

# THE *widow's* MIGHT

*the story of Naomi, Ruth & Boaz*



A MUSICAL BY RYAN MALONE

ORIGINAL ARMSTRONG AUDITORIUM CAST RECORDING  
SOUNDTRACK LINER NOTES

## PERSONNEL

### SOLOISTS

<i>Naomi</i> .....	Paula Malone
<i>Boaz</i> .....	Mark Jenkins
<i>Ruth</i> .....	Jessica Brandon
<i>Chief Elder</i> .....	Ryan Malone
<i>Ben (Boaz's Chief Steward)</i> .....	Joshua Sloan
<i>Tob (Near Kinsman)</i> .....	Shane Granger
<i>Orpah</i> .....	Amy Flurry
<i>Reaper</i> .....	Jesse Zoellner
<i>Gatherer</i> .....	Calela Brooks
<i>Granddaughter</i> .....	Megan Jenkins
<i>Widow</i> .....	Valerie Jenkins
<i>Fatherless</i> .....	Skye Malone
<i>Stranger</i> .....	Sean Welsh

### CORPS

*City Elders* .....

Dan Arnfield, David Brandon, Eric Burns, Albert Clarke, Jordan Ellis,  
Caleb Heerma, Matthew McCarty, Seth Malone, William Wallace

*Women and Children* .....

Jessie Beezley, Sherry Beezley, Paulette Corey, Olivia Culpepper,  
Corinne Eagle, Lindsay Eagle, Sarah Evans, Becky Falk, Spencer  
Falk, Sandra Heyer, Luke Hyde, Rachel Hyde, Tara Hyde, William  
Jenkins, Talon Kaleho, Jacquelynn Locher, Christy McCarty, Aiden  
McCarty, Brendan McCarty, Gabrielle Morley, Heather Morley,  
Nathaniel Morley, Michal Orleans, Paula Powell, Jordy Rouzer,  
Heidi Rumler, Jonathan Saranga, Sarah Stewart

*Gleaners* .....

Deepika Azariah, Anthony Chibarirwe, Erika Hernandez, Carolyn  
Coats, Elizabeth Clarke, Maggie Hilliker, Jaden Hernandez, Laila  
Hernandez, Katie Rumler, Gianni Welsh

*Boaz's Servants* .....

Cathryn Bancroft, Carleigh Blanchat, Elijah Burks, Cariña Car-  
bonell, Eleanor Clarke, Dillon Davis, Michael Davis, Aaron Eagle,  
Amber Eagle, Cami Eagle, Julia Goddard, Lilian Harms, Julia Hayes,  
Zechariah Henderson, Ethan Hensley, Audrey Locher, Victoria Lo-  
cher, Ezekiel Malone, Adam Paul, Ariana Saranga, Emma Smithies,  
Maree Tolis, Micah Turgeon, Jack Wood, Tyler Verbout, Brianna  
Weeks, Ansley Welsh

*Orchestra* .....

Ryan Malone (keyboards, percussion), Parthena Owens (flute);  
David Price (oboe); Tara Heitz (clarinet); Rod Ackmann (bassoon);  
Eldon Matlick (horn); Karl Sievers (trumpet); Jeff Kidwell (trombone);  
Roger Owens (percussion); Densi Rushing\*\*, Marat Gabdullin,  
Patrick Conlon (violin I); James Thomson\*, Sam Formicola, Cathy  
Reaves, Elizabeth Venegas (violin 2); Royce McLarry\*, Donna Cain  
(viola); Jim Shelley\*, Valerie Tatge (cello); Larry Moore (bass)

\*\* concert master | \* principal

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## ACT ONE

### 1. OVERTURE / WIDOW'S LAMENT

(Naomi): Two souls become one flesh,

(Ruth): A husband and a wife,

(Orpah): They share each breath of air;

(Naomi/Ruth): They form a single life.

(Orpah): The moments of each day,

(Ruth): Emotions one might feel,

(Naomi): Till shared with the other,

They never seem as real.

(Ruth): So when death arrives for one,

(Orpah): It forces half to leave;

(Naomi): And there are times it seems

Impossible simply to breathe!

### REFRAIN

(All Three): The times of lamenting,

Of grief unrelenting,

Are seasons of anguish and woe.

