish for me to tutor you, I'm sure they'll let me know."

She stomped her foot, enraged. "House. H-o-u-s-e." She yelled the last letter in William's ear. He slapped his pencil down and spun up from his chair like a whirlwind. Abigail almost backed up. He was younger than her by two years and a head shorter, but he had a vicious punch.

He reared back his hand to strike. She kicked him in the shin, and he howled in pain as Master Falwell forced himself between the warring siblings. "ENOUGH!"

Abigail and William fell silent. Master Falwell heaved a great, frustrated sigh. So slender, he reminded Abigail of a praying mantis, which made him a little frightening. He was about to speak again when a

low rumble of laughter came from the doorway. Abigail's heart soared.

Grandpa Smith stood in the doorway, an empty pipe in his hand. Master Falwell tugged nervously on his collar. "I'm sorry, sir, for the chaos. Abigail keeps inserting herself in William's lessons and I—"

"Teach her."

"You'd like me to tutor her as well, sir? The same lessons?"

"No. Reading and writing only." A big man with a great, barrel chest, he smiled at his grandchildren but lingered on Abigail. "If she proves inquisitive enough, we shall revisit further education."

Abigail dropped instantly into the seat next to William and laced her fingers on the table. "I'm ready."

William scowled and retook his seat. Ugly glares shot back and forth between the siblings. Irritated with her brother and thrilled with the opportunity to learn, she shoved him hard in triumph. Scowling, he shoved her back.

A ruler slapped on the table between them, the noise echoing in the library like a rifle shot. Abigail and William froze like statues. Master Falwell sneered at them both and leaned in. For a moment, Abigail regretted her interference. His eyes blazed, and his bony cheeks reddened. "As a student of mine, you will be held to the same standard of conduct as your brother. Do you understand?"

Abigail gulped and nodded.

"Good. Another outburst and I shall paddle you both." He straightened. "Now, William, you may finish the test tomorrow. For now, we shall go back to reading from the Primer. Abigail, you may use mine." He slid it over from the end of the table. "Do not waste this opportunity. It may not come again."

Five Years Later—

"I like Richard." Abigail grabbed a strand of her sister's golden hair, so unlike hers—dark, thick, and unruly beneath her mob cap—and began braiding it. Her gaze bounced back and forth between her hands and Mary's reflection in her vanity mirror. Hard to believe they were sisters. Mary was golden, delicate, beautiful. Abigail was dark in coloring, lean from being too active, and plain.

"I'm glad you do. I like him very much, as well."

"He's a good catch. He'll make a wonderful husband because he's so smart and loves you."

Mary threw a handkerchief at the mirror. "Oh, what do you know of love and marriage? You're fifteen."

Abigail yanked Mary's hair playfully. "Forgive me. I didn't know that at eighteen, you held the knowledge of the goddess Venus?"

A soft knock on the door interrupted them, and Mother peeked in. "Darling, Mr. Cranch is here. And

he has a young man with him. They're in the drawing room."

"Thank you, Mother. We'll be right down."

As the sisters descended the steps, Mary huffed. "I wasn't aware he would be bringing anyone with him. He's so popular, though, that he has many friends at Harvard."

Her irritation reflected Abigail's thoughts. "If you burden me with entertaining some dry, boring, blockhead, I shall rebel. You'll find a mouse in your bed in the morning."

Mary stopped and clutched Abigail's arm, landing a pleading gaze on her. "Please allow us some time to spend with each other without the burden of this guest or you."

Oh, those wide, green eyes. Abigail had never been able to deny Mary anything. "Fine. I'll do my part. But I shall put the debt to your account."

"So be it."

The girls entered the drawing room, and the gentlemen stood. Mr. Cranch, tall, dark, and chiseled, towered over the young man beside him. Similar in coloring, he was shorter, stouter, and less relaxed in his movements. Not a handsome man, but oddly compelling with his intense, dark eyes and full lips. Neither of them wore wigs, but tied their hair at the napes of their necks.

"Mary, Abigail," Mr. Cranch motioned to his companion, "this is Mr. John Adams. He has accompanied me for the weekend."

Mary and Abigail curtsied. "Mr. Adams," Mary greeted him, but her gaze quickly slipped to Mr. Cranch, and the longing in her eyes tweaked Abigail's heart again.

All right, fine. Abigail smiled stiffly. "A pleasure to meet you, Mr. Adams."

"The pleasure is all mine." His bland expression, however, said he was bored.

As was Abigail. But she loved her sister. "Mr. Adams, would you like to see our garden? It's quite..." *Time-consuming to stroll.* "Full of roses." She shrugged a shoulder, surrendering to the obviousness of the ploy.

As did he. "Ah. Roses. Certainly."

Mr. Cranch rocked on his heels. "Yes, the garden is lovely. Mary and I will join you...in a bit."

Abigail hugged herself as she and Mr. Adams strolled along the brick path. Around them, bees hummed and soared from flower to flower. She caught herself drumming her fingers and squeezed her elbows to stop the action. "So, Mr. Adams, you attend Harvard, as well?"

"Yes. The law school."

"Have you taken the bar yet?"

“Not yet. In two weeks’ time.”

“Oh.” Several steps passed in silence. Frustrated that he did not show interest in at least a polite conversation, Abigail racked her brain for something to say. She had a book upstairs she’d like to get back to. “Do you read, Mr. Adams?”

“Yes, quite a bit. Nearly all of it, however, is legal subject matter. I’ve little time for anything else.”

“I assume, therefore, you are well-prepared for the bar.”

“I do intend to pass it the first time. I’m not a man fond of second chances to correct the results of sloth.”

Well, isn’t he special? “I’ve heard many great men have had to attempt it multiple times.”

“Perhaps they would have been greater had they not wasted valuable time retaking an exam they should have easily passed in one attempt.”

His pompous attitude grated on Abigail’s nerves. “Based on your presumption, I assume you plan on being a man of mythological proportions then.”

His step hitched, and he laced his hands behind his back. “How old are you, Ms. Smith?”

“Fifteen.”

“Ah, that explains your impertinence.”

“I was not being impertinent. I was merely reasoning your plan out to the logical conclusion.”

“With a great deal of sarcasm.”

The man was insufferable. Abigail chewed her lip, resentful that Mary had thrust his company upon her. He was odious and arrogant.

The garden path skirted a large pond on the estate. Ducks and swans swam about, enjoying the warm, spring day. Oh, how Abigail wished she could be shed of this boring man, get her book, and read in the shade of a tree.

“Ms. Smith, I hope you won’t think me rude, but I’m sure you have better things to do than entertain me. Would you mind if I sat by this lovely pond and read? I have a few of my law books with me.”

She held back a sigh, unsure whether it would sound like relief or irritation. He had claimed her favorite reading spot. “Of course not. It’s quite peaceful down here.” *I’ll read elsewhere.*

They stared at each other for a moment, clearly unsure of how to end this awkward meeting. Abigail gestured behind her. “I’ll go this way. A shortcut to my room. I was reading as well and would like to finish.” She flinched inwardly, praying he would not ask what she was reading. A romance would sound childish, no doubt, to this peacock.

He didn’t bother. “My books are in the carriage. I won’t need to disturb the love birds.”

It should have been a joke, but somehow it sounded like an insult. “Yes. Well, then, good day, Mr. Adams.”

He dipped his chin. "Ms. Smith. I'm sure we'll see each other again."

It did not sound as if he looked forward to the meeting. Done with him and this brief duel of wits, Abigail smiled and took the path through the tea roses back to her room.

Mary would be old and married before she paid off *this* debt. But then, Abigail touched her lips. Why was she smiling?



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