

“At the Table: Rage”

Script 2

by
Tracy Wells

- What** Joanna, a merchant who sold animals for sacrifice at the temple, recounts the events of Jesus clearing the temple.
- This is the second scene from the collection, “At the Table” and can be combined with the other monologues to form a full play depicting the thoughts and reflections of the Disciples and others as they prepare and sit down for the Last Supper with Jesus.
- Themes: Easter, Last Supper, Palm Sunday, Jesus Cleanses the Temple, Sacrifice
- Who** Joanna
- When** Biblical Times
- Wear (Props)** Joanna wears biblical attire.
Coins
Bag with a mutton leg or meat (for full play version)
- Why** Matthew 21: 12-22; Luke 19:45-48, John 2:13-17
- How** This is a simple scene that is easy to stage. The stage can bare if performing as a stand-alone monologue, or there can be a long table with twelve stools, goblets and plates and a loaf of bread if performing as part of “At the Table”.
- Time** Approximately 3 minutes

Joanna enters. If performing this monologue as part of "At the Table," Joanna should carry a bag, or perhaps a slab of meat or a mutton leg. Shifra (from "At the Table: Body," script 6 in the series) will enter from opposite direction, hand Joanna money, take the bag/meat/mutton leg and exit. Then Joanna will turn to face the audience.

If performing only as a monologue, Joanna should enter with a few coins in her hand.

Joanna: *(counting the coins in her hand)* Seven...eight...nine. Looks like it's all there.

Takes a money pouch that's tied around her waist and puts the coins inside, then cinches the pouch and turns to the audience.

Selling livestock is a good business—or at least it can be. People always need a nice piece of goat for their stews or a leg of mutton if it's a special occasion. And when they come to the temple to worship, people want to offer sacrifices. If they don't have a spare sheep or goat at home, then their gonna need to buy one, right? *(shrugs her shoulders)* The way I see it, my husband and I are doing a public service.

Confidently, like a salesperson.

I mean, we're talking about convenience, here. All these people have to do is show up at the temple, and right there is my stall, ready to sell them the sacrificial animal of their dreams! And contrary to popular belief, you can't just show up with any old animal from the farm. The priests assess the animals and determine if they are fit for sacrifice. Well, every animal at my stall has been pre-screened by the priests for optimal sacrificial potential. *(shrugs her shoulders)* So you can hardly argue that these top-quality animals aren't worth a small upcharge. My husband and I are simply taking a cut of the money—a cut we have earned for all the legwork we do to make sure that our customers are satisfied. *(clarifying)* Oh, right, and also so that God is satisfied. Because that's why we're doing this after all, isn't it? To glorify God?

We merchants get a bad rap, especially after that business with Jesus earlier this week. They want to make us out like we're just in it for the money. But we're not. We're just people trying to make a living, same as anyone else. And that's all we were doing the day Jesus came in and started turning over tables, scattering coins and driving out the livestock. *(shocked)* He was furious! I had heard of this man, this supposed Messiah. This man who was all about peace and love. And now here he was, standing not two feet away from my stall, yelling, "my house will be a house of prayer, but you have turned it into a den of robbers!" *(incredulous)* Robbers? Does taking my cut make me a robber? Does making a profit mean that I'm stealing? *(thinks for a moment)* Sure, we take a little extra when it gets closer to Passover. *(justifying)* But the money changers were charging an extra temple tax, so it really was only

fair that we made a little extra too. (thinks again) And I know these people were just coming to worship their God— *(clarifying, adamantly)* a God I believe in too, just in case you were wondering.

(thinks; beginning to slow down a little) And while I haven't seen these miracles that people have said Jesus performs, I have heard the tales and I must admit, there's something about him...something powerful...something...holy about him.

She pauses to really reflect; she's just now beginning to understand a little more of who Jesus is. Be careful not to rush this but let her process through these feelings. Let her be in that moment again when she met Jesus.

That day, when he approached my table and looked me in the eye, it was as if he was looking into my soul. And what he found there...

Stops, thinks, suddenly sad, looks down at the ground, then looks up, concerned.

Did he see a wife who wants to help provide for her family or did he only see greed? *(becoming worried)* Did he see the love I have for my God or did he only see a woman profiting off the backs of people who only wanted to honor him? *(beat; upset)* Did he see who I am now or who I want to be?

Looking upward. Fully realizing...

No wonder he was so angry! We took God's own house and instead of honoring him, we allowed money to rule us—to be our false God—to be our savior. *(thinking)* And right there—right in front of us, was our true savior, Jesus. And we angered him. *(finally understanding)* I don't blame him. Not one little bit. *(looks at audience)* I only hope he can forgive me.

Joanna exits. Otherwise, end of scene.