

CHIEF AND COMMANDER

Mark Morgan

Chapter 1

MY STORY

I am Joab, the son of Zeruah.

Now I know you may be thinking, ‘Hang on, Zeruah is a woman’s name!’, and you’re right, but my mother had the uncommon distinction of being used as the name-anchor for all three of her sons. This may have been partly because my soldier father died when I was very young, but the main reason we were called the sons of Zeruah was her forceful character. Being King David’s sister may have contributed too.

My mother was deeply committed to justice. Right was right and wrong was wrong, and we were taught never to mix up the two.

King David was my favourite uncle, and he stands out from my very earliest memories in the days when the main thing he had was amazing potential.

Our family has always been important in the tribe of Judah. It included such famous people as Nahshon, leader of the tribe of Judah during the escape from Egypt; Salmon, another leader who married faithful Rahab; and Boaz, his son, who married faithful Ruth, the Moabite. Even when Israel abandoned God and worshipped idols, many in our family still walked with him. Paradoxically, the addition of foreigners seems to have helped strengthen that tie, because those foreigners had a strong faith in God. Ruth was Grandpa Jesse’s grandmother.

Yet by the time of Grandpa Jesse, we were not a rich family – and ten children were a severe drain on his finances.

My father was a soldier, absent for much of my early life and dying in battle when I was five. I remember almost nothing of him. My mother was the rock of my childhood. The rock on which I built my ideas.

Chief and Commander

“Justice and only justice” was her catch-cry. Sometimes it was a war-cry.

Of course, David is the most famous member of the family, and he’s only seven years older than me – close enough in age that everything he did fascinated me.

I decided to write this autobiography because many people seem to view me as a vicious murderer, disposing of anyone who gets in my way, not to mention being an overbearing, domineering bully who constantly hectors King David and bends him to my will.

I can’t help laughing at that idea. If you know King David, you’ll realise that *bending him to my will* was never possible. And as for willy-nilly murder, I’m not like that either. Like my mother and my brothers, I love justice. We all hated the dishonesty so rampant amongst those who seek positions of leadership, so we were all committed to protecting King David from such people. Sadly, he didn’t always want to be protected. Early on, I think he was a little naive and sometimes tried to please people he should have confronted. Later, circumstances made him lose his confidence in enforcing justice, particularly among his sons.



This is the end of the first part of the first chapter of *Chief and Commander* by Mark Morgan.

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