The cold nights, the long days

The hours I am always

Surrounded, yet always alone.

(Ruth): One image sparks a thought

A memory is inflamed;

(Orpah): One scent transports me back,

The sorrow is reclaimed.

(Naomi): It happened long ago,

For me the years are ten.

(All Three):

But there are days it seems

I lose him all over again!

### REFRAIN

(Orpah): Stay busy so time will pass

(Ruth/Orpah): Till sleep comes,

(Ruth): but then alas

In darkness a sharp sorrow stirs.

(Naomi): Profound pain prohibits me

From closing this elegy

(All Three): There simply are no more words!

### 2. RETURN

(Naomi):

I hear God ends the drought in my homeland,

And gives it the bread that it yearns.

The curses of famine are finished,

His blessings have been reconfirmed.

To Judah the Lord returns.

The Lord returns.

The soil of my soul has been arid

The leaves of my life have been burned.

So where the Lord goes I must follow,

My faith must be now reaffirmed.

To Judah I now return

I now return.

May God show you favor and kindness,

And give you the rest you have earned,

Rewarding you both with redemption,

For all of your care and concern.

To each of your homes return.

Now go, return.

(Ruth/Orpah):

We will return, not to our people,

But we will return with you.

We will return, unto your people,

So life can start anew.

By leaving you alone,

Our living would be hollow,

Our hearts have not returned

How could our footsteps follow?

(Orpah): To lessen our bereavement,

(Ruth): The grief we have confronted,

(Ruth/Orpah): Rebirth is not just welcome,

This change of scene is wanted.

And if there is a place,

With good people just like you,

Then we firmly grasp your garment,

For we want to live there too.

(Naomi):

Return to your people, my daughters,

Where married life might yet resume;

But why stay with me for this custom?

Are there any more sons in my womb?

For I am too old to remarry

Yet even if I did tonight,

And by some miraculous wonder

Two boys from this void were supplied.

Would you remain alone,

Those years till they were grown?

Return to your people, my daughters.

Return to your families and homes.

Concerning the future in Judah,

I can promise no easy life there

The hand of the Lord is against me

My life is too bitter to share.

Return to your people, my daughters.  
Return and avoid my despair.

(Orpah):  
On the bank of this river,  
At this mark of division,  
I now stand at this crossing,  
On the brink of decision.

When life presents two choices,  
And neither is appealing,  
Both options being certain  
To end familiar feelings,  
The comfort of the moment,  
The present situation,  
No longer can be guarded  
By further hesitation.

Do I return with her?  
Do I return back home?  
Do we cross together?  
Do I return alone?

Not knowing what awaits me,  
The burden and dishonor,  
When weighing all these factors,  
The pull of home is stronger.  
Though separation grieves me,  
These future doubts bewilder;  
When pondering both options,  
I choose the more familiar.

I cannot return with you,  
So I return back home;  
I cannot cross this river,  
So I return alone.

(Naomi):  
See Orpah goes back to her people,  
The gods and the ways she first knew;  
Accompany her in this journey,  
The destiny she shares with you.  
Your sister-in-law returns,  
With her return.

### 3. RUTH'S PLEDGE

(Ruth):  
Where you go I will go,  
Where you lodge I will lodge;  
Your people are my people;  
Your God is my God.  
Where you die I will die,  
Where your bones come to lie  
There my bones shall be buried,  
So we are forever nigh.

Do not persuade me to leave,  
There is no more you can say.  
I am determined to go;  
Nothing can stand in my way.  
This is my course,  
My path and my track,  
I put my hand to this plow,  
And will never look back!

May God render judgment severe,  
No punishment would be unfair,  
If anything other than death  
Would sever the bond that we share.  
He is my Lord,  
And you are my kin;  
I know by clinging to you,  
I am clinging to Him!

### 4. WAVING THE BARLEY (Dance)

5. COUNTING ON THE HARVEST  
(Granddaughter): There is rhythm in our lives  
(Chief Elder): And a rhythm in the soil  
(Townspeople): It's the meter and the beat  
    We are counting while we toil  
(Ben): Six days we give to labor  
    The seventh day we rest  
(Boaz's Servants): Six years we work the farmland  
    The seventh is our test.  
(Elders): Then after seven sevens,  
    When counting in the spring,  
(Granddaughter): We celebrate the harvest,  
(Chief Elder): The firstfruits it will bring,  
(Elders): And after seven sevens  
    When counting by the years  
(Chief Elder): We hail the jubilee  
(Gleaners): When every debt is cleared.

