

A Light in the Darkness

Copyright 2006, 2007 by Sandi Zimmerman Rebert

All rights reserved.

Please Note: This is just a sampling of the script for “A Light in the Darkness. It may be used for evaluation purposes only.

Act I

Overture

Scene 1 - Tax Collector’s building (*early morning, two weeks before the Passover*)

(People are milling about the street shopping, talking, etc. Near Rachel’s home, there is a group of slaves with one or two guards. Malchijah is sitting at the tax collector’s table. There is a short line at the table. A guard should be to his left. Rachel leaves her home and slowly walks across the stage, taking her place at the end of the line. She should give the impression that she is dreading talking with Malchijah.)

Malchijah: Rachel. (*slightly sarcastically*) So nice to see you. (*hesitatingly, noticing her black veil*) But, where’s Josiah?

Rachel: (*She glances at the soldier and steps slightly away from him in fear, then speaks somewhat coldly, yet in grief.*) Surely such news travels to a tax collector. He’s—he’s dead, Malchijah.

Malchijah: (*taken back, troubled*) I hadn’t heard. How did it happen?

Rachel: He took sick several months ago. We all did. Nathan and I recovered quickly, but Josiah...

Malchijah: I’m sorry, Rachel.

Rachel: He was your childhood friend.

Malchijah: (*skeptically*) Are you trying to tell me you can’t pay your taxes?

Rachel: He didn't work during that time. The medicine, the doctor—it all cost money.

Malchijah: Couldn't your *son* find any work.

Rachel: That's cruel, Malchijah.

Malchijah: (*laughing*) I suppose it is. Perhaps working alongside the Romans has hardened me. Would you say so?

Rachel: Josiah was very concerned about you. (*pauses*) You've changed since you were boys tending sheep together on the hills of Galilee.

Malchijah: Changed? Don't you mean I'm a traitor to Israel? Go on, say it! That's what everyone else says behind my back, isn't it? That's what Josiah used to tell me.

Rachel: (*pauses, then quietly*) Because it's true.

Malchijah: (*looking at the soldier standing next to him*) Speak up, Rachel. What did you say?

Rachel: (*boldly*) I said it's true.

Malchijah: (*laughing*) And you expect me to grant you a favor. (*soldier laughs with him*) Josiah was concerned about me because he never had the money to pay his taxes on time.

Rachel: Things have been hard.

Malchijah: Things have always been hard for Josiah. In fact, he still owed some money from the last taxation. I was gracious enough to give him an extension. He had promised me that by the "next time" he'd have the money in full. That's today.

Rachel: *(after an awkward pause)* He would have had no trouble paying if the tax had been fair.

Malchijah: I will choose to ignore that comment *(glances at the soldier)* for your sake.

You do realize, don't you, Rachel, that your husband could have been a wealthy man. I offered him a position.

Rachel: *(looking away, disgusted)* My husband was not interested in dishonest gain.

Malchijah: Enough! I have lost my patience with you! I need to get on with my business and you need to get on with yours. I'll give you thirty days.

Rachel: Thirty days! I can't possibly...

Malchijah: One month, Rachel, or that crippled son of yours will be spending time in prison until you do pay.

Rachel: You wouldn't...

Malchijah: *(waving her away)* I've given you more time than I can spare. Next!

(Rachel turns away despondently. She glances around her, noticing a Roman soldier with some slaves in chains, two people fighting with each other, a blind girl at whom others are laughing. Matthew steals some food from the marketplace and is apprehended by a soldier. Ad-lib dialogue for all these situations.)

Blind Girl: *(Hearing footsteps near her, she holds out a small bowl)*
Please, can you help me?

Rachel: *(kindly, kneeling down to speak to the girl)* I wish I could. I wish so much that I could.

(Rising, Rachel takes a few steps, then turns and reviews the scene before her.)

Rachel: (*Turns back toward the audience, speaks aloud to the Lord, holding back tears*) God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—You see my hopeless plight, the hopeless situation of Your people. The world is full of hate, fear, injustice, misery. All Your people cry out for Your help.

You have promised a Redeemer. Please, Lord, send us the Messiah. Free us from the tyranny of Rome. Free us from the oppression of sin!

