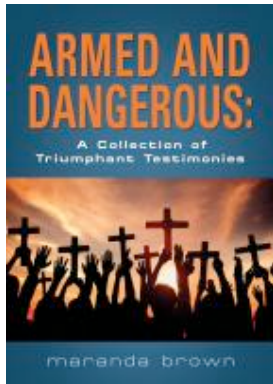


ARMED AND DANGEROUS:

A Collection of
Triumphant Testimonies



maranda brown



*In this collection of testimonies, women share their storm experiences. These women emerge from their experiences with power, and are a testimony that you, too, can triumphantly overcome your storm, and proclaim that you're **Armed and Dangerous**. If you hunger for healing, hope, and encouragement, God is going to reveal Himself to you through these writings. You, too, can thrive through the storm.*

Armed and Dangerous

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Maranda Brown

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Foreword: Armed and Dangerous ***Maranda Brown***

At any given time, law enforcement agencies all over the country relay messaging to their counterparts about the conditions of the subjects they encounter. These communications come in the form of codes and are typically broadcast over messaging systems for multiple purposes. When one hears the “armed and dangerous” code it alerts the recipients that the subject they are encountering has a deadly weapon, the situation is potentially deadly, they should be prepared to use deadly force if necessary, and they should potentially place others on standby for backup. Sometimes entry into the armed and dangerous environment is unassuming as a means to be strategic. At other times, a perimeter is set up in the local area as a boundary to work within, to safeguard those in the general vicinity; as well as, to contain the subject who possesses the threat.

Even in non-law enforcement communities, the concept of “armed and dangerous” heightens one's consciousness for vigilance. Possession of a deadly weapon is integral to this code. Automatic thought causes most to default to a firearm as the weapon of concern. However, any seasoned peace officer will tell you that anything can be considered deadly contingent upon the subject who presents the threat and how they

use it. Parallel to the analogy, is the deadly weapon that believers have at their disposal in their arsenal of arms. For the purpose of this book, our testimony is the deadly weapon we possess that changes the dynamic of the situation and the response to those who encounter us. Our testimony makes us *Armed and Dangerous*.

When approaching the subject or the scene the officer is cognizant that the situation is potentially deadly. For this reason, a calculated and strategic approach is taken with heightened regard. Equally, the experiences one lives in and through, forming their testimony are potentially deadly. The enemy seeks to sift, devour, kill, steal, and destroy you with the experiences that shape testimony. Naturally, when you are the prey, the warfare that's designed for you attempts to take you out figuratively and literally.

With the foreknowledge that the context of what you are entering into is potentially deadly, you have to be prepared to use deadly force. Upon assumption of the work detail each day, normal procedure requires law enforcement to be in the uniform of the day with proper identification and in possession of their firearm. Being properly uniformed and equipped allows them to execute deadly force if warranted. In the same vein, believers are to be vigilant and prepared without notice of the perils that life presents. Your uniform of the day is the full

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armor of God. Being clothed in it ensures you are prepared for deadly encounters which could result in use of deadly force. Readiness is imperative. You cannot wait until you enter the fight to condition as we have an assurance that the day of evil will come (Ephesians 6:13). Authorized for your use are truth, righteousness, peace and preparation, faith, salvation, the spirit, and prayer.

The authorized armor serves as backup in the same way that additional manpower backs up the responding officer to the potentially deadly scene or subject. It allows you to stand in confidence that you are well equipped for the encounter. Psychological warfare is a key strategy of our adversary. Threats come to ravish your heart and annihilate your mind. For this reason, it is necessary to draw upon the strength of your backup. Having backup reinforces your confidence so that you walk not in fear. Your defensive posture is the bold confidence afforded you because of your faith (Ephesians 6:16). Uncertainty will try to creep in. This is expected as your adversary comes to infiltrate with lies fostering doubt in the fact that you are well-equipped to withstand and overcome.

For many years, more than I care to share, I had been carrying the desire to write a book. I had the title, subject matter, outlined chapters, and began writing the first chapter. Not having made the writing a priority and

not feeling confident as a writer, I tabled the work until I felt I'd have more preparation as a writer such as the completion of an advanced degree. Having completed the degree, one thing or another came up that I subconsciously used to further prolong the writing. Eventually getting around to it, when I was ready I went in search for all the components I'd began years prior. Much to my surprise, none of the places where they were electronically saved yielded the documents. I couldn't understand how this could be as I am a very organized and meticulous person. Nonetheless, I chalked up the lost and thought I will just begin anew. When I went to work on it, I was unable to produce. Kicking myself at this point as I knew it was only my own fault, I went back to a prophetic word that had affirmed for me that I would write books and that they would be of benefit. Encouraged and hopeful that it would surely come, I arrived at *Armed and Dangerous*.