### REFRAIN

(All):  
We are counting on the harvest;  
    We are counting on these weeks;  
We are counting on the heavens,  
    And the labor heaven seeks.  
We are counting on these efforts;  
    We are counting on the Earth;  
We are counting on these firstfruits,  
    And the measure of their worth.

(Boaz's Servants):  
As harvest time commences,  
    We wait upon the Lord,  
To grant us great abundance,  
    And bestow a rich reward.

(Ben): We each go to our gardens,  
And hope our prayers take root;  
(Tob): For fifty days of plenty  
(All): And seven weeks of fruit.

(Gleaners):  
We have no place to gather,  
No field to call our own;  
We hope to glean in pastures,  
Where mercy will be shown.

(Fatherless): As fatherless,  
(Widow): as widows,

(Stranger): As strangers and as poor,  
(All Three): We pray our God will guide us  
(Gleaners): Where portions will be sure.

## REFRAIN

(Chief Elder/Granddaughter):  
It's the rhythm of our lives,  
(Ben): With each measure and amount  
(All): So on this blessed harvest we count!

## 6. BITTERNESS

(Granddaughter): Grandfather, grandfather,  
Who are these two visitors?  
Are they strangers who came here to rest?  
(Chief Elder): My darling granddaughter,  
Yes, one is a stranger,  
But the other might not be a guest.  
Naomi? Naomi?  
Could this be Naomi?  
Just over a decade has passed.  
The seasons have weathered  
This lady once treasured,

Whose family's wealth was once vast.  
She left here before you were born,  
But comes back so weary and worn.

On behalf of our town's dwellers  
And as Bethlehem's Chief Elder  
I welcome you back to your home.

(Townsppeople): Naomi? Naomi?  
Could this be Naomi?  
And why does she no longer roam?

(Widow): Do you remember my daughter?  
From the day of your departure?  
The infant that you held and kissed.  
(Fatherless): I'm now eleven years old!  
(Naomi): And too big to hold!  
(Widow): There are so many things you have missed.

(Naomi): But where is her father?  
(Widow): Naomi, we suffered  
His loss many winters ago.  
So this is our lot,  
In this we are taught,  
To bear every burden and woe.

(Tob): Naomi, what pity  
Your land in this city  
Decayed after all of this time.  
Now, one could nullify it,  
If you would let him buy it,  
Since to poverty you are resigned.  
You have no provider,  
Just a paltry outsider;  
What can your companion provide?

(Townsppeople): Naomi, Naomi.

O tell us Naomi,  
Who is this young woman you guide?

(Naomi):  
My daughter in law, my compassionate friend,  
Is just what her name ...  
(Ruth [to Gleaner]): Ruth  
... describes;  
But mine, meaning pleasant, must no more be said;  
This meaning no longer applies.  
Since bitterness chastens me all the day long,  
Call me Mara from this moment on.

The first desert spring approached by our fathers  
Was given this name for cursed was the water.  
The Lord gave my life identical flavor;  
Now I find myself removed from His favor  
And bitter  
My life has become so bitter;  
Like grass I am withered  
And bitter

Afflicted and plagued, so feeble and humbled,  
My soul was consumed, to ashes it crumbled.  
I went away full, God brought me back empty;  
Once blessed of the Lord, He now is against me  
So bitterly  
The Almighty has dealt with me bitterly  
The Almighty afflicted me bitterly.

My mourning from morning through night  
Continues through uncounted years,  
So faint from my sighing,  
So weary of crying,  
My vision is clouded by tears.

I feel in my bones the pierce of God's arrow;

The poison thereof consumes all the marrow.  
A mother and wife, now widowed and barren;  
Surrounded and rich, now lonely despair and  
Such bitterness  
Like owls of the wilderness  
Bitterness  
No sign of deliverance,  
Just bitterness.

## 7. LET ME GLEAN

(Ruth): Do not refuse my comfort,  
For you are not alone,  
Now let me glean in pastures,  
Where mercy will be shown.  
The fatherless and widows,  
God promised to relieve,  
Now let me claim the blessings  
The diligent receive.

