

A Romance

Press Kit

A Powerful Voice

Penelope Powell



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Anaiah
✝ Press



Penelope Powell



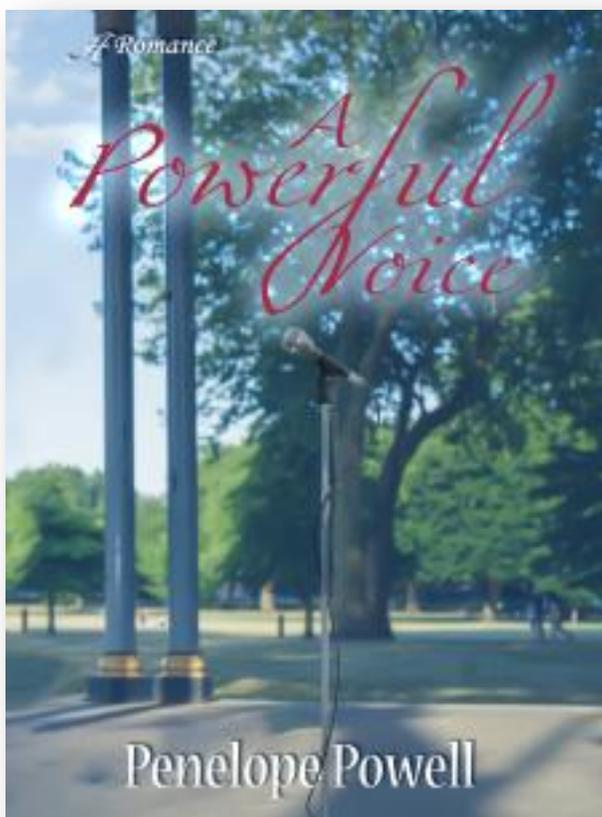
A Powerful Voice

By Penelope Powell

Gloria Fielder is trying her best to live with sincere faith, but regret for a past decision makes it difficult to live with herself.

Justin Case knows first-hand the consequences of bad choices, but he doesn't believe in burying past mistakes. He openly shares his testimony with the purpose of showing there is hope and freedom for those who come to Christ.

Justin is the new worship leader for the church service Gloria attends, and he also leads a new Bible study she knows will help her. To complicate matters, once Justin becomes aware of Gloria's struggle, he seems intent on drawing her out of her self-imposed shell of guilt and regret. If she trusts him with her secret and her heart, will their friendship evolve into something more, or will it simply be her undoing?



Details:

Title: A Powerful Voice

Author: Penelope Powell

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Romance*

Length: 282 pages

*Release Date: June 14,
2016*

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Author Bio:

Though her roots are buried deep in the hills of Middle Tennessee, she now lives in Indiana with her family, and serves in her local church. She loves to entertain, give life to old things, antiquing, reading, and of course writing.

“Like the things we experience, I believe good Christian fiction can inspire and change someone’s perspective, and hopefully point them to Christ.”

*View Penelope’s website at:
<http://penelopepowell.com>*





PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Anaiiah Press announces release of *A Powerful Voice* by Penelope Powell.

Eden Plantz, Executive Editor of Anaiiah Press, announces the release of *A Powerful Voice*, a contemporary romance novel by Penelope Powell, on June 14, 2016. The book is available in electronic format through most major and online book retailers.

About the Book

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Important Links

Barnes & Noble— <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/a-powerful-voice-penelope-powell/1123886059?ean=2940153055947>

Amazon— <https://amzn.com/B01GNCI7JE>

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About Anaiiah Press

Anaiiah Press, based out of Saint Petersburg, Florida, is a Christian publishing house dedicated to presenting quality, faith-based fiction and nonfiction books to the public. Their goal is to provide authors with the close-knit, hands-on experience of working with a small press, while ensuring they don't have to sacrifice quality editing, cover art, and marketing. To learn more about Anaiiah Press, visit www.anaiiahpress.com.

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Excerpt

Chapter One

Time heals all wounds...unless you deserve to suffer.

When the thought from her internal mantra struck, Gloria Fielder froze mid-step. As if punctuating the accusation, an icy wind howled, the force of it wrenching the glass door from her grasp and slamming it against the stopper.

“A few more minutes and you would’ve missed us entirely.”

Gloria looked up into the unsmiling face of a rail-thin woman standing sentinel over a group of children. Gloria assumed she was the children’s director, as they were all dressed in the festive colors of Christmas, their bright reds and deep greens reminding her of the candlelight service in progress.

She hesitated, her gaze shifting to the plaster nativity figures less than ten feet away, the babe in particular so...lifelike. Would it be better to leave and apologize later for having missed the program?

“Could you shut the door please? It’s hard to keep everyone’s attention while a draft is blowing through, *and* it’s almost time for us to begin.” Seeming to barely hang on to her patience, the director’s smile was as tight as her collar.

Being late was bad enough, but being made to feel like she was an annoying interruption was well...worse. Gloria shifted to close the door.

After an inquisitive glance toward Gloria, a chubby boy with flushed cheeks pulled on the director’s sleeve. “Mrs. Parker, when do we get our candles?”

“Patience, Tommy. We need to wait for the lady to go inside the auditorium, don’t we?”

Glancing from the boy to Mrs. Parker, Gloria apologized.

“That’s all right. We’re happy to wait for you to get settled.” Mrs. Parker’s smile stretched.

Gloria glanced back toward the woman, wondering if she meant what she said. She’d grown up in a house where a smile often held duplicity. Committed to stay, she hurried toward the partition crammed with winter coats. She unfurled the red scarf from her neck, then squished it and her coat into the mix.