Song: There Is A Longing (*Everyone but Rachel freezes in position until the chorus of the song; those portraying Romans remain “frozen,” those portraying Jews, with the exception of Malchijah, “come to life.”*)

Lights Down as All Exit

Scene 2 - Rachel's Home (*Two weeks later, the Thursday before Passover. Lights up on Rachel's home and the street. There should only be a few people on the street. Add more as the scene progresses*)

Adah: (*Adah runs in, through the audience, breathlessly. She comes to Rachel's house and enters without knocking.*) Rachel! Rachel!

Rachel: (*Rachel is cooking something over her oven. She turns toward Adah, speaks facetiously*) Please, won't you come in, Adah?

Adah: I have exciting news!

Rachel: (*uninterested, turns back to her cooking*) You always have exciting news.

Adah: Oh, but this is exciting. (*peaking into the back room*) Where's Nathan?

Rachel: (*Being used to her friend's rants, Rachel is still unmoved.*) He was finally able to find some work in the marketplace. Old Tobias was good enough to let him help at his stand. It won't bring us anything close to what we need, but perhaps what he earns, along with the little I've been able to bring in, will persuade Malchijah to give us more time.

Adah: I have to see Nathan! I have to tell him the good news!

Rachel: Please Adah, sit down and calm yourself.

Adah: (*sits down, catches her breath*) There's a man coming to Bethany. His name is Jesus. I've heard of Him before; I've told you.

Rachel: The One Who *calls* Himself the Messiah, the One Who's been preaching and teaching for the past three years from here to Galilee.

Adah: And healing the sick, Rachel. The blind see, the lame walk...

Rachel: (*sits down beside Adah, sighs*) Just the other week I begged God to send us a Redeemer. But there have been so many who have called themselves Messiah. Yet, we are still in the clutches of Rome's power.

Adah: Yes, Rachel, and I know you haven't believed in this Jesus up until now. I know you thought the miracles we'd heard of were just tricks of some sort, but... You need to sit down, Rachel.

Rachel: I am sitting down, Adah.

Adah: Oh, of course. I'm just so excited! (*grabs Rachel's hand*) He raised a dead man, Rachel!

Rachel: What?

Adah: It's true! I heard it myself from Sherah. It happened a little while ago in Bethany. I can't believe I didn't hear about it until now! What's even more surprising is that Sherah didn't hear about it until now. She finds out about things quicker than I do! And that's saying something!

Rachel: Are you sure?

Adah: Oh yes. I don't know how she does it...

Rachel: No, I mean about this man Jesus coming to Bethany.

Adah: Oh, yes! Sherah said this man, Lazarus is his name, is a close friend of Jesus. He has two sisters, Mary and Martha—they live right there in Bethany. Anyway, Jesus is coming to visit them; He should be there by tomorrow. And not long ago he actually raised this man Lazarus from the dead! Lots of people are planning to be there to see Jesus. Well, of course, some of them want to see this man who was raised from the dead!

Can you imagine seeing someone rise from the dead, Rachel? (*Rachel is preoccupied with her own thoughts while Adah rambles on.*) Sherah said he'd been dead four days already! Four days, mind you! Even with my imagination I can't fathom what it must have been like to see this man come out of the tomb. And the smell! (*pauses momentarily*) Rachel, are you listening to me?

Rachel: (*talk aloud to herself*) He raised a man from the dead. (*getting up slowly, thinking aloud*) The blind see, the lame walk... If I could get Nathan... (*Adah also rises*) Perhaps... (*giving Adah a hug*) Oh, Adah, thank you! Thank you! As soon as Nathan comes home, I'll take him to see this Jesus. (*Adah nods in agreement*)

Do you know how long He'll be staying in Bethany?

Adah: (*as she heads out the door*) No, but I'll find out! (*Adah runs through the people in the street and exits through the marketplace.*)

Rachel: (*standing in the doorway, looking after her friend; smiles knowingly, as if thinking about how Adah manages to find out everything that's happening*) I'm sure you will, Adah. I'm sure you will. (*Just then Rachel notices the blind girl entering the street from the single archway. She is walking as if she can see.*)

Man: (*one of the men who had made fun of her in Scene 1*) What happened to you, girl? You act as though you can see!

Girl: (*in awe of the miracle which happened to her*) I can see! I can see! Jesus touched my eyes and now—I can see! (*A crowd begins to gather.*)

Rachel: *(walks over to the girl)* Did I understand you correctly? Did you say someone named Jesus healed you?