(Naomi): How could I persuade otherwise,  
There is no more I can say.  
You are determined to go;  
Nothing can stand in your way.  
If you do not fear  
To humble yourself  
And work along with the poor,  
Then my daughter, yes, go and excel!

## 8. MORNING HARVEST

(Dance)

## 9. THE BLESSING OF BOAZ

(Boaz's Servants):  
Blessed be our Lord,  
Creator of all things

He makes each mountain glad,  
And every valley sings!  
By opening His hand,  
Each soul is satisfied.  
Abundance fills our fields,  
With fruits on every side.

(Boaz): Servants of my house,  
You have earned my deep respect:  
The Lord be with you all,  
And bless what you collect!

(Boaz's Servants): Blessed be our chief,  
The owner of this field!  
God bless you in return,  
And give you fruitful yield!

(Reaper Soloist): We praise our loving lord,  
By lifting up our voice.

(Gatherer Soloist): When righteous masters rule

(Both): The servants all rejoice.

(All): The servants all rejoice!

(Boaz): Credit goes to God  
And to my right-hand man,  
A servant wise and faithful,  
Obey what he commands.

(Tob): I need all this grain,  
The drought has set me back.  
Do you believe you are  
The only ones who lack?  
You scum have gleaned enough!  
I have no more to spare;  
My property ends here;  
Find plenty over there!

(Ben): Here we keep the law,  
And reap not all the sheaves;  
(Reaper Soloist): And you all are welcome to  
Whatever reapers leave.  
(Ben): Each gatherer collects,  
But cannot gather all;  
(Gatherer Soloist): So you are welcome to  
What residue may fall.

(Reapers): We have reaped,  
But not the corners;  
(Gatherers): We have gathered,  
But left what fell;  
(Boaz's Servants/Gleaners): God will bless  
The thoughtful farmers,  
(Fatherless): And in plenty they will dwell.  
(Boaz's Servants/Gleaners): Yes,  
in plenty they will dwell.

(Ben):  
Heed my warning, neighbor,  
For are you not aware,  
This law would bring you blessings?  
For it is just and fair.  
And since this law is godly,  
It's not some great expense;  
But rather simply proper business sense.  
If one provides to those in need  
Unto the Lord he lends;  
And that which he has given  
Will God pay him again.  
The one who freely gives gains even more  
While greedy men with poverty are cursed.

(Reaper Soloist): The generous are prosperous,  
(Gatherer Soloist): No fortune finds the covetous,  
(Both): But those who water others never thirst.

(Gleaners): For this we thank you!  
How we have gleaned!  
God bless your hands!  
We pray we find this  
Related kindness  
In other fields as well,  
Yes, in other fields as well!

(Boaz): We treat everyone with honor,  
No matter what their station!  
For we were all once slaves,  
Within a hostile nation.

## 10. A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

(Boaz):  
This gleaner works persistently  
And nothing distracts;  
Undeterred by ridicule,  
Impressively she acts.  
In this town, I recognize  
Each face that I see,  
But this maiden's I do not know.  
Who is she?

(Ben):  
When the famine came upon us,  
How Bethlehem did grieve,  
And the pressure on the wealthy  
Caused some of them to leave:  
Elimelech and Naomi,  
With two sons in their care,  
Went beyond the Jordan River  
For ten years settled there.

When Naomi's husband perished,  
Her sons took two wives,

But these men would leave two widows  
When God took their lives.  
So Naomi left for Judah,  
Where blessings had returned,  
Though she came back nearly empty,  
New loyalty she earned,  
Beyond the price of jewels renowned,  
A virtuous woman she had found.

Strength and honor are her clothing,  
Her garment and attire,  
Though uncertain is tomorrow,  
She greets it with a smile.  
On the other side of Jordan,  
Her future was unclear  
But she held fast to Naomi  
To start a new life here.  
Beyond the price of jewels renowned,  
A virtuous woman we have found.

She eats not the bread of idleness,  
Providing for her own,  
Here this diligence is evident,  
Her industry is shown.  
Since she came to me this morning,  
What effort she exerts;  
In the service of another,  
Incessantly she works.  
Beyond the price of jewels renowned,  
A virtuous woman we have found.

How she girds her loins with power,  
And makes her shoulders strong,  
From her mouth proceeds great wisdom,  
With kindness in her tongue.  
She relies not on her beauty  
But fears the God of truth.

Now you know this widow's story:  
This lady's name is Ruth.  
Beyond the price of jewels renowned,  
A virtuous woman we have found.

## 11. A FULL REWARD

(Boaz): Listen carefully virtuous daughter,  
To no other man's farm shall you go.  
Follow my maidens,  
To the fields they are taken,  
And glean where my finest wheat grows.

(Ruth): What profit do I bring to you  
That you have recognized?  
How has a widowed stranger  
Found favor in your eyes?

(Boaz):  
Since the death of your husband, I've heard  
Of the love to my kindred you've shown,  
Leaving your father,  
And the land of your mother,  
To come to a city unknown.

If one provides to those in need  
Unto the Lord she lends;  
And that which she has given  
Will God pay her again.

As a young bird leaves its dwelling  
And to its mother clings,  
You seek refuge in God's feathers  
And hope beneath His wings.  
May this favor for your labors  
Be given from the Lord:  
Protection and redemption,

Blessed with a full reward.

You are welcome at my table,  
When mealtime arrives;  
You shall feast on all our bounty,  
And share in how we thrive.

(Ruth): With your favor and these blessings  
You comfort me, my lord  
Though I am not your servant  
What friendship you afford.  
You are my full reward.

(Boaz): All the fruits of your endeavors,  
The toil of your hands,  
Shall bring you joy and gladness,  
And your blessings will expand.  
May this favor for your labors  
Be given from the Lord:  
Protection and redemption,  
Blessed with this full reward.

Guard her like a sister,  
For here she shall glean on;  
Allow, if she is thirsty,  
To drink what you have drawn.  
And where she goes to gather,  
Be there among those crops,  
And from the sheaves let extra gleanings drop.

(Boaz/Boaz's Servants):  
If one provides to those in need  
Unto the Lord he lends;  
And that which he has given  
Will God pay him again.  
The one who freely gives gains even more  
While greedy men with poverty are cursed.

(Reaper Soloist): The generous are prosperous,  
(Gatherer Soloist): No fortune finds the covetous,  
(Ben): But those who water others never thirst.  
(Boaz): To her let our abundance be dispersed!

(Ruth): For this I thank you!  
How I have gleaned!  
God bless your hands!  
I pray I find this  
Related kindness  
All other days as well,  
So in plenty we will dwell!

## ACT TWO

### 12. THE WAY OF A MAN WITH A MAID

(Naomi):  
Like ships of the merchants my daughter returns  
Now bringing her food from afar.  
Ten omers of grain?  
(Ruth): And some food that remained  
From a feast in which I took part.

(Naomi):  
What fruitful abundance your host supplied!  
Assuredly God intervened!  
So please tell me who  
Took interest in you,  
And where was this field you gleaned?

(Ruth): I followed the Gleaners to pastures of Tob,  
But Tob would not suffer us there;  
It seemed then by chance  
That we would advance  
To fields with more excess to spare!  
But here I was hassled by some of the men.

To them I was some sort of game.  
But all that would fade  
When one came to my aid:  
Boaz is his name.

(Naomi): This master is well-known!  
A noble in our tribe.  
The son of Lady Rahab,  
Who sheltered Joshua's spies.  
This man is blessed of Heaven  
For laws that he obeys  
To both the dead and living  
Such kindness he displays.

(Ruth): The master insisted I stay for a meal  
And at his own table I dined,  
To keep me from harm,  
He promised his farm  
Would always have plenty to find.

(Naomi): These things do not just happen:  
By chance no sparrow falls,  
God sent you to my kinsman,  
This must fulfill some cause.  
Until the harvest closes,  
Beside his servants stay,  
There persevere and gather  
The profit of each day.

Like ships of the merchants the woman went out,  
Returning with food from afar.  
And while in that field  
One unforeseen yield  
Was earning the master's regard.

She faithfully worked by his maidens each day  
Until the spring harvest would end.

And what she would glean  
As soon would be seen  
Was a hero, protector, and friend.

#### REFRAIN

It is one of our lives' most breathtaking scenes,  
Of four great and marvelous things:  
There's the way of the eagles on air,  
And how serpents on stone are conveyed  
There's the way of a ship on the sea,  
And the way of a man with a maid.

He faithfully watched if his men would obey  
By easing her efforts to glean  
And what he would earn  
For all his concern  
Was a young woman's highest esteem.

#### REFRAIN

And one small seed  
In arid ground,  
Where love was never thought to grow;  
From one small seed,  
New hope was found:  
Its blossoms soon began to show.

#### 13. ALL THAT YOU SAY I WILL DO

(Naomi):

The day we left for Bethlehem  
When you held fast to me,  
My task would be to find you rest  
And grant security.  
This widowed man you've grown to love,  
His hand you may require.  
But numbered are the harvest's days,

The time will soon expire.  
Though your redemption is this kinsman's right,  
You must be the one to act tonight.

So wash yourself, anoint your head,  
And don your festive gown  
Then journey to his threshing floor  
And wait till he lies down.  
Next, follow there and this, I know,  
Will sound quite strange to you:  
Unveil his feet, lie there, and he  
Will tell you what to do.  
And this peculiar custom will be blessed.  
This is how the Lord shall give you rest.

(Ruth): The counsel and guidance you grant,  
Though puzzling from my point of view,  
I will obey though I don't understand:  
And all that you say I will do.

The reason to heed and obey  
Might not be perceived by the eye.  
Just as Noah would build,  
With so little fulfilled,  
We don't always need to know why.

At times we are tested and tried  
Not knowing what God will allow,  
Like Abraham's heir,  
Before he was spared,  
We don't always need to know how.

Prince Moses forsook his own land,  
In Egypt he dared to stand out.  
For he did not fear  
The scorn of his peers,  
And never submitted to doubt.

The mother of Boaz as well  
From Jericho's fate she was freed.  
For all of these just  
Our God earned their trust,  
And faith was their reason to heed.

The same faith that conquered strong nations,  
That raised from the dead,  
That thwarted the sword,  
Is the same faith that forms my foundation,  
To journey ahead  
To earn this reward.

#### 14. WINNOWERING THE BARLEY

(Dance)

#### 15. A FULL REWARD (REPRISE)

(Boaz): I fell asleep all alone!  
So I must ask, who are you?  
(Ruth): Please, master, do not be startled.  
I am your handmaiden, Ruth.

From the refuge of a mother  
Young fowls will never stray,  
Protected by her feathers,  
From other birds of prey.  
So hide me in your garment,  
The shelter of your wings,  
The symbol of betrothal,  
Redemption you can bring,  
With the blessing of this covenant  
Please honor me, my lord,  
Protection and redemption,  
Bless with this full reward.  
You are my full reward.

(Boaz): May God bless you for all your devotion,  
For not following much younger men.

(Ruth): Wealthy or poor,

These men held no allure,

(Boaz): What kindness you've shown in the end.

Yes, verily I am your kinsman

But there is one nearer than I.

I promise to find

If his claim is declined.

So tarry beside me tonight.

Now let your eyes close;

Find peaceful repose.

## 16. YOU EXCEL THEM ALL

(Boaz):

You are a virtuous woman,

To all this truth is known,

A crown to any husband

Who seeks you as his own.

So I will do all in my power

To rescue and redeem

There is no greater honor.

No price is too extreme.

REFRAIN

I rise to sing your praises.

A blessing you are called:

There are many virtuous daughters,

But you! You excel them all!

Find rest beneath my garment,

The shelter of my wings,

Your increase I will nurture

Providing all good things.

With gems I will adorn you,

Upon your head a crown,

Fine linen as your garment,

A gold-embroidered gown;

Your beauty will be your renown!

As God arrayed His nation,

(What jewels He supplied!)

It's the honor that a husband

Bestows upon his bride:

REFRAIN

Forsaking your forefathers,

The country of your birth,

You yearn to make your children

The princes of the Earth!

God makes your name remembered

Through every coming age,

Exalted by all nations,

For ever to be praised.

REFRAIN

## 17. ENTRACTE

(Dance)

## 18. THE MAN WILL NOT REST

(Naomi): My daughter-in-law,

Is that you I see there?

O where have you been,

And how did you fare?

(Ruth): I went as you said to your kinsman last night,

But redemption is not his to grant,

Though he is our brother

He spoke of another

Who first must be offered this chance.

He charged me to rest at his feet through the night,

And he would resolve this at dawn;

Before morning's first glow,

Before any could know,

Discreetly I would be withdrawn.

He said: "Let it not be known

That a woman slumbered here,

But do not go back empty,

To Naomi you will appear

With your shawl now filled with plenty;"

(Naomi): Six measures full of grain.

(Ruth): He will soon go to the elders

Our case he will explain.

(Naomi):

Now patiently wait while the matter is heard,

And watch how this claim is resolved;

For the man will not rest,

Till your doubts are addressed,

Long before the next sunset will fall.

This is one of our lives' most breathtaking scenes,

Of four great and marvelous things:

(Both): There's the way of the eagles on air,

And how serpents on stone are conveyed

There's the way of a ship on the sea,

And the way of a man with a maid.

## 19. EXCHANGE

(Chief Elder):

Elders of Bethlehem promptly draw near.

Boaz has called us as witnesses here.

He seeks to settle a widow's estate.

Matters that always are judged at this gate.

You are familiar with property laws,  
Every statute and every clause.  
Land stays in families, God has ordained,  
Passed to the children so wealth is maintained.

But if a man dies without leaving an heir,  
His land is not once and for all undeclared,  
God said his nearest of kin was to wed  
The widow, and bring forth a child for the dead.  
Now if the nearest of kin will refuse,  
Custom says he withdraws one of his shoes.  
Publicly sealing the transfer of land,  
Binding and just, it can lawfully stand.

(Boaz):  
Naomi as the widow of our brother Elimelech  
Seeks to sell the plot of land their family owned.  
And as his closest kin  
This redemption you may win,  
To all those here just make your wishes known.

Brother, I should also mention  
in the presence of those here,  
That I'm the only kinsman who remains,  
In front of every witness  
Please tell us of your interest,  
And if you plan to execute your claim.

(Tob):  
When Naomi returned with no wealth to her name,  
I knew the two choices she had.  
Either glean with the poor,  
Or be swayed to procure  
A redeemer to purchase her land.  
Though some foreign companion  
had helped her to glean,  
She could not pay all her expenses,

This honorable deed  
Has now fallen to me  
Since she finally has come to her senses.  
Let my charity be seen.  
Her land I shall redeem.

(Boaz):  
Brother, I should also mention  
that the stranger who returned  
Was the widow of Naomi's childless son,  
This means she shares possession  
Of the property in question,  
And so another blessing you have won.

When you buy it from Naomi  
then you also buy from Ruth,  
No greater woman could our family claim!  
And after you two marry,  
The children she will carry  
Will keep the land in her dead husband's name.

(Tob): Wait, wait, wait,  
as the husband of my kinsman's widow,  
The land would not truly be mine.  
And the children we bear,  
Would not count as my heirs,  
So this offer I now must decline.  
Furthermore, this poor widow  
would come with great price  
It would cost to provide all her needs.  
Plus her children would drain,  
All the profit I'd gain,  
That would be too many mouths to feed.  
But, brother, it would seem  
This land YOU could redeem.  
As a kinsman of great wealth,  
Why not buy it for yourself?

## 20. WITNESSES

(Boaz): You are witnesses today,  
Of all I have redeemed,  
The inheritance is transferred,  
What Tob did not esteem:  
The house of Elimelech,  
And all of his estate,  
I purchase from Naomi;  
You are witnesses today!

You are witnesses today,  
How Naomi's name lives on  
For the widow of her offspring  
Shall bear to him a son.  
I will serve Ruth as her husband,  
Her hand I have obtained,  
There is no greater honor;  
You are witnesses today!

(Elders): We are witnesses today;  
This outcome we record,  
This house now shall redeem,  
And glory you restore.  
(Townspople): We are witnesses today;  
And sing with one accord:  
That he who finds a wife,  
Finds favor from the Lord.  
She is a virtuous woman,  
To all this truth is known;  
A crown to any husband,  
Who seeks her as his own;

(Boaz): Her price is far above all precious gems,  
(Widow): No earthly treasure can exceed her love.

(Boaz/Chief Elder):  
For land and wealth can be inherited.

(All): But a prudent wife is from the Lord above.

(Widow): To Rachel and to Leah,

Your bride may be compared.