Hushed giggles drew her gaze back to the director, who was busy giving each child a candle with detailed instructions. Everything about them seemed to contrast her. Was it just last year she wore red, putting on a good front? She wasn’t interested in being that person anymore. The clingy dress and all it represented was exiled to the corner of her closet. Proof she was different.

The past few weeks had been particularly hard. When something like seeing the babe in the manger shook her confidence instead of giving her hope, she questioned her faith as a believer in Christ. The possibility of seeing someone at this service she’d rather avoid tightened her chest with further worry.

“Ma’am, they’re waiting for us to start.” Apparently losing her patience, Mrs. Parker nodded toward the doors going into the auditorium.

Gloria tamped down her misgivings, straightened her shoulders, and walked toward the sanctuary. As she edged around the children to reach for one of the doors, a little girl dressed in an evergreen velvet dress took a candle from a basket and offered it to her.

“Thank you.” Gloria smiled.

The girl’s pink lips curved in reply.

Suddenly, blinking back the unwelcome pressure of tears, she turned and eased through the doors. Assailed by the scent of melting wax and pine, she waited for her eyesight to adjust to the soft glow of dimmed lighting, giving her a chance to scan the room for empty seats.

Soon an usher stood next to her, his face brightening when he smiled. “Is anyone joining you?” His generous teeth gleamed in the darkness.

Just me. She shook her head.

He motioned for her to follow him, then pointed to some empty chairs. As she made a beeline for them, his parting greeting followed. “Merry Christmas.”

Gloria glanced over her shoulder and forced a smile. She wanted to be merry. Wanted to simply feel peace. Wanted a reprieve from the recording in her head. Some days, the indictment playing over and over—tightening the tendrils of regret—putting her back on the treadmill of if-only. Making forgetting impossible.

If time was linear, and the passing of it promised things would get easier, then why hadn't the grip of shame and sorrow weakened?

She settled into a chair as the children from the lobby entered and dispersed down the center aisle, the sound of their voices rising as they moved toward the front, their song offering her a distraction from her turmoil. With a deep breath, she closed her eyes and tried to escape into the words.

Joy to the World. A feeling she had yet to muster.

After several carols and a reenactment of the birth of Christ, the pastor walked up on the stage.

Bobby Jordan had thinning gray hair, a solid middle-aged build, and the demeanor and voice of an authoritative grandfather. But that was her opinion now that she knew him. Their first meeting was at her office. His friendly and forthright manner reminded her of the old Southern gentlemen at home. He explained he was a pastor hoping to refer church members who were house hunting, said a friend had recommended her.

Her peace of mind wavered at the memory. Fortunately, the uncomfortable connection led to providential results. If she had not been going through such a rough time, and if Bobby had not sought her out, she might never have begun a relationship with Christ. If only she could find a way to reconcile how the two connected without all the bad stuff. She rubbed her forehead.

“Thank you children, you may join your parents,” Bobby said.

Gloria glanced up as Bobby laid a hand on the shoulder of a little boy after dismissing the others to find their seats.

“This is Johnny, one of our shepherds in tonight's program. He's seven. I asked Johnny a question earlier, and I wanted you to hear his response.” Bobby crouched down. “Johnny, what's Christmas all about?” He tilted a microphone toward Johnny.

“Pweth-sents.” The boy turned toward the audience and smiled, the gap in his front teeth sparking chuckles from the crowd.

“What's so great about presents?”

“They' we fwee.”

Bobby ruffled Johnny's hair and told him to join his parents. When the laughter trickling through the congregation died down, Bobby stood at the edge of the platform. "Each Christmas, we decorate our homes with nativity scenes and our Christmas trees with lights."

Gloria swallowed, the nativity from the lobby edging back into her thoughts.

"We send cards, sing carols, and we exchange gifts." Eyes down, Bobby paused. "I agree with Johnny. Big or small, presents are special, but are they truly free? Certainly, they're free to the recipients, but to the giver there is always a cost." Bobby raised his arms. "*But to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.* Paul wrote this to the Ephesians. God's gift of grace. Undeserved favor for us."

Undeserved. That was certainly her. She'd never measured up to expectations, which was one of the reasons why she worked so hard at her job.

"As recipients, God's gift of grace costs us nothing because Jesus paid for it. He gave his life, so we might receive forgiveness. Receive life. In this season of giving, in addition to the wrapped packages we place under our trees, let's give grace to one another. Offer forgiveness when needed, even underserved." Then Bobby prayed.

As before, the children assembled across the front. Once their candles were lit, they disbursed down each aisle, lighting the candles of people sitting on the end as they went. Music played in the background.

Eyes closed, Gloria focused on Bobby's words. She prayed the message would wash over her. Because there was hope in knowing Christ had already forgiven her. And she could do the same.

"Excuse me."

Startled from someone's touch, Gloria slapped a hand to her chest.

A man barely visible, given the darkness and shadows cast by candlelight, leaned closer. "Sorry to disturb you, but I thought you might want to light your candle." Highlighting his explanation, he lifted his candle. For one brief moment, a striking, masculine face with eyes so dark they glittered like pools in moonlight stared back at her.

She swallowed, her heart still pounding from having been disturbed. "Sorry." She fumbled for the candle amongst her things. Finding it, she held it toward him and tilted her wick toward his flame. A cool, woody scent wafted toward her, reminiscent of an autumn breeze. She inhaled the refreshing smell and relaxed a bit.

When her candle was lit, the flare illuminated his face once more. He looked up and caught her staring. Embarrassed, she turned away. “Thanks.”

“No problem.”

When the lights came up, she hit the aisle, determined to get through the lobby then home. The last thing she wanted to do was linger. Not that she didn’t enjoy talking with people afterward, but tonight she felt fragile.

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