Girl: Yes. *(Pauses)* I recognize your voice. You're the woman who was so kind to me not long ago.

Rachel: *(humbly)* I would have been kinder if I'd had some money to give you.

Girl: Kind words are sometimes worth more than money.

Rachel: I should have thought to invite you to my home and at least give you a meal to eat and a roof over your head. I'm sorry. I'm afraid I was too caught up in my own troubles to think clearly.

Girl: Don't feel badly. God supplied my need. He sent someone along who took me to see Jesus. Praise be to Jehovah, Jesus healed me! But even more importantly, He forgave my sins!

Man: *(angrily)* Blasphemy! No one can forgive sin but God.

Girl: Jesus is Who He claims to be; He is God! I know it. I've not only seen Him with my eyes; I've seen Him with my heart!

Song: I've Seen Jesus *(The choir sings their part as if speaking to each other.)*

(Scene 3 - 6 are here.)

(Lights Down on Scene)

Scene 7 - Rachel's Home *(the Monday morning before Passover; dim lights up on house)*

Soldier: *(knocks on the door, then enters the house as Rachel enters from the back room)*

Rachel: *(stepping back in fear)* What do you want?

Soldier: *(demanding)* Where is he? *(The soldier looks around the room, goes into the back room, then enters the stage area again.)*

Rachel: Where is who? What are you talking about?

Soldier: Your son, woman. Your son!

Rachel: Nathan? *(bitterly)* You ought to know the answer to that. You're the one who took him off to prison.

Soldier: I was obeying orders. *(softening somewhat)* Look, the sooner you tell me where he is, the better things will go for him.

Rachel: *(shaking her head in disbelief)* I don't know what you mean? The last time I saw my son was yesterday morning at the garrison. I brought him some clean clothes. I've not seen him since.

Soldier: If you're found to be lying...

Rachel: *(Unnerved, she sits at the table.)* I'm assuming he's escaped?

Soldier: Yes.

Rachel: *(relieved)* Praise be to Jehovah!

Soldier: You will not be praising your God once we have captured your son.

Rachel: *(reaching out and touching his arm, then drawing her hand back quickly in fear)* Please, please don't hurt him. He's just a boy. *(She gets up, crosses to other side of table, then faces toward the audience while speaking to the soldier.)* You can't blame him for wanting his freedom.

Soldier: Do you have any relatives to whom he may have fled?

Rachel: *(abruptly)* No. No, I—I have no family who would take him in.

Soldier: Are there any friends he may be with?

Rachel: I don't know.

Soldier: Would you tell me if you did know?

Rachel: *(turning toward the soldier, pauses before answering)* Would you expect me to?

Soldier: *(nodding in understanding, starts to leave, then turns back to Rachel)* If you truly believe in your Jewish God, you may want to pray we find your boy soon—for his sake. *(pauses)* And yours.

(Lights Down on Scene)

(Scene 8 is here)

Intermission

Act II

Musical Interlude 3

Scene 1 - Mount Calvary/Street *(just after Christ's Crucifixion)*

(People are coming down the hill; they are very somber. Dim lighting on scene.)

Rachel: *(entering through the Marketplace, sees Adah)* Adah, oh, Adah, I'm so glad to see you. I've been so frightened! I'd just returned from

searching for Nathan. As I came into Jerusalem, the sky was dark as midnight, the ground started shaking...

Adah: Oh, Rachel—I'm so sorry.

Rachel: What is it? You found him? Has something's happened...

Adah: *(shaking her head)* No, Rachel, it's not Nathan. It's Jesus. *(long pause)* He's—He's been crucified!

Rachel: What? Crucified?

Adah: Up there on Golgotha, “the place of the skull.”

Rachel: *(long pause)* How can that be? He said he was God. He healed the sick, He raised the dead. He made the blind see and the lame... *(overcome with emotion, unable to continue)*

Adah: *(putting her arm around her friend)* I know, Rachel. I'm so sorry.

Rachel: I had such high expectations, such faith that God would answer my prayers—that I'd find Nathan. I thought Jesus would heal him... *(holding back tears)*

Adah: Let's go back to your house, Rachel.

Rachel: *(shaking her head sadly in agreement)* Why? Why did they crucify Jesus? He was my only hope. I wanted to believe in Him. If He's not the Son of God, as He said, then Who is this Jesus? Why did He have to die?

