



*Sometimes  
the most important  
battles are the ones  
we don't think  
we can win.*

the  
**SONG**  
of David

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

**AMY HARMON**

# THE SONG OF DAVID

I won my first fight when I was eleven years old, and I've been throwing punches ever since. Fighting is the purest, truest, most elemental thing there is. Some people describe heaven as a sea of unending white. Where choirs sing and loved ones await. But for me, heaven was something else. It sounded like the bell at the beginning of a round, it tasted like adrenaline, it burned like sweat in my eyes and fire in my belly. It looked like the blur of screaming crowds and an opponent who wanted my blood.

For me, heaven was the octagon.

Until I met Millie, and heaven became something different. I became something different. I knew I loved her when I watched her stand perfectly still in the middle of a crowded room, people swarming, buzzing, slipping around her, her straight dancer's posture unyielding, her chin high, her hands loose at her sides. No one seemed to see her at all, except for the few who squeezed past her, tossing exasperated looks at her unsmiling face. When they realized she wasn't normal, they hurried away. Why was it that no one saw her, yet she was the first thing I saw?

If heaven was the octagon, then she was my angel at the center of it all, the girl with the power to take me down and lift me up again. The girl I wanted to fight for, the girl I wanted to claim. The girl who taught me that sometimes the biggest heroes go unsung and the most important battles are the ones we don't think we can win.



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Recommended for ages: +16



## ATTENTION

**THIS DOCUMENT INCLUDES SPECIFICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO AVOID  
UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE BOOK.**

## CHARACTERS

The love story is centered around David "Tag" Taggert and Millie Anderson. Do you consider them the only main characters in this novel or do you think there are others who play a pivotal and influential role? If so, who and why?

Moses describes himself as "cracked" and Tag is described as "bent" and they met in a psych hospital. Given their beginning, did you think they were good for each other?

Do you think the characters were realistically portrayed? Describe these character's personalities.

How does the way the characters see themselves, differ from how others see them? How do you see the various characters?

What did you think about Tag's reactions to Henry? What did you think of their relationship? Was he trying to be a father, brother, or more like a friend to Henry?

What is motivating the actions of the characters in the story? What do the sub-characters want from the main character and what does the main character want with them?

Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices of any of the characters? What would you have done differently?

Who did you like best? And who do you like the least? Why?

What past influences are shaping the actions of the characters in the story?

Do the main characters change by the end of this novel? Do they grow or mature? What events trigger such changes?

## THEMES, DEFINITIONS & SYMBOLISM

### Hope

*noun*

a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen

*“The worst part is . . . I actually hope it’s just that he doesn’t know how to tell me he changed his mind. I actually hope he woke up and realized he wasn’t in love with me after all. I hope that’s it. Because I can’t think of an alternative that isn’t a hundred times worse. And I’d rather lose him than lose him.”*

*“What the doctor wouldn’t say was whether or not Tag would win the battle. [...] If my best friend was going to die, I didn’t want to know. I didn’t want to see his dead sister at his shoulder, his great-grandmother waiting patiently for him to cross over. I didn’t want any of it. I didn’t want to know. I refused to know, because hope was vital. Hope was precious. And I would not take that from my friend or the girl who loved him.”*

The main theme of this book is **hope**. Millie’s hopeful that David’s disappearance is nothing worse than him not loving her anymore. She’d rather “lose him than lose him.” Do you understand what she meant with that? Where’s the difference?

While Moses’ hope is believing David’s cancer isn’t going to take him away from his loved ones.

Were there other themes in this book? Do you feel they were adequately explored? Were they brought to life in a cliché or in a unique manner?

# Intimacy

*noun*

close familiarity or friendship

*“The most intimate thing we can do is to allow the people we love most to see us at our worst. At our lowest. At our weakest. True intimacy happens when nothing is perfect.”*

What is your definition of **intimacy**? Do you agree or disagree with Millie? Why? Have you experienced true intimacy with someone?

# Darkness

*noun*

the partial or total absence of light

*“The darkness is huge, though. You don’t need to be afraid of the dark. Whenever you start feeling trapped or helpless, just close your eyes, and you have more space than you’ll ever need.”*

Do you agree with Millie? Are you afraid of the dark? What is **darkness** for you? Do you close your eyes when you’re feeling helpless or afraid? Trying to find your inner peace? To reflect on things? Or do you disagree?

