

A TIME TO LIVE

A Musical in two acts inspired by the book of Ruth

Act I Scene 1 – Naomi Returns

Intro to HAVE YOU HEARD begins as the curtain opens on a marketplace scene in Bethlehem. There are merchant stalls along one side and a well stage right. Naomi's house is stage left. Townspeople bustle about, doing business, getting water. NEMUEL presides over a richly decorated stall nearest the well. It bears a sign: **“Tours to Rachel's Tomb- 12s”** His slave, MEHU stands meekly behind the stall.

During HAVE YOU HEARD, NAOMI AND RUTH enter and try to open the door to Naomi's house. It is opened from within and the occupant and Naomi have a 'gestural discussion' (silently) indicating that Naomi can't come in – someone else is living there. Then NAOMI and RUTH exit.

Chorus

Have you heard?
 Have you heard?
 Naomi's coming home!
 [spoken] She's what?
 She is coming home
 From Moab where they roamed
 And now she's coming home
 But that is not the only thing
 For she is not alone
 She's brought along a daughter
 Well, not her very own
 Her sons have died
 And both of them were married in that land
 To Moabites, of all things
 Not what Naomi planned
 But one of them named Ruth
 Refused to leave her side
 Apparently she begged and begged
 And set aside all pride
 So here they are together
 Naomi and her dead son's bride

DINAH goes to fill her water jar at the well.
She is approached by MILKAH.

This interchange must be brisk and tight.

Dinah! MILKAH

DINAH 'nonchalantly' fingers her recent purchase, hoping it is noticed.

Hello, Milkah. DINAH

MILKAH
Have you got news? Have you seen them?

DINAH
I saw her this morning, coming right down the street!

NEMUEL obviously tries to hear the conversation.

MILKAH
How did she look?

DINAH
Well--

MILKAH
Is it true about her sons?

This catches NEMUEL's interest- he's troubled by it and now listens intently.

DINAH
I said to myself -

DINAH AND NEMUEL
(In unison)
'Can this be Naomi?'

The WOMEN freeze.
Spotlight on NEMUEL.

NEMUEL
What a complication *that* would be! That idiot in Moab thought he was doing me a favor. It's not my fault they died! It's not my fault.

The women resume action. Other townspeople begin exiting.

DINAH
And then she said the oddest thing!

MILKAH
What?

DINAH
She said ‘don’t call me Naomi.’

MILKAH
What?

DINAH
She said ‘call me Mara!’

MILKAH
Mara?!

The women take their water jars and exit as they talk.

DINAH
Mara. It means-

DINAH and MILKAH
Bitter.

DINAH
And she blamed it on God!

MILKAH
Blasphemous!

DINAH
She said, ‘I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.’

MILKAH
So—*the Almighty* emptied her nest!

DINAH
What else could she expect after flying off like that? To pagans!

MICAH
Her foreign, idol worshipping chickens came home to roost!

DINAH
She brought one of those foreign chickens home with her!

MILKAH (to DINAH)
and NEMUEL (to himself)

So it's true!

DINAH nods. She, MILKAH and
NEMUEL exit.

Brief musical interlude while DINAH
changes to MIRIAM

NAOMI and RUTH enter and approach the
well. RUTH gets water.

RUTH

Where is everybody?

Miriam enters

NAOMI

Bethlehem closes up early.

MIRIAM

Naomi? Naomi!

NAOMI

Miriam!

MIRIAM and NAOMI run to greet each
other with an embrace.

MIRIAM

Oh, my friend! It has been so long!

NAOMI

Too long. You must tell me all your news!

MIRIAM

Not til I hear yours—I mean, I'm so sorry, Naomi.

NAOMI

It's all right. I do need to tell my story, maybe then it will start to make some sense to me. But first, I want you to meet my dear daughter in law, Ruth.

MIRIAM

You are truly a dear daughter in law to follow Naomi this far!

NAOMI

She is! And now that we're home we find that Nemuel has our house rented out.

MIRIAM

Stay with me tonight. I'm surprised I didn't see you before now.

RUTH

We arrived before anyone was up and now everybody's gone home. I think she's trying to hide me!

NAOMI

I'm just waiting for the right time.

RUTH

Well, it is time! I'll win their hearts, you'll see.

MIRIAM

Come. We'll talk about it over dinner.

RUTH

I'll be along. You two have catching up to do.

MIRIAM

(Pointing) Third house on the left.

NAOMI and MIRIAM exit.