Song: Who Is This Jesus?

(The crowd quietly disperses and exits offstage. Rachel and Adah go back to Rachel's house. Lights down on crosses and street. The street should remain deserted.)

Scene 2 - Rachel's House

Rachel: (*“lighting” the oil lamp*) Adah, tell me—tell me what happened that led to Jesus’ crucifixion?

Adah: Oh, Rachel, it has been such a week in Jerusalem. Let’s see, you spoke to me on Monday morning, right, soon after that soldier had come and told you of Nathan’s escape? And then you left to begin searching for Nathan...

Rachel: Yes.

Adah: Well, sometime that day Jesus went into the temple and began overthrowing the tables of the money changers. He quoted Isaiah saying, “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.” And then He healed some people. (*realizing how hurtful her words have been*) Oh, Rachel, I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have told you that part.

Rachel: (*sitting down*) It’s alright, Adah. I’m happy for those who... (*She is unable to continue.*)

Adah: Well, as you can imagine, neither of those events made Him popular with the chief priests and scribes!

They had Him arrested! It was one of Jesus’ own disciples who betrayed Him into their hands!

Rachel: How horrible!

Adah: That was only the beginning. He was mocked by the soldiers. Rachel, they even platted a crown of thorns and beat it into His head and ripped the beard from His face! He was so mutilated it was hard to recognize Him!

Pilate had him scourged, then released a notorious criminal—you know, that Barabas who had been sentenced to die?

Rachel: He released a robber and crucified Jesus?

Adah: The people *asked* him to release Barabas! After Pilate had Jesus scourged, he had the audacity to wash his hands in front of everyone saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person.”

Rachel: (*thinking back*) Josiah always said Pilate was a weak ruler, that he was more concerned with popularity than principle.

Adah: They *demand*ed that Jesus be crucified—even some of those who sang “Hosanna” less than a week ago!

Rachel: How could they? Jesus had to have been sent from God! All the miracles He performed... No one but God could do such things!

Adah: I know. I know.

Rachel: Yet, if He were God, He could have had the power to defeat those who wanted to crucify Him.

Adah: He *was* powerful, Rachel. I heard that, when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, the soldiers who came to take Him into custody fell as dead men just at the sound of His voice. Then, one of His disciples was so angry he took his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest’s servant! (*slight pause as Rachel reacts*)

But Rachel, listen to this! Jesus took the man’s ear and healed it—put it right back on his face as if nothing had happened.

Rachel: He would even have such love for someone who planned to kill Him?

Adah: Oh, Rachel, He had *such* love—such love for those who treated Him so disdainfully. Even while dying on that cross He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” I’ve never experienced anything quite like it.

Rachel: (*getting up slowly*) I guess it’s over. (*turns away from Adah, faces the audience.*) My hopes of Nathan ever walking... (*struggles to hold back tears*)

Adah: *(getting up and going to her, puts her hand on Rachel's shoulder)*
Rachel, I'm so sorry.

Rachel: It doesn't matter. *(turning towards Adah)* The important thing now is to find him. Just to know that he's—safe.

(Lights Down on Scene)

(Act II, Scene 3 is here.)

Musical Interlude 5

Scene 4 - Jerusha's house *(a few days later)*

(Rachel and the Servant Girl are behind the scrim as the lights come up.)

Servant Girl: Please wait here until I return with my mistress.

Rachel: *(nods, turns away from the entrance to the room, trying to gain courage and control her emotions)*

Shomron: *(enters)*

Rachel: *(Thinking it's Jerusha, she speaks as she turns toward him.)*
Jerusha! *(Startled by Shomron's presence, she turns fearfully away.)*

Shomron: *(with controlled anger)* Jerusha is not here. And if she were, I would forbid her to speak with you!

Rachel: Please, I know there has been a wall between our families ever since...

Shomron: Since your sister married a Samaritan?

Rachel: *(turning toward him)* I am not the one who built that wall.

Shomron: *(turning away from her and crossing his arms)* Nor am I. It was your husband who built that wall. It is your husband who must tear it down.

Rachel: But he can't! He's—he's dead.

Shomron: Then I must ask you to leave immediately!

Rachel: *(pleading)* Please, just tell me one thing. My son, Nathan... He's been missing for weeks. Just tell me if you've seen him.

Shomron: *(angrily, forcefully)* I said you must go!

Rachel: *(ignoring his threat, pleading)* When his father and I were ill, I told him where you lived. I told him that if anything should happen to us, he should come to you and Jerusha for help. I hadn't dared to think that he would now, but... It's taken me weeks to get the courage to come here! Please—I have to find him! If you know anything...

Shomron: *(turning toward her, speaks forcefully, then exits behind curtain)*
Go!

Rachel: *(reacts to his anger in fear, cries)* Please! Please!

(Lights Down on Scene)

(Scene 5 is here.)

(Lights Down on Scene)

Scene 6 - Rachel's Home *(about a week later)*

(Lights up on Rachel who is methodically doing chores around her house. She sinks onto a bench, leans on the table, and buries her head in her hands.)

Rachel: *(looking up)* Oh, God of my Fathers. I feel so helpless. I know the Christ will come again someday, but what am I to do now? What am I to do until then? I need a light—a light in the darkness.

I never had the chance to meet Your Son, Jesus, when He was here on earth. I came so close—so close! I thought He was that Light, the answer to my problems. I thought Nathan would... I have nowhere else I can look and no one else to whom I can turn. *(breaks down and cries)*

(lifting her head, as if suddenly realizing something) I came close to seeing Jesus face to face, yet, I've not seen Him with my heart—not in the way the blind girl was talking about. Not in the way Adah's come to know Him. Yes, I believed He was sent from You. I believed He could do miracles. But, I was waiting for Him to do something miraculous just for me. I was more concerned with Nathan's healing, than I was with the eternal—salvation from sin.

(rises, paces some while speaking) But that was wrong of me. Christ has already done the miraculous for me personally. He gave Himself willingly to die, then rose again so I might have the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life!

I've wanted redemption from my problems, redemption from Rome, but what I truly need is redemption from my sin. I was angry with you for allowing these things to happen. I've had such hatred in my heart toward Malchijah, such bitterness toward that soldier who... Yet, I can never forgive them, *(pauses, then sits down)* not until I have Your forgiveness.

Oh, dear Jesus, though I cannot see You here on earth, I know You are the Son of God and that You died on the cross as my substitute. I know I must place my faith in You alone. Please, please forgive me! Save me from my sin!

(pauses, looks up, then rises) Lord, I know You can see my son, wherever he is. I desire so much for Nathan to know You—to see You with His heart, as I have. Please, whether or not you see fit to heal him, please let him see his need of You as his Savior!

(Lights Down on Scene)

(This is just the last part of Scene 7)

Shomron: You've seen the miracle of this boy's healing. You've stood here and heard the testimony of those who have witnessed the resurrected Christ.

You've observed the difference it has made in our lives. Surely, you must have an opinion.

Soldier: I am a soldier, sir. It is not for me to make such-judgments.

Rachel: (*Smiling slightly*) I know that, as a soldier, you must "simply obey orders." (*The soldier reacts with a slight grin; Rachel speaks very seriously*) But, in matters of the heart, you must think for yourself.

Were you—at His crucifixion?

Soldier: (*pauses, feeling guilty, remembering that day, finds it difficult to talk*) I was a part of it.

Shomron: We were *all* a part of it. It was our *sins* that nailed Him to that cross.

Soldier: (*shaking his head*) This—salvation is of the Jews. I am a Roman.

Shomron: And I am a Samaritan, hated by the Jews because of my Assyrian heritage. Yet, Christ has forgiven me.

Soldier: (*looking from Shomron to Rachel*) One of my superiors, a centurion, admitted that day, that this Jesus of Nazareth "was the Son of God." His Words have troubled me ever since. (*pauses*) I will consider what I have seen and heard.

Shomron: (*putting his hand on the soldier's shoulder*) Do not put it off for long, son. A soldier's life is very uncertain. None of us have the promise of tomorrow, yet, we can have the assurance of eternal life.

Soldier: (*nodding, pauses*) We should be going.

Adah: (*running to the house from the marketplace*) Rachel, Rachel! You should see what's happening outside the (*the soldier turns around, Adah nearly runs into his sword*) temple... (*pauses*) I'll come back tomorrow.

Rachel: *(going past the soldier and grabbing her friend's hand)* No. No, Adah—please stay. I have such exciting news to tell you! *(She brings Adah into the house. Adah is ecstatic to see Nathan)*

Postlude

(Lights Down on Scene)
The End