

Amanda Conquers (Friddle)

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Non-Fiction

All Circumstances

I clenched the purse on my lap. Guilt plagued me. How could I, a woman who had walked with God through storms, be here, and be this desperate? And how could I leave my nursling and three children behind?

The ER has a separate wing for potential mental health cases. It was there I waited to find out if my problems had a medical cause, or if this was all anxiety, robbing me of sleep, withering away my body, making me shake and pulse and cry out, “Oh, God, mercy!”

Down the hall, a man ran out of his room naked. He flailed on the floor like a fish out of water while the security guards tried to hold him. The woman across from me clawed at herself, *Oh, I don't feel right. I just don't feel right.* I laid my head on my husband's shoulder and closed my eyes as if the back of my eyelids would produce a serene mountain meadow scene. It was only black. And loud.

How could this be the path to the peace I needed?

A social worker brought the paperwork where my signature would equal a surrender of my rights for seventy-two hours. I gulped. I handed over my phone, the drawstrings on my pants, and was told all my baby's milk had to go down the drain.

It felt like being torn open. To stay with the ones I loved, I needed to leave them. But I knew, sometimes surrender is a fighting stance.

Right there, peace hovered. It was thick like Kentucky's summertime air when it doesn't matter if you are standing in the shade, that wet heat is everywhere. I only have a handful of times when I've felt peace that tangibly. But surely it was then.

Listen: knowing the unknowns doesn't give us peace. Our circumstances don't hold us. God does. It might be tempting to disbelieve it this year between a pandemic, a whole coast on fire, and old racial wounds opened and bleeding angry. But it's still true.

I have hemmed you in, behind and before. Where can you go from my Spirit?

I wanted to question God, ask how this was in His plan, how He could withhold the healing and bring me to this place. Ecclesiastes promises that God has made everything beautiful in its time. Unfortunately, it doesn't say anything about it being in our time.

The thing is, this beauty-making—redemption—it isn't our job. Surrender is.

Yesterday, I came across the drawstring-less pants I wore during my hospital stay. I winced reflecting on that week, and then I threw those pants away. I celebrated how far God has brought me, even if it is a little yellow pill that is helping to keep my mind regulated.

He leads us from victory to victory. We are held by the Ancient of Days, by the Raiser to New Life, by the Redeemer of Crushing Defeats.

And He makes everything beautiful in its time.