

Fruit of His Loins

by Amy Verlennich

As he went home, he tried to brush the thoughts of the recent past from his mind.

It was no big deal...

Yet as much as he tried, something in the pit of his stomach felt uneasy. He couldn't stop thinking of her eyes... They were familiar somehow...

Maybe it had nothing to do with the woman at all. Maybe it was just his past haunting him again. Although it had been years, he *still* woke up in a sweat from the nightmares.

He shook his head, as if to prevent the memory from resurfacing. He was betrayed with the thoughts of his sons' deaths instead. They'd died so suddenly, he couldn't help but wonder if it was to pay for his own sins. Were they sacrifices?

A tear ran down his tanned skin. He remembered it as if it was yesterday. He wondered what had ever happened to the brother he'd sold. He had harbored so much hatred for the "dreamer"... they *all* had, and even though he had changed their minds and spared his brother's life, he still hadn't done what was right.

It was too late now. No matter how he wished he could change the past, nothing could undo what had been done. He would never again see his brother Joseph.

"Are you sure you heard correctly?... I mean, are you *sure* it's Tamar?"

The man nodded his head.

Anger welled up in his heart. "Bring her to me! She'll be burned for prostitution!"

He had *never* had any intention of having his remaining son fulfill his legacy, but now the weight was off his shoulders. It had been years since he'd sent her to her father. He'd almost forgotten about her. He recalled her striking beauty and those eyes...

A funny sensation came over him as he remembered the last time he'd seen eyes like that. It was on the road to Timnath when he'd stopped to seek a few moments of pleasure.

Why did I give that harlot my signet, bracelets, and staff?!

Another moment in the past he wished he could take back.

His thoughts were interrupted as Tamar was brought out. She'd sent a message to Judah saying, 'I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things. Identify them, please. Who's the owner of this signet, bracelets, and staff?'

Judah's heart sank. He now knew the truth. It was almost as if time stood still... waiting for the decision he would make. He could turn his back on this woman carrying *his* child, or he could, at long last, seek forgiveness.

Years of remorse washed over him as he fell to his knees weeping. Judah confessed aloud, "Tamar has been more righteous than I. I would not give her my son Shelah. What she has done has been done to carry on my name."

The men binding Tamar let go as Judah went and bowed his head before her.

"Will you forgive me?"

"Yes Judah."

As he took her hands in his, he looked into her eyes. They revealed wisdom and compassion. His heart softened as he realized the extent of suffering he'd put her through. He touched her protruding belly and silently vowed to respect her until he died.

"It's a boy!"

Tears of joy and relief fell from Tamar's eyes, but were followed with more intense pain, as she bore the second son.

As Judah was told the news, he praised God and wept uncontrollably. He'd deserved so much less than what he'd been given.

Two sons, Lord! He thought of the ones he'd lost.

As he went into the tent, he gazed upon his sons. Taking Tamar's hand, he gently squeezed. He loved her more than he would ever be able to express. He first took Zerah, and kissed his forehead, vowing, "They will be brought up in the ways of my father, and his fathers before him."

Then, taking Perez, he kissed the one whose descendants would bring forth the Forgiver of the world... the fruit of Judah's loins.

(Taken from Genesis 38)