# Suffering

*noun*

the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship

*“And then she said ‘I wanted to save you and Henry from suffering, but I’ve come to realize that your suffering has made you better people.’ My mom may not have been able to keep me from suffering, and I certainly couldn’t keep her from suffering, or Henry, for that matter. But we loved each other, and that made the suffering bearable.”*

Millie talks about her mom. How she would try to protect Millie and Henry. Protect them from being hurt, from suffering. Millie’s mom says **suffering** makes us better people. Does it? And does it depend on the person, or the amount of suffering, and whether there are loved ones or other people around holding your hand?

# Resignation

*noun*

1. An act of resigning from a job or office
2. The acceptance of something undesirable but inevitable

*“And now, inexplicably, he has let go. He’s let Millie go. He’s let Tag Team, his businesses, his plans for a title fight, all go. He’s let me go.”*

*“Moses once told me that you can’t escape yourself. You can run, hide, or die. But wherever you go, there you’ll be.”*

Both definitions of **resignation** play a part in this book. In one, David has left everything behind. He had no plans to return to his friends, to his team, to Millie. He planned to disappear by “taking a hike up into the hills above the overpass in Nephi. Take a pill. Watch the sun-set as I went to sleep.” But unforeseen events make David return. Or at least, be found again. Where comes the second definition of resignation into play?

## NO ONE FIGHTS ALONE

*“No one fights alone. That was my motto for Tag Team, yet it was my motto for everyone else. It was my motto for my teammates, but I never believed it myself. I was the team, I wanted to be the team for everyone else. I’d told Millie before the Santos fight that everyone fights alone. And I guess, deep down, I didn’t want anyone to have to fight for me. Stupid? Obvious? Maybe. But that’s who I am. Or who I was.”*

What do you think about this statement? How do you feel about his protectiveness?

## David & Goliath

*Goliath was a giant Philistine warrior defeated by the young David, the future king of Israel, in the Bible's Books of Samuel (1 Samuel 17). The original purpose of the story was to show David's identity as the true king of Israel.*

*In recent usage, the phrase "David and Goliath" has taken on a secular meaning, denoting an underdog situation, a contest where a smaller, weaker opponent faces a much bigger, stronger adversary; if successful, the underdog may win in an unusual or surprising way. It is arguably the most famous underdog story.*

***"It was David and Goliath, [...] Moses' David was small and young. A boy really, ten or eleven, younger than I imagined he had actually been. And in the boyish face, I saw my own. The shaggy hair, the green eyes, the strong stance. [...] Goliath was huge, towering over the boy like they belonged to two different species. His biceps and thighs bulged, his calves were unnaturally large, and his shoulders were as wide as the boy was tall. [...], and young David stood stoically looking up at Goliath, his sling hanging from his hand, his eyes solemn. I leaned in closer, noting the detail, the lack of fear on the boy's face. I looked at Goliath again, comparing and contrasting, and then my breath caught in my throat. I didn't just see my face reflected in David. I saw myself in Goliath too. David was me. And Goliath was me. They both had my face. I was the boy, and I was the giant."***

But The Song of David has many more different definitions of David & giants (Goliath), can you find them all? Who are these giants and to who or what do they refer to? What are your thoughts on Moses' painting of David & Goliath?

Are you facing a giant problem or impossible situation? Stop for a minute and refocus.

## QUOTES

*“I’m convinced you can’t ever be completely happy walking on someone else’s road. Someone else’s path. The way to true happiness is to forge your own, even if your road isn’t straight. Even if there are bridges to build and mountains to tunnel through. Nothing feels as good as paving your own way.”*

Here is the most highlighted quote from the novel. What are your thoughts about it?

Do you have any favorite quotes or passages in the novel that you enjoyed or found insightful?