Not wanting to err in the same way as previously, I acted without haste. Knowing and capitalizing on seasons is vitally important. The initial vision came while I was vacationing. I immediately made some notes and as I acted upon the vision, the more the book project would unfold. It was the epitome of Him making provision for the vision. Each contributor, which you will soon meet, received a blanket invitation to just say yes to a very elusive description of what was to come. Sensing

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the will of God, they each agreed without hesitancy. This confirmed for me that I was operating according to the preordained and predetermined intent and purpose for this undertaking. The testimonies were carefully selected with you in mind as common experiences of women.

In this book, it is my hope that no matter where you are in your life, you will realize the power of being an *Armed and Dangerous* woman. It bears repeating that trouble don't last always as I hope you realize as you experience the balm that lies within these testimonies of other remarkable women who have been tried by the fires of life and have come out with a bold audacity to not keep it to themselves. God is not a respecter of persons, so if He did it for them, He certainly can do it for you.

I've been taught that in life, we are either in a storm, coming out of a storm, or about to enter into a storm. This book serves to equip you for your past, present, and future. If you aren't currently in a storm because you've just traveled through or because you are about to enter into, these testimonies will serve as encouragement for you to hold on for what is ahead and to rest and be renewed in what you've overcome. If you are currently in a storm, it is our hope that these testimonies will silence the deafening beliefs that you're alone; feeling defeated, and can't see your way through. For you daughter, allow your heart to receive the voluminous revelations

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revealed. May you be captivated and know that within you lies the resilient power that's illustrated within the lives of these women.

Each of the lives that you will be opened to in this book embodies various relationships I have made in my life. Relationship, their ability to hear from God, and entrusting me with the beauty for ashes that He has given them to create the tapestry of the Triumphant Testimonies contained within.

PART 1

ESTEEM

***Chosen: Surviving Abandonment and
Rejection
Maranda Brown***

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1: 5 ESV).

During the summer of 1984, I went to a summer school enrichment program. At that time, summer school wasn't solely for those who had not done well academically. You could also attend for enrichment purposes to sustain content learned for an easy transition to the next grade level. I can't recall the subjects for which I was receiving enrichment, although I recall very distinctly the day that my childhood changed.

I was around ten years old at the time and the program involved children of varying ages, some of which were older than me. Having been raised in a relatively small town at the time, most people knew one another or knew your family. On this particular day, either during recess or as we awaited parents to pick us up I was confronted with a truth that I'd not known. There's innocence in childhood yet there is also blatant

cruelty. As I do not know the intent, I'd like to think what happened was childhood innocence.

An older boy whom I knew through loose connections blurts out in front of a group, "your parents aren't your parents; you're adopted." Engulfed in anger and rage, I spew back some commentary contradictory to this and an argument ensued that resulted in a playground type altercation. Program staff intervened and addressed the situation which I would have liked to have just mentally dismissed from my memory. Unfortunately, I wasn't afforded the chance to do that. Upon pick up, the program staff communicated to my father what had happened prompting a conversation that I don't think either one of us was ready for.

That evening my parents sat me down and confirmed what I'd hoped was a lie, that I was adopted. During this time and within my cultural community, adoption was really a taboo subject. Today, adoption is championed because of choice. But back then, it seemed like one of the worse things to learn in the way I'd learned it. I'm sure my parents had planned at some point when I was older to tell me. However, this incident took away their ability to choose and control when that was. I remember an empty sadness that seemed to follow me that evening when I returned to my room alone with just my thoughts and those vile playground comments. I was angry. I was

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angry at the boy who'd forever changed my definition of my family. I was embarrassed. I was embarrassed that not only did the boy know but others on the playground knew too. I was sad. I was sad because my adolescent mind couldn't wrap my head around why I'd been put up for adoption in the first place.

As the days and months thereafter passed, it all began to make a bit more sense to me. I mean I didn't look anything like my parents. They were much older than most parents of children my age. This explained why none of the family photo albums had any baby or toddler pictures of me. It's hard to think I'd not realized this or come up with this on my own somehow.

Naturally, curious I began to want to know more. For whatever reason; however, I didn't seek out those answers from my parents. There was a lot going on in my family when my curiosity peaked and I think I didn't want to add my inquisitiveness to the plate. Raised on the investigative properties of Inspector Gadget, I went on my own mission to find answers i.e. I snooped around. I happened upon some important papers that included my birth certificate. Within this document some telling information was included. I now knew where I was born and my birth name. I stored this information in my memory for later use. This was the era

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where we used the card catalogues and the Dewey Decimal System as our search engine.

My memory would replay the words from the playground like a New Edition hit in my mind. My unconscious (psyche) for whatever reason from time to time would add to those words. I began telling myself that not even your own mother wanted you and so it began the nourishment of the seed of abandonment and rejection. I would subconsciously repeat these scarring words and others like, if your own mother didn't want you why would anybody else want you. The latter seemed to be added in my early adulthood. As these self-defeating messages would run sprints through my head and take up residence, I embraced them. Consciously, I would listen to them until I cried. What I didn't know is that these messages had taken on a life of their own that I would pick up when I needed an explanation of why a relationship ended or why I seemed to experience so much loss. Because I'd listened so much to the voice inside my head, I failed to see the beauty within the reality of the situation. This would not come for some fifteen years later.

