

NOWHERE TO HIDE

AHAB

WHEN AHAB HEARD THAT NABOTH WAS DEAD, HE GOT UP AND WENT DOWN TO TAKE POSSESSION OF NABOTH'S VINEYARD. 1 KINGS 21:16

Ahab reached out, fingering the nearest bunch of grapes. He plucked one, paused and smirked before quickly tossing it in his mouth. As he bit down a shot of juice bubbled out and dribbled down his chin. This, he enthused, is what power tastes like.

The fruit was succulent—better even than he had thought it would be. Ahab began to imagine the quality of wine that could come from the grapes of his new vineyard. He imagined the guests at the party where he'd first serve it, the compliments he'd garner, the women he'd impress. He plucked another grape from the vine, squeezing it in his fist, the juice squirting out between his fingers.

Ahab stopped his sampling at the sound of plodding footsteps coming up behind him. He saw what looked at first to be a beggar limping his way down the row of grapevines. Ahab's bodyguards stepped in front of the king to protect him, and as Ahab looked from behind these two young men a flash of recognition crossed his mind. As soon as the man opened his lips, Ahab's fears were confirmed. He knew this visitor was no common vagrant.

"This is what the Lord says!" The words burst forth from the man like thunder, an unexpected display of power from the otherwise feeble figure. Ahab nearly choked on his grapes. This was none other than the prophet Elijah in all his social awkwardness. The prophet continued, "You've murdered a man and seized his property, haven't you? This is what the Lord says . . ." Elijah continued to pour forth his proclamation as though he were reciting a poem: "I have found you as you have been about the business of evil."

The words hung in the air thicker than Elijah's breath. The prophet went on to predict disaster for Ahab, the end of his family line and the destruction of his household.

It's that woman I married, Ahab thought to himself as the guards escorted the prophet to the vineyard gate. *She brought this on me. What will I do now?* Ahab heard the wind among the grapevines and felt the juice on his chin. He looked down and, startled, noticed the grape stains on his hands.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

:: WHAT DOES AHAB'S STORY SAY ABOUT THE PERSON AND CHARACTER OF GOD?

:: HAVE YOU EVER TURNED AWAY FROM GOD? WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

:: WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO ENSURE THAT YOU WILL NEVER FALL INTO "THE BUSINESS OF EVIL"?

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

READ ALL OF 1 KINGS 21—22 TO SEE HOW GOD DEALT WITH AHAB AND HIS WIFE IN RESPONSE TO THEIR DISOBEDIENCE.