**Discuss the following quotes.**

*“Millie told me once that the ability to devastate is what makes a song beautiful. Maybe that’s what makes life beautiful too. The ability to devastate. Maybe that’s how we know we’ve lived. How we know we’ve truly loved.”*

*“Saying something is “meant to be” is a cop out. It’s a way for people to deal when they screw up or when life hands them a bowl of shit stew. The things that are meant to be are the things we can’t control, the things we don’t cause, the things that happen regardless of who or what we are. Like sunsets and snow-fall and natural disasters. I’ve never believed hardship or suffering was meant to be. I’ve never believed relationships were meant to be. We choose. In large part, we choose. We create, we make mistakes, we burn bridges, we build new ones.”*

*“You don’t ever disappear. You just change. You leave. You move on. But you never disappear. Even when you think you want to.”*

*“Falling is easier if you don’t fight it.”*

*“I didn’t like pictures. Pictures rarely told the truth. They were like gold lacquer over Styrofoam, making things seem shiny and bright, disguising the fragility beneath. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but it still wasn’t worth a whole hell of a lot.”*

Were there any particular quotes that stood out to you? Which ones and why?

## STRUCTURE, WRITING & GENERAL DISCUSSION

What did you think of the overall structure of the novel? Were you engaged immediately?

What did you think about the time-line and points of view? Were you able to move between Moses and Tag's tapes seamlessly? Why might the author have chosen to tell the story the way she did?

How did you feel reading it? Which emotions conveyed the story? Did the story keep you interested?

Would you say this is a plot-driven book or does the story unfold slowly with a focus on character development? Were you surprised by the plot? Or did you find it predictable?

How credible did the author make the setting and dialogue?

What scene did you find was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way?

Did certain parts of the novel make you uncomfortable? Were there any scenes that made you laugh?

What is the significance of the title? Did you recognize it in the book? Would you have given the book a different title? If yes, what is your title?

What surprised you the most about the book?

How important is the setting & time period to the story? How would it have played out differently in a different setting? What about a different time period?

Why did you think Tag left Millie and his Tag Team behind? What were your initial thoughts?

Did you expect the ending or were you surprised?

Did you think the ending was appropriate? How would you have liked to have seen the ending go?

## SONG OF DAVID

*“You can’t see a song. You feel a song, you hear a song, you move to it. Just like I can’t see you, but I feel you, and I move toward you. When you’re with me, I feel like I glimpse a David nobody else knows is there. It’s the Song of David, and nobody else can hear it but me.”*

[Click here to listen and watch the official trailer and song for this novel.](#)

What is the mood of the music? Is there a message the song is trying to convey? If so, what? To whom?

## Q&A with AMY HARMON

This is the Question and Answer that was organized right after a group of readers finished a group-read of The Song of David. [This Q&A is also published on the author's website. Feel free to leave your thoughts there.](#)

**There are biblical elements threaded throughout the books in this series. How do these characters, fit their biblical counterparts?**

Hmm. Mostly it's just that - threads. Moses was a prophet of sorts who parted the waters. David had to battle his Goliath. I love creating parallels.

**Are there real people who inspired these characters (Tag and Moses)?**

I don't know anyone like Moses or Tag. I do think, though, that my characters have little bits and pieces of many people I've come across in my life. Tag has a little of my three brothers in him. Moses was such a wise old grouch and Tag was such a happy force of nature. I loved their bromance. I loved writing a romance from the POV's of two men who were friends, not lovers. I wonder if that's ever been done before in a romance novel.

**Was Moses' narration always planned?**

This is a superb question. The hardest thing for me is figuring out POV. I could not get this story to work the way I wanted it too. I tried writing Millie's POV and I couldn't. Her inability to see made telling the story from her "head" impossible. I didn't realize how much sight and observation is used to move a story forward.

One day, I let Moses have his way. I let him speak. And that's when I decided he had to help narrate and Tag's POV would be on the cassette tapes, which allowed him to be present without being present. I didn't know if it would work, but once I made that decision, the story came much faster. I actually sent the prologue and the first chapter to my editor and said "Is this going to fly?" She loved it, and that gave me a lot of confidence.

**While you were writing The law of Moses and Tag was introduced, did you have his story with Millie already in your mind or did that come while you were writing their book? When you write a book do you write the story from beginning to end or different scenes then put it all together ?**

I write in pieces, scenes, and that gets the creative juices flowing. Sometimes I have to abandon scenes that were written before the story takes on its life, but often the scenes start working together and I don't have to abandon much.

My friend and publicist, Mandy Lawler, says she pictures me writing the way Moses paints. It made me laugh, her image of me sitting at the computer, hands flying, my face blank, as I channel the

voices. I wish it was like that. But it isn't. It's tedious, hard, work. I have to force myself to write most days because it rarely flows easily. I work for these stories. But maybe that's the magic. If it was easy, the stories wouldn't be as good.

As far as the Millie question: I knew I was going to write Tag's story pretty early on in the writing of *The Law of Moses*. But Millie didn't show herself until I actually started writing scenes. I had no idea she was going to be blind. I just knew Tag would need a girl who could teach him how to be vulnerable and strong at the same time. Tag had to learn how to be both. He'd learned strength. He understood compassion. He was a very good man. But he hadn't learned how to be in an intimate relationship, which was obvious from his romantic history. He hadn't learned how to let someone else love him – to submit to someone else and still be strong. Tag needed a very unique girl to break through. And that's how Millie was born.

**The women you write always feel very . . . wholesome. Even though Millie was a stripper, she still seemed so innocent. Is there a part of you in them?**

Interesting. I do write rather wholesome characters, and yep. I think it's because I tend to be pretty wholesome. I taught at a Christian school for heck sake. I feel a certain responsibility to keep it from being too gritty, but still be realistic. It's always a fine line. And I would love to learn to pole-dance. A reviewer sent me an email when she was done reading and she commented that I was "subversive" that I get under people's skin because I write characters that don't fit a mold yet are incredibly relatable. I take that as a huge compliment. Millie didn't dance to be sexy or please men. She danced to please herself.

**Millie's blindness was a shock. Did you know at the beginning you were going to make her blind?**

Love this question. I didn't know Millie was going to be blind until I wrote that scene where Tag meets her for the first time. It slapped me in the face. I was actually doing a writing sprint with Jessica Prince, an author friend of mine. I messaged her and said, "Well, damn. My leading lady is blind. I didn't see that coming." No pun intended.

**Where do you get the inspiration for your characters? I love that your characters are never what you expect. They are not billionaires, overtly handsome or beautiful in a way that a lot of books are. Your books have a feel of realism of a part of society that is often overlooked and I think that is what make your book so heart wrenchingly beautiful. Also you have been very open with us about your friend suffering from brain cancer. (Which is very near and dear to my heart) Did you know that Tag was going to have this before you found out or after.**

I stew a lot. I think and discard, think and discard. Then, when I sit down to write, I often have the character pretty fleshed out in my mind so that I'm "channeling" that person, focusing on them as I write a scene. I didn't know Millie was going to be blind, but I knew Tag. I had wrestled with him for months, trying to figure him out. Millie was a little gift that I stumbled upon. But inspiration is a hard concept to explain. Inspiration isn't one dimensional. It usually can't be traced to one thing. It comes in little strands that lead to other strands and sometimes the original inspiration doesn't resemble the finished product at all. So I don't know where I get my inspiration. Everything inspires. Conversations I over hear, lyrics in a song, something someone says on Facebook. Seriously.

Inspiration is pretty hard to pin down.

I resisted the brain cancer plot line. I dug in my heels. But in the end, it was the story that needed to be told. I called my friend Stephenie and said, “Steph, how do you feel about this? And will you help me get it right?” She was excited about it, I think, and was a great source all through the book. When she finished reading and gave me the thumbs up, it was a very special moment for me.

**What do you think was the turning point for Tag in deciding to fight his illness?**

Interestingly enough, I don’t think Tag embraced the idea of sticking around, of fighting the illness, until Millie forced him to hear her. As convincing and incredibly touching as Moses’s hospital scene was, and as heartfelt as Henry pleaded in his scene, Tag was still convinced that his decision to spare his loved ones was the best course of action. Sacrifice takes a lot of love. It takes a lot of strength, and I think Tag felt like sparing his loved ones was his responsibility, it was his sacrifice. It was the way he demonstrated his love.

It wasn’t until Millie got in his space and challenged him, made him realize that vulnerability, trust, “submission” takes as much or more strength than being the hero. It wasn’t until she released him, until she told him he didn’t have to beat it, he just had to love and let himself be loved, that he started to crack. That scene was my favorite of the book.

Moses told Tag early on that he was going to have to submit. But Moses couldn’t have known how true that was. This was the Jesus Take the Wheel scene (LOL) but it was Tag allowing Millie take the wheel – blind eyes and all.

**I keep re-reading the last sentence of the epilogue and the emotion is tangible. I've gone back and forth as to how to interpret the ending but I'm leaning more toward believing that Tag had another miracle and beat the cancer, had a long and happy life and is now meeting Moses again. When you wrote the ending, did you want the reader to have his or her own interpretation?**

YES! That was the whole point of the ending. I don’t WANT to tell you what happens, because truthfully, I don’t know. I have my own desires, my own need to “save” Tag’s life. But I truly feel that undermines the message of the book, the message I so desperately wanted to share. The story is about living. Not dying. The story is about trust and vulnerability and overcoming. I felt like I couldn’t END this story when what I really wanted to do was reinforce the message of there not being an ending. None of us know when our stories will end. None of us know how long we have. Tag and Millie didn’t know either. So it felt absolutely vital to keep hope alive, to reinforce the sense of journey, the sense of perspective that I think the ending gives.

**The ending was genius! When I asked a friend if it was a HEA (Happily Ever After) before I started reading she said it was, kind of . . . and that's exactly what it was, kind of! Can you share what your interpretation was with Tag? When Moses sees him, is it in the flesh?**

Readers want me to tell them what I think happened to Tag. And I understand that. But if I tell you what I want to have happen to Tag, it undermines the ending. It undermines the message. And I don’t want to do that.

I will give you this. I did NOT write that scene with Tag’s death in mind. I did not give little hints that he was dead, any more than I give hints that he was alive. This wasn’t a game of clue. The way it was

written truly was designed to be interpreted several different ways. I don't know about you, but there's lots of people I love that I don't see every day or even every month. So the way the story ends with Moses thinking "It had been a while, and I had missed him," that doesn't mean anything specific. It means exactly what it says.

I don't know what happened to Tag. I don't know when he died. I don't know IF he died. Only Moses knows. And he isn't talking. What I do know is Tag and Millie got their love story. They got their love story. And forty years later, Moses was acknowledging that their love still continued. It still lived on.

**Did you always know how you wanted to end *The Song of David*?**

No. I stressed and stressed over the ending. Nothing felt right. It was late at night a few days before the book needed to be sent to the editor, and I decided to do a free write from Moses's POV, playing around with an epilogue with him because the book started with him, it felt right to end with him. I started writing, and that ending just came out. As soon as I wrote it I was at peace. Completely. I remember walking up the stairs from my office at 3 am and feeling like I'd climbed Everest. I don't think anyone would have been able to talk me out of that ending at that point. It was the right ending.

**Not to be funny, but your books always bring to mind those jokes... you know the ones where a blind girl, a psychic, and an MMA fighter walk into a bar.... I begin reading and wait for the punch line to fall, but it never does it always turns into a powerful story that makes me think and think well after I have closed the pages of the book. How do you manage to weave all of these extraordinary characters together to tell stories that are both real and insightful?**

Ha ha. I think of those same jokes, truly. I think I even mention that in Moses when he says something about the black artist and the white cowboy. Honestly, I try very hard to understand my characters, to flesh them out, to make them multi-dimensional. By doing so, they take on life. I also try to avoid the obvious.

**When writing, do you spend a lot of time on research?**

I always spend LOTS of time researching. I research the entire time I write. Research separates the authors from the scribblers. Research makes a story live and breathe.

One thing I didn't research AS MUCH was autism. I didn't want to try to make Henry text book Autistic - which is laughable, because there isn't text book Autism -- I just wanted him to be Henry. So I let him be, and he told me who he was.

**Henry was brilliant and people really responded to him. What's the inspiration?**

I had a few students who had autism and or Asperger's, so I was comfortable with some of the characteristics. I truly think though, that people responded to him because of his quirks. We love a character who makes us laugh and cry simultaneously.

**Tell us about the song and how it developed. It's beautiful and so well suited.**

I couldn't get a melody out of my head and ended up plunking it out for my son with the "Sing me a song, sing me a song" refrain coming up over and over. He took it and ran with it.

**What are the toughest scenes to write?**

In the Song of David, the epilogue. Without a doubt. It took me two weeks to write it. Not because I was writing and deleting, but because I was thinking. I truly didn't know how to end it and be true to the book.

**Will you be writing a book about any of the other characters?**

I started a book about Dr. Noah Andelin, the young doctor at Montlake who lost his wife. I have that story in my head, but I really don't want to write another spin-off right now, just because David hasn't sold well. Moses and Tag wouldn't be in Dr Andelin's story. It takes place while they are gallivanting off in Europe. So I wouldn't put it in a series with them.