RUTH

(Singing)

I want to be a part of this family, I want to live my life in this place.
I want to love and learn and strive to earn respect, and be given a measure of grace,
in this place.

I want to love this God that they worship, to know the power that He has
I want to be a part, an important part of this family and this place.

And if this God whose name is so holy, no one dares to utter his name,
would be kind to this poor servant and grant me a man to replace..

[At this point, Ruth stops the song and breaks down and cries - then speaks]:

Oh God, why did you have to take him away?

[more measures in silence before singing]

I want to be - I want to be - I want to be.

Act I Scene 2 – Welcome Home

At the well in the marketplace. Next morning. Merchant stalls are active with business. DINAH and MILKAH are again at the well. NAOMI and RUTH approach the well. NEMUEL notices them and moves closer to eavesdrop.

MILKAH

Isn't that the same shawl you wore yesterday?

DINAH notices NAOMI and

RUTH.

Some other women gather round, whispering and pointing. Men of the town look and point at Naomi and 'kibbutz' with each other. BOAZ continues doing business at merchant stalls. He doesn't notice the women.

DINAH

Naomi! So...good to have you back.

MILKAH

Is that the foreign chicken?!

RUTH

Cluck cluck cluck!

MILKAH

(To Naomi)

Terrible to hear of your...*(she looks at Ruth)* losses! Just terrible!

NAOMI

Thankyou. I knew I could count on my friends and relations to scatter the chickenfeed in my absence.

DINAH

Well, ah, my pleasure...

NAOMI

You have not yet had the privilege of meeting my faithful and beautiful daughter, Ruth.

MILKAH

(to RUTH)

Is it true you ah, *worked* in the temple of *Baal*?

Excuse me?!
 Who said *that*?
 It's common knowledge about Moabite women...
 Oh really!

RUTH

NAOMI

DINAH

RUTH

NAOMI

MILKAH

NAOMI

DINAH

How CAN you spread such lies and rumors about your own family!?

If you'd wanted to uphold the family name you'd have stuck it out with the rest of us instead of running off to do business with pagans!

During the following dialog, BOAZ notices RUTH. He stops and stares admiringly.

My mother in law gave up everything she knew to do what was best for her family!

RUTH

MILKAH

Well, *that* worked out well, didn't it?

RUTH

OH!

MILKAH

Mara – is that what you call yourself now?

DINAH

Bitter indeed, coming home with a Moabite!

RUTH

(Pulling off DINAH'S shawl)

Yes! A Moabite and proud of it—

DINAH gasps and recoils

NAOMI grabs the shawl and throws it at DINAH, who lets it fall to the ground.

NAOMI

Don't you DARE speak ill of my Ruth!

DINAH

You won't find a Bethlehem man willing to marry her.

NAOMI steps boldly toward DINAH as she speaks her next line. DINAH stands her ground as NAOMI comes nose to nose with her.

NAOMI

Any man would be lucky to have her!

DINAH

Hah!

NEMUEL stands- an idea has struck him. The WOMEN and BOAZ freeze. Spotlight on NEMUEL

NEMUEL

Say, there's an idea - I can't get my hands on her land until the time limit is up on the contract her husband made with me. Unless...I *am* the nearest kinsman—a kinsman redeemer! The law says I'd have to marry the girl, but—that needn't last long. (*he rubs his hands together in evil glee*)

The WOMEN resume their action near the well.

NAOMI

Don't worry, I wouldn't let any kinsman under *your* roof come courting her!

NAOMI picks up the shawl and holds it out to DINAH. DINAH glares at NAOMI, ignores the shawl being offered and then exits toward BOAZ. NEMUEL approaches NAOMI.

BOAZ

(*To DINAH*)

Sister, is that—

DINAH

YES. Now come, I need you at home.

DINAH exits. BOAZ pauses to look a moment more at RUTH then exits.
NAOMI looks at the shawl and shakes her head.

RUTH

So much for my measure of grace.

NEMUEL

Can it be? My dear niece home from exile at last?

NAOMI

Uncle Nemuel?

NEMUEL

And with a—*beautiful* daughter in law in tow.

NAOMI

How is it you never—

NEMUEL

(*overlapping*)

I will come to see you soon. We have much to discuss.

NAOMI

Like why we never heard from you after Elimelech's death? And why there's someone living in *my* house who's paying rent to *you*?

Intro to I DON'T WANT MUCH begins.

NEMUEL

So many regrets for us all. And my deepest sympathy to you in your most recent, tragic losses. I'm sure I can make amends in ways that are a benefