

A script from



"In the House of Bread"

by
Curt Cloninger

- What** What begins with Boaz showing off his new son to Eli, becomes a trip down memory lane as Ruth and Boaz reflect on the journey that brought them together. Scenes with Ruth and Naomi lead to Ruth discovering Boaz and his kindness, eventually leading the couple to the blessings that God had in store for their lives.
Themes: Redemption, Loyalty, Kindness, Kinsman Redeemer, Living Bread
- Who** Boaz
Naomi
Ruth
- When** Bible times
- Wear (Props)** Colorful shawl
Setting is simple, with Naomi's kitchen table. You can decorate the table with baskets and wooden bowls.
Suitcase
Dresses
Photos
- Why** Book of Ruth
- How** This script opens with developed relationships between Boaz, Naomi and Ruth, so their interaction with one another should be familiar, as a family that has been together for some time now. The transitions between scenes require well-rehearsed timing and blocking. They should flow smoothly and effortlessly, so leave yourself plenty of time to rehearse this entire script.
- Time** Approximately 20 minutes

To the Director,

In the historical retelling of Ruth, found in the Old Testament, we read an amazing love story. The love story unfolds on many different levels. We read of the unselfish affection and commitment of a young Gentile woman for her Jewish mother-in-law. We see a risky romantic love unfold between an older man and a younger woman, the older man a rich Jew, and the younger woman a poor Gentile. We witness the love of parents toward a long-awaited son. We see a relative stand in the gap for a down and out cousin. And underneath it all, we are reminded of the constant provision of God for his people.

God provided comfort and bread for the widowed Naomi, and restored her hope and good name. God provided love and security for the foreigner Ruth. He provided a wife for the old bachelor Boaz and a chance to fulfill his destiny. For all of them God provided a son, Obed, and ultimately a grandson, the great King David.

And for us? For us, God has provided not just a reminder of His constant love. Most importantly, God has provided for us the offspring of Ruth, and Boaz, and Obed, and King David. God has given to us, Jesus, born many years later, in Bethlehem (the "House of Bread"), and destined to be our Living Bread, the ultimate Provider of all our needs.

I hope you'll enjoy this re-telling of a great story, and be reminded, once again, of the wonderful and surprising ways God has come to the rescue of his people.

Curt Cloninger

Author's Note:

We'll be skipping back and forth in time and place a bit, from Bethlehem to Moab, and back to Bethlehem. We'll travel between joy, back to despair, and ultimately back to joy. Hang with us!

Scene One- Bethlehem, in the home of Boaz and Ruth. Obed is three months old.

Scene Two- Moab, fourteen months earlier, in the home of Naomi.

Scene Three- Bethlehem, twelve months earlier, in the rental home of Naomi and Ruth.

Scene Four- At the threshing floor of Boaz's farm, in Bethlehem.

Scene Five- Bethlehem, at the home of Boaz and Ruth. Obed is three years old.

Boaz holds his infant son, wrapped up in a colorful shawl. The audience doesn't see the baby, just the shawl wrapping the baby. The shawl will be used throughout the entire play. Boaz is boisterous and very proud of this baby. Boaz stands downstage and talks to an unseen character, his cousin, Eli.

Boaz: You tell me, Eli, is this not the most beautiful baby you ever laid eyes on? Of course he is. *(Talks to the baby)* Yes, you are, Obed. *(To Eli)* I heard what you said, Eli. I heard that. And, let me tell you something: You're right. *(Laughs)* You're right. Thank God he looks like his mother. You think I'm crazy, Eli? I'm crazy like a fox. *(To the baby)* Yes, I am, Obed. Your old papa is crazy like a fox to marry your mother. *(Back to Eli)* You had your chance, Cousin. You could have done the right thing. You could have been her hero. *(Listening, and then)* Of course she's a foreigner! So what?! You didn't want to take a chance just because she's a foreigner? Well, I did! And look what it got me. A beautiful young wife and the most beautiful baby boy in Bethlehem. I'm not stupid, Eli. *(Listening, and then)* No, you can't hold him. What do you know about holding a baby?! *(Listening, and then)* I know lots about holding a baby. I've had experience. Lots. Three months of experience. *(Listening, and then)* Okay, you can look at him, but just for a minute. But I don't want your dirty hands on him or on Ruth's shawl. Just look. From over there. No closer than that.

Naomi enters with a rolling pin and sees what's happening.

Naomi: *(to Eli)* What do you think you're doing? Do not come any closer to my grandbaby, Eli! Get out of here! Go on home, Eli, and wash up, and then, maybe I'll let you come look at our baby. Go on home to your goats and your sheep. *(Starts after him)* Go on, now. Git! Get out of here! *(She watches him leave, then speaks to Boaz, laughing)* Well, that's the last we'll see of him for a while.

Boaz: *(joining in the laughter, watching Eli run)* Good riddance. The old coward. He ran like a rabbit.

Naomi: A circumcised rabbit.

Boaz: *(still with a chuckle. He and Naomi enjoy an easy and familiar banter)* Well...I think I would run too if I saw you coming after me.

Naomi: I did come after you, Boaz.

Boaz: Yes. But, not with a rolling pin.

Naomi: True.

Boaz: How did you know?

Naomi: To come after you?

Boaz: With Ruth, yes.

Naomi: I didn't know.

Boaz: You're a gambler, then.

Naomi: A gambler?

Boaz: What if I didn't want anything different. What if I liked my life the way it was?

Naomi: Did you?

Boaz: (*blustering*) No screaming babies. No nagging women. Peace. Quiet. Money in the bank.

Naomi: Ah, yes. The contented, rich old bachelor.

Boaz: Who are you calling old?

Naomi: You. You're old enough to be this baby's grandfather, instead of his father. I'm calling you old.

Boaz: You're one to talk. How old are you?

Naomi: That's none of your business. How old are you?

Boaz: Younger than Abraham.

Naomi: When he died?

Boaz: When he had his first boy.

Naomi: Congratulations. So...how old?

Boaz: I'm fifty-two.

Naomi: God rest his soul, that's the age of my husband when he died.

Boaz: Elimelech was just fifty-two when he died?

Naomi: Fifty-two. Sixteen years older than me. You're not the only one who robbed the cradle.

Boaz: And your boys...how old were they?

Naomi: Late twenties, both of them. Sickly, for years. I'm surprised they lived as long as they did.

Boaz: *(after a beat)* You've had a hard life, Naomi.

Naomi: *(a bit wistfully)* Yes. The first part. *(After a beat, optimistically)* But, the second part, I think, is better.

Boaz: And for me, too.

Naomi: Your first part wasn't so bad, Boaz. You haven't exactly suffered.

Boaz: Not compared to you, thank God.

Naomi: *(after a beat)* And did you?

Boaz: What?

Naomi: Thank God.

Boaz: *(lighter, bantering)* Of course I thanked God. You think I'm an infidel? I thanked God. I said, "thank you, God, for giving me all of this stuff. Now...how about giving me a woman?"

Naomi: *(laughing)* You didn't say that to God.

Boaz: I did. For years and years, I told Him, "God, you promised me a—

Naomi: *(interrupting)* God promised you a woman?

Boaz: Well, not exactly. But, it sounded good. Eventually, I quit telling Him what to do.

Naomi: When I was a young woman, I used to expect things from God. But, then...I got old and...and...

Boaz: Life beats it out of you, huh? Hope.

Naomi: *(after a beat)* You know what I think, Boaz? I think maybe you never so much wanted a woman, as you wanted the idea of a woman.

Boaz: I think maybe I wanted a chance to finally live up to my name. "Boaz".

Naomi: "Strong One". Huh. Could be. So, God sent you someone to rescue.

Boaz: *(with a laugh)* Women, imported from Moab.

Naomi: *(with a "twinkle" in her voice)* Well, I'm glad we could be of service.

Boaz: *(chuckling)* I'll bet you are. *(He starts to cross with the baby.)*

Naomi: It's good to be...well...it's good. You want me to take him?

Boaz: No, I'm gonna lay him down for a nap.

Naomi: Where's Ruth?

Boaz: *(as he begins to enter the house)* Out for a walk.

Naomi: You sure you don't need some help with the baby?

Boaz: *(as he enters the house)* Naomi. I run a farm. You think I can't put one little baby down for a nap? *(Turns toward Naomi before entering the house)* Well, maybe you could check on him in a minute. I never knew one baby could make me so tired.

Naomi: You go take a nap.

Boaz: *(on his exit)* I'm glad you came back, Naomi. To Bethlehem.

Naomi: *(almost to herself)* Me too.

Boaz: *(from offstage)* I've always been curious. What made you choose me? My farm?

Naomi: *(quietly)* Bread.

Scene Two

Fourteen months earlier, in Moab. The interior of a very simple kitchen. Three chairs, and a beat up old table. Naomi is sitting at the table and is very tired. She's overwhelmed with all that has happened to her, still bitter with the death, years earlier of her husband and two sons. On the kitchen table is an old suitcase, empty. There are various old dresses, a few pictures and a few pots and utensils strewn all over the table. She stands and surveys all the unpacked stuff.

Naomi: *(calling offstage to Ruth)* Ruth? What food is there to pack?

Ruth: *(enters from the kitchen area)* Not much. A half load of bread, and four figs.

Naomi: There's no sense bothering with the figs. I'll just bring the bread. What about my blue cotton dress?

Ruth: It's outside drying. I washed it last night. I'll get it *(she exits)*.

Naomi: *(she stares at the pile for a moment, sifting through the clothes and utensils as if through old memories. She tries to pack a couple of pots,*

half-heartedly putting them in the suitcase. She folds a couple of dresses and drops them in. Then, overwhelmed, she simply stares at the pile again. To herself) I need these? I need pots for one half load of bread? And, who am I going to wear this dress for? Who am I kidding? *(She dumps the contents of the suitcase onto the table)* Some joke you've played on me, God. Some joke.

Ruth: *(she carries unfolded clothes)* I'm sorry Momma Naomi. I forgot to fold these things.

Naomi: *(in an overwhelmed daze)* I don't need all those clothes.

Ruth: *(gently)* These are my clothes. They were outside drying with your dress.

Naomi: *(not paying attention to Ruth, still in somewhat of a daze)* I don't need...

Ruth: *(gently gathering up the scattered things)* Let me help you get these things in the suitcase, Momma Naomi.

Naomi: *(angry, bitter)* Don't call me that.

Ruth: What?

Naomi: Do you know what that means? "Naomi"?

Ruth: *(confused)* I—

Naomi: *(interrupting)* I'll give you a little Hebrew lesson, Ruth. It means "Pleasant". Some joke, eh? "Pleasant". Now, tell me, do I seem pleasant to you?

Ruth: You seem...tired. That's all.

Naomi: *(with sarcasm)* Tired? One dead husband. Two dead sons. No money. Half a loaf of bread and four figs. And God sleeps through it all. Tired. Yes. Don't call me "Pleasant".

Ruth: *(quiet, but not cowed)* What should I call you?

Naomi: Mara. You know what that means?

Ruth: I—

Naomi: *(living up to the name)* "Bitter". It means "Bitter". That's better, don't you think?

Ruth: I think you need to rest.

Naomi: *(trying to return to the pile)* I need to finish packing.

Ruth: Let me do this. *(She gathers all the stuff and begins to put it in the suitcase again)* I can make all of this fit, no problem. And there will still be plenty of room for my small pile of things. That way we won't have to carry two suitcases with us.

Naomi: You don't need your things.

Ruth: I don't have much. Just this small pile. If there's not enough room in the suitcase I'll just tie my things up in my shawl.

Naomi: *(lashing out)* You don't need to pack! You're not going with me! I told you that, just like I told Orpah.

Ruth: *(simply)* I'm not Orpah.

Naomi: Go back to your own people, like she did. Go back to your own gods. You'll have a better chance with them.

Ruth continues to simply and quietly clean up the mess.

Naomi: *(softening a bit, after watching Ruth)* Look...Ruth...don't be stubborn. This is not going to work. No one in my country will marry you. You'll be a foreigner there. Just like I am here. So just go home, back to your family.

Ruth: *(simply)* You're my family.

Naomi: I'm not your family. You are no relation to me. You're just some nice foreign girl who married my dead son. You should stay here. And, if you're lucky, find yourself a nice Moabite husband.

Ruth continues to simply fold clothes.

Naomi: *(with another flash of anger)* You think I'm going to produce another son for you to marry? I can't support you. I'll be lucky if I have enough bread to last me through tomorrow. Please, Ruth. Stop. Let me go home to die alone, in my own country, ignored by my own God.

Ruth: *(she still is packing, fitting all her things into the suitcase)* I think it will all fit. *(She mutters a phrase to herself in a foreign language)* eicim eib ia miich Ideith eiiita.

Naomi: *(quietly, after a beat, in an exhausted daze)* God, I hate this country. All these years here, and I never even learned the stupid language.

Ruth: I know the language. *(She's almost done with the suitcase)* Now, if we start walking, we can get to a good stopping place before it gets dark.

Naomi: (*Ruth has broken Naomi with her persistent kindness*) Why are you...what do you...

Ruth: (*ready to latch the suitcase, she looks straight at Naomi, perhaps taking her hands in her own, or her face in her hands*) Momma Naomi. (*With conviction*) That's your name...your only name. And this is the end of this discussion. You are my family. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. I'll die where you die. If we die shriveled, childless widows, abandoned by God, at least it will be together. But, I will not leave you. (*Turns back to the suitcase*) Now...do you want that I should keep my things in the suitcase, or wrap them in my shawl.

Naomi: (*surrendered to Ruth's kindness*) Leave them in the suitcase. But, wear your shawl...your beautiful shawl.

Ruth: (*she removes the shawl, then latches the suitcase. Then she wraps the shawl around her, simply*) I've always thought so. (*She picks up the suitcase, then reaches out and takes Naomi's hand*) Let's walk.

They exit.

Scene Three

Twelve months earlier, In front of Naomi and Ruth's rental house in Bethlehem, Judah. Naomi sits on a bench, scrubbing a pot with an old rag. She's unable to work and is tired and hungry and very negative. Ruth walks up. She's hot and sweaty. She carries her shawl like a small tote.

Naomi: Anything?

Ruth: There's a huge farm at the edge of town. At least fifty pickers.

Naomi: (*disappointed, but not surprised*) I didn't want to tell you, Ruth, because you were so determined. But, I knew this would happen. You're a foreigner. No one is going to let you pick.

Ruth: No. No. They let me pick.

Naomi: (*refusing to get hopeful*) But, you got no food. It doesn't matter. I couldn't cook it anyway. We have no oil. What are they harvesting...barley?

Ruth: Yes. Close your eyes, Momma Naomi.

Naomi: Ruth...I'm tired...

Ruth: Just close your eyes and hold out your hand. (*She does, while Ruth pulls bread out of her shawl and places it in Naomi's hands. On feeling the*

barley cakes, Naomi opens her eyes, surprised) Bread. Baked bread. Leftovers from my lunch. Leftovers, from a real lunch. I couldn't eat it all. And there's more in here. More bread than we could eat in a day! *(Excited)* And... Momma Naomi... there's a whole sack, almost a bushel, of threshed barley leaning against that tree over there. I was too tired to carry it any further. We can trade for oil, or whatever else we need.

Naomi: *(stuffing her mouth with bread trying to talk at the same time. What she says is unintelligible because of her full mouth)* Where...

Ruth: Eat. Just eat. I'll tell you what happened.

Naomi: *(washing the bread down with water)* Who gave you lunch? Where were you picking?

Ruth: Like I told you. At the edge of town. A huge farm.

Naomi: Whose farm?

Ruth: His name is Boaz.

Naomi: Boaz? How old a man is he?

Ruth: I don't know. Probably about your age.

Naomi: Blue eyes? A big laugh?

Ruth: Yes.

Naomi: *(realizing the significance, almost under her breath)* Unbelievable. You just "happened" to pick in his field. *(Quietly excited, not daring to hope too much)* How did you know to pick in his fields?

Ruth: *(thinking she's done something terribly wrong)* I didn't know. It was the first farm I came upon. It just... happened.

Naomi: "Happened"?

Ruth: I... I did something wrong?

Naomi: No, no. Nothing wrong. You did good. *(In amazement, to herself)* You happened to pick... we could be— *(She stops herself, a bit mesmerized with the possibility, but not wanting to assume too much too fast)* Now... sit down and tell me exactly what happened.

Ruth: *(sitting next to Naomi, still not aware of the significance of what has happened)* Well... I got there in the morning, early. There were pickers everywhere. Lots of pickers. I thought for sure they would run me off. But, I worked up my nerve and asked the foreman if I could follow them,

in the field. The foreman looked at me funny, suspicious, but he said "yes". They didn't leave much grain, not with all those pickers. But, they didn't run me off.

Naomi: That's good.

Ruth: It gets better. Late morning, I saw this man—

Naomi: Boaz.

Ruth: Yes. And he looked like he was in charge. Of...of everything. He was talking to the foreman. Then the foreman walked over and talked to the pickers. Then all of them looked over at me. I thought, for sure, I was in trouble. But when the pickers went back to work, they started leaving stalks of barley already picked, just lying on the ground.

Naomi: *(impatient to get to the **Boaz** part of the story)* And you talked to him...to Boaz?

Ruth: At lunch time, *(**Ruth** begins to walk downstage to an area where **Boaz** is seated on a stump and simply transitions into re-living the scene with him)* he was sitting by himself, away from his workers. I walked up and thanked him. *(Her actions mirror her words)*

Naomi: *(excited)* And what did he say?

Ruth: *(**Ruth** is now in the scene with **Boaz**)* He just said—

Boaz: You're welcome.

Ruth: You told your foreman to leave me alone.

Boaz: Yes.

Ruth: You told the pickers to leave stalks for me to gather.

Boaz: Yes.

Ruth: Why?

Boaz: *(big laugh)* A beautiful young woman shows up in my fields to clean up the leftovers. What kind of idiot wouldn't leave her some food to gather? *(He laughs again. **Ruth** doesn't respond, or laugh. She just looks at him, a straight, un-nerving gaze. **Boaz** stops laughing, realizing **Ruth's** discomfort)* I've heard of you.

Ruth: *(scared about what he's heard or that she may have done something wrong)* How did ... What did you hear?

Boaz: You're from the land of the infidels. From Moab.

Ruth: *(scared)* Yes.

Boaz: But you're the widow of a Jew.

Ruth: *(more scared)* Yes.

Boaz: Your mother-in-law is Naomi. Also, a widow. Also, a Jew. True?

Ruth: Yes.

Boaz: *(looks at her for a moment before continuing)* You left your family, your country. You followed her here, to Judah. To Bethlehem. Why?

Ruth: *(unsure what to say)* I...

Boaz: *(a bit more intimidating)* Why?

Ruth: *(sure of this answer)* Because it was the right thing to do.

Boaz: *(intrigued)* Who told you that?

Ruth: I don't know.

Boaz: *(after a beat)* What about your gods in Moab?

Ruth: What about them?

Boaz: *(baiting her a bit)* You're a brave woman, to leave your gods. They may be angry, or they might not find you here.

Ruth: *(still serious, but much less intimidated)* What do I care? They've never found me before.

Boaz: *(laughs)* Well...we have a God in Israel, and He can find you...here... Moab...wherever. *(Pulling out some bread and water)* Now, enough of this. You need lunch. I can offer...bread...fresh bread, and water. *(He begins to pull out the bread)* You know what the name of this village...Bethlehem...you know what it means in my language?

Ruth: No.

Boaz: It means "the house of bread". *(He laughs)* That's good, huh? "House of bread". *(He hands her a piece of bread)* Go ahead. Eat. You know what us Jews say about bread?

Ruth: No...

Boaz: *(laughs)* Neither do I.
They both sit in silence for a moment, eating bread.

Boaz: Your name is Ruth?

Ruth: Yes.

Boaz: My name is Boaz. You know what that means in my language?

Ruth: *(warming up to his humor)* I'm afraid to ask.

Boaz: *(laughs)* It means, "rich old Jew, who owns this farm and three others".
(Laughs) Just kidding...about the old part. *(More serious)* Don't worry, Ruth. You're safe here. I've told my men to watch out for you. There will be plenty of leftovers. You, Naomi...you won't go hungry.

Ruth: Thank you. *(An awkward pause)* I...I should go back to work. *(She starts to cross back toward the house, and into the scene with Naomi)*

Boaz: Ruth. *(Ruth turns back toward Boaz)* You've done a good thing.

Ruth has now crossed back into the scene with Naomi.

Naomi: He told you that? He said, "You've done a good thing"?

Ruth: Those were his exact words.

Naomi: *(almost under her breath)* Unbelievable.

Ruth: *(sits again, next to Naomi)* So...what do I do?

Naomi: *(a bit surprised at the question)* Do? You gather up the leftovers, like he said.

They sit in silence for a moment, eating the bread. Finally, Naomi can't help but speak her mind.

Naomi: Ruth...this man...Boaz...he was kind.

Ruth: Yes.

Naomi: *(thinking out loud)* He likes you?

Ruth: *(a bit uncomfortable)* I don't know...I think so...yes.

Naomi: *(now determined to take action, she decides to tell Ruth the truth about the situation)* I know him...Boaz. He has no wife or children. He is the

cousin of my dead husband. He is...related...to us. In our law, the law of the Jews, do you know what that means?

Ruth: No, Momma Naomi.

Naomi: He will be your strong rescuer. *(After a beat)* You liked him?

Ruth: He laughed a lot.

Naomi: Yes. He always did. You will be happy with him.

Ruth: If you tell me to, I will.

Naomi: Yes. And you will give him what he never had, but always wanted. *(Now planning)* Ruth. Go inside. Quick. Put on a clean dress. Now. Go! Go!

Ruth hurriedly exits.

Naomi: *(calling offstage to Ruth)* And brush your hair. Do you have any perfume left?

Ruth: *(from offstage)* Yes. Just a little.

Naomi: *(calling offstage)* Bring it with you. All of it! Is your shawl clean?

Ruth: *(from offstage)* The bread was wrapped in it. But it is clean.

Naomi: *(still calling offstage)* Good! Hurry now! Hurry! It's almost dark. They may be done threshing the barley. Did all the pickers leave when you did?

Ruth: *(from offstage)* Yes. Only Boaz and a few of his men stayed. They were at the threshing floor.

Naomi: Good. They had food for dinner?

Ruth: I think so. Yes. And wine.

Naomi: Good. *(She fusses over Ruth, making sure her hair is okay)* You look beautiful. Wear your shawl. *(Naomi arranges the shawl on Ruth, and smells it)* It smells like bread, still?

Ruth: Yes.

Naomi: Good. Good. Now...wash in the stream on the way. Then put on your perfume. *(As Naomi is describing these next actions, Ruth is crossing downstage to an area which represents the threshing floor. Boaz will be lying down there, asleep. Ruth simply acts out the actions that Naomi is describing)* Then walk slowly to the threshing floor. Watch from a distance to see if the men have finished their work. If they have finished

with their work, and eaten and had wine, the men will be tired. Hopefully, they'll be asleep. Make sure they are all asleep. Find Boaz. Lie down at his feet. When he wakes, he will tell you what to do.

*Naomi's speech should be timed to **Ruth's** actions. By the end of the speech **Ruth** should be lying next to **Boaz**. The light fades on **Naomi**. **Ruth** lies, very tentatively, at **Boaz's** feet. **Boaz** is asleep. **Ruth** is very much awake, and very nervous. But she lies at **Boaz's** feet for at least thirty seconds. Then, shivering, she tries, somewhat in vain, to cover herself with her shawl, then with **Boaz's** coat. In doing so, she stirs **Boaz**. He wakes with a start and sits up.*

Scene Four

The scene at the threshing floor continues.

Boaz: *(sleepy)* What? What is it? Who...who are you?

Ruth: *(very scared, shivering)* I'm...it's...Ruth.

Boaz: *(still a bit out of it)* Ruth?

Ruth: I picked...you were kind to me.

Boaz: Ruth.

Ruth: Yes.

Boaz: *(waking up)* You've been here?

Ruth: For a while.

Boaz: Asleep...at my feet.

Ruth: Not asleep.

Boaz: What...what do you want from me?

Ruth: I don't know.

Boaz: *(sees her shivering)* You're cold.

Ruth: Yes. Cover me...please. *(Boaz does so, with his coat. Ruth asks innocently)* What should I do?

Boaz: Do?

Ruth: Momma Naomi said that you would tell me what to do.

- Boaz:** I should...you are... *(He wants to say "beautiful" but can't quite bring himself to say it. His bluff has been called)* I don't know...
- Ruth:** She said that you are my... *(Ruth is scared to say it)*
- Boaz:** *(gently)* What, Ruth? I am what?
- Ruth:** My strong rescuer.
- Boaz:** Strong... *(A moment of realization, knowing that this is his time to live up to his name. After a long beat)* Yes. I am. *(Resolved)* Yes. *(After a beat)* What else did she tell you?
- Ruth:** That I will give you what you always wanted.
- Boaz:** *(amazed that this young woman would come to him. Is speechless for a moment)* You could have any young man. Rich or poor. But, you come to me.
- Ruth:** Naomi told me...to come to you. She said I would be happy. *(Seeing a bit of disappointment in Boaz' eyes, fearing that she's only responding out of obedience, Ruth speaks great kindness to Boaz)* I wanted to come to you. It is...right. And good.
- Boaz:** *(tenderly, realizing)* It is kindness. This is...kindness, I never knew I needed.
- Ruth:** *(after a beat, forcing him to ask her)* Tell me what to do.
- Boaz:** *(gently puts his hand on her face, almost afraid to touch her. This is the touch of a man who has virtually never touched a woman, and longs to do it right)* Be my wife. Perhaps, someday, give me a son. And, God willing I should live that long, someday a grandson. Your kindness would be to honor me so.
- Ruth:** I would.
- Boaz:** Then we are honored. The both of us. And your mother-in-law, she will get her good name back. *(Ruth looks at him, not understanding)*
- Ruth:** *(happy with the realization)* Ah. "Pleasant".
- Boaz:** Yes. You are good to us, both. Naomi. Me. *(He very gently puts his hand on her face again)* Thank you. *(He holds that pose as long as he dares, then breaks it, a bit embarrassed and overwhelmed with his affection)* Now, the sun will rise soon, and my men will wake up. You should go home. But, not without a...a token of my intentions. Give me your shawl. *(Ruth, uncertain what he's going to do, unwraps her shawl)* I

have no ring in my pocket, and I won't give you a rock. So, for now, you're going to have to do with bread. *(He gently spread out the shawl, places the bread in it, and gently wraps it up)* You take this bread home to Naomi, and you tell her that soon she will have a son-in-law who is older than she is. *(He laughs. Ruth stands. Boaz wraps his coat around her. She starts to leave, and turns back when he calls her name)* Ruth. Thank you. You will not be disappointed.

Ruth exits one side of the stage and Boaz exits the other.

Scene Five

Naomi is back standing at the table where she was seated at the end of Scene One. On the table is a pile of food. It's dinner time in the Ruth and Boaz household. Ruth and Boaz have now been married for four years. Obed is three years old. Naomi is fussing over the table as she calls Ruth and Boaz to dinner.

Naomi: Bread, you two! It's time for food! Ruthie! Boaz! It's dinner time!

Ruth enters from one side of the stage. She is carrying some of Boaz' shirts.

Ruth: I'm coming Momma Naomi. *(She hugs her)*

Naomi: *(good naturedly)* What do you have there, girl?

Ruth: Oh, just some of Boaz's shirts that were drying on the line.

Naomi: He should gather his own shirts.

Ruth: It's my honor to gather his shirts.

Naomi: *(good naturedly)* So, where is the old scoundrel?

Boaz: *(entering from the other side of the stage, wiping his hands on his pants legs. He has Ruth's shawl draped over his head or shoulders)* I'm here, I'm here, I'm here. *(Walks up to Ruth, hugs her, then gives her a kiss on the cheek)* Hello, my good wife. I haven't seen you all day, and you got more beautiful. *(He heads over to Naomi to hug her, well aware that he is baiting her)* As did you, "Momma Naomi".

Naomi: *(Naomi good naturedly wards Boaz off)* Don't you "Momma Naomi" me! How many times do I have to tell you, Boaz? I am not your Momma! Or your Mother-in-law.

Boaz: *(teasing)* Makes you feel old, doesn't it?

Ruth: *(laughing)* Alright, you two. That's enough. Let's eat.

Naomi: *(noticing Ruth's shawl on Boaz' shoulder)* What are you doing with Ruth's shawl?

Boaz: *(as the three of them begin to gather around the table)* Oh. I got it off of the boy. He was trying to wrap it around that sheep of his. *(Calls out to Obed)* Obed, get in here! It's time for bread.

Naomi: Oh, don't worry about him. I'll keep some food warm for him.

Boaz: *(laughing)* You spoil that boy. You spoil him rotten. Both of you.

Ruth: *(with a smile)* Of course we do.

Boaz: *(laughing)* Look at him, chasing that sheep. I swear, if I'm not careful, that boy is going to turn into a shepherd instead of a farmer.

Ruth: Well, Boaz, there are worst things than being a shepherd.

Boaz: Yes. Of course. He could be a sheep!

Naomi: He's not going to be a sheep.

Boaz: So, what is he going to be?

Naomi: Famous. All the women around here have told me so.

Boaz: A famous son, eh? Well, if all the women say it, it must be true.

Boaz motions both women over to himself. He puts Ruth's shawl gently on her shoulders. He puts his arms around the both, then he lifts his hands in a blessing.

Boaz: Come, you two. Prayer, before bread. "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth living bread from the earth."

Ruth/Naomi: Amen.

Boaz: So be it. Let's eat.

The lights slowly fade on the three of them sitting down at the table, eating and drinking.