(Granddaughter): Her seed will build our nation;

For this we offer prayer:

(Fatherless): Prosperity in Ephratah,

(Stranger): In Bethlehem great fame,

(Chief Elder): A fruitful womb like Tamar,

(Elders): Who furthered Judah's name.

(All): Yes, this is what we pray.

We are witnesses today!

## 21. PANTOMIME OF THE BETROTHAL

(Dance)

## 22. REDEMPTION

(Chief Elder): What exciting news!

(Townspople): We are filled with joy!

(Chief Elder): For a son is born,

(Fatherless): It's a boy?

(Granddaughter): It's a boy!

(Stranger): It exceeds the glee,

(Widow): And exceeds the glow

Of the wedding that we had a year ago.

(Ben): Like a fruitful vine,

(Reaper Soloist): Like an olive plant

(Gatherer Soloist): Is the wife who bears

What the Lord may grant.

(Chief Elder): But the mother who is revered today

Is the one to whom these blessings are conveyed.

(Women):

O blest is the Eternal,

The family He provides,

Redemption through a Husband,

Salvation through a Child.

In Israel may his name

Forever be renowned,

And on the lips of all

His praises shall be found.

(Widow): And may this child supply

Renewal for your soul;

(Women): Provision all your days,

Your nourishment when old.

(Widow): This son is born of Ruth,

The daughter you have won;

(Women): The love she shows to you

Surpasses seven sons!

(Granddaughter): Unto the virtuous woman

This promise is expressed:

(Widow/Fatherless): Her children shall arise,

And call their mother blessed.

(Women): O blest is the Eternal,

The family He provides,

Redemption through a Husband,

Salvation through a Child.

(Chief Elder): Our God is the hero

Who strengthens the widow

And causes her house to expand.

(Women): For truly this baby

Is born to Naomi,

God gives her the fruit of her hands.

(Townspople): The honor your labor creates

Brings you glory and praise in these gates.

(Naomi): At that first bitter well

Approached by our fathers,

The Lord used a branch

To sweeten the water;

Now God gives my life

Identical flavor,

A life-giving tree,

A sweet smelling savor.

## 23. ONE SMALL SEED

(Naomi): From one small seed, comes a tender plant,

With roots that spring from arid ground;

(Ben): From one small field, comes a tender branch,

Where fruits and blossoms will abound.

(Ruth): From one small child comes a family,

A nation in its smallest frame;

(Chief Elder): From one small tribe comes a legacy,

(Elders): From obscurity to greatest fame.

(Boaz): Just like the tiny mustard seed,

The smallest of the grains;

(Naomi/Boaz): Among the shrubs becomes a tree,

(Naomi): In heights that it attains!

(Boaz): Other garden plants have not been blessed

(Naomi/Boaz):

With branches where the fowls may nest.

(Ruth): From one small town, opportunity

To join humanity as one

(All): From one small world, one community

Will see what lies beyond the sun!

(Gatherer Soloist): A little seed in a humble plot,

In a modest town, may not seem a lot.

(Reaper Soloist): But this modest town

In the least of lands

(Both): Is destined to greatly expand!

(Fatherless): The Lord abides

In the day of small things

(Stranger): In the widow's mite  
(Widow): And the wealth it brings  
(All Three): For the widow's mite  
Is the earnest of more  
(Gleaners): The inheritance God has in store! From ...

REFRAIN

(All): One small seed,  
One small grain  
In bountiful fields and boundless terrain;  
One small seed,  
When unconstrained,  
Brings limitless yield, and endless gain

(Reaper Soloist): This meager start  
Someone might despise  
For it can't be seen by human eyes.  
(Gatherer Soloist): What cannot be seen  
Is too small to perceive:  
(Both): All the glory it soon will achieve!

(All): For anything lasting, majestic and vast  
(Boaz): Begins in the smallest of ways,  
(All): Each journey is born with a singular step  
Eternity starts with today! With ...

REFRAIN

(Granddaughter): It's not the place we depart  
(Chief Elder): But the place where we go.  
(Granddaughter): Not the size that we start,  
(Chief Elder): But the size that we grow.  
(Naomi): The fruits are beginning to show;  
(Leads): And soon we will reap what we sow

REFRAIN

(All):  
God gives all that we need  
So that we may succeed.  
And it all begins with one small seed.

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