Too young to realize at the time that as I'd made BFF (best friends forever) with these two, abandonment and rejection, another thorn lurked. I didn't know what self-esteem was until I realized that mine was sorely affected.

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During adolescence, fitting in is everything as you begin to navigate parents as your authority to friends as your barometer. I seemed to stand out in a way that at times made me a target for peer cruelty. I recall the desire to fit in and look like my peers. I wasn't satisfied with my wardrobe and from that need to fit in, instead of asking to have more choice in selection of clothes, I began to steal. The first time I stole clothes was from a local department store called TG&Y. I pocketed an entire outfit that I would later bundle up into my book bag and change into once I got to school. There would be other outfits and the compulsion of stealing wouldn't end until my senior year in college where I'd racked up two criminal charges as a result. Even beyond the college years, I continued to try to fit in even though I'd outgrown the peer teasing.

You might be wondering what all this has to do with being adopted. With the knowledge of the adoption came the feeling of rejection. The opposite of rejection is acceptance. I wanted to fit in because I wanted to be accepted by my peers. I thought to be accepted, I had to look a certain way or do certain things. I didn't realize that if they failed to accept me for who I was their friendship meant little of nothing anyway. The reality was, I didn't accept myself, so how could I expect others to do what I failed to do.

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Being accepted became really big for me in relationships. Even with my parents, I found myself doing things to seek approval and validation. There was an unspoken fear for me that I had to excel and to perform to be accepted. My fear was rooted in thinking that I'd be abandoned or put back up for adoption if I wasn't achieving and perfect.

The test may have come in the form of abandonment and rejection but the testimony was purified in my ability to flip the switch on the darkness that I'd allowed my mind to engage in about it. Truly this battle was one that was in the mind and I continually allowed my mind to seek out opportunities to validate the lies that came wrapped in abandonment and rejection. Internalizing every situation from that lens, I continually reinforced to myself that I was not worthy of love and that everything that I loved left. With this rationale a cycle of abandonment and rejection ensued as a result of the messages I sent to myself and the conversations that I had with myself. The unconscious messages made conscious in my actions of being overly paranoid about loss, relaxed standards leading to compromise, and defiling behavior that attempted to regain people and things that should have never been held onto.

Seeds germinate in darkness. The process itself involves nourishment. I was nourishing the seeds

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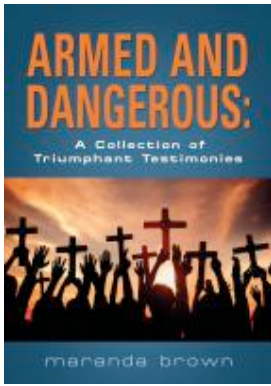
through my own faulty sense of thinking. As I continued to nourish the seeds, the roots thrived and strengthened. Though it was hard to see it from the surface, what lied beneath was thriving. What was not fully recognized by me was that while I was nourishing these seeds the original seeds were still there. In addition to the fact that I'd been chosen by a family on Earth; God had chosen me before I was formed in the womb that carried me into the Earth (Jeremiah 1:5).

There was a purpose for me that existed at my creation and that purpose was also planted in this same ground. In scripture a parable is offered about the wheat and the tare. I'd been consumed in my thoughts and had fertilized seeds giving power to the tare. It's not uncommon for the wheat and the tare to come up together. Once I recognized that I was predestined, called, consecrated, appointed, justified, glorified and set apart the tare couldn't choke out the promise and purpose that was in the wheat. The harvest first had to come in my mind before the full production of the yield was seen in the physical.

Grieve no more over what was and who accepts you because you were fully accepted from the foundation of the Earth. Concern yourself no more with why you had to have this experience or that experience and wishing that you could bury it deeply to never be known again.

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Dissecting aspects of your story for the sake of a perfect presentation will compromise and sacrifice the full manifestation of your harvest. What's within you is so powerful and strong that only you can stagnate your potential. If you could you would have this cup pass but it is necessary for the deliverance of the world. Recognize that you have been chosen and this choosing allows you to be *Armed and Dangerous*. Instead of lamenting over what isn't and questioning what could be; value and appreciate the beauty of who you are. The warring was always an attempt to thwart your ability to recognize the stealth potential that lies within your story. Triumph and overcome.



*In this collection of testimonies, women share their storm experiences. These women emerge from their experiences with power, and are a testimony that you, too, can triumphantly overcome your storm, and proclaim that you're **Armed and Dangerous**. If you hunger for healing, hope, and encouragement, God is going to reveal Himself to you through these writings. You, too, can thrive through the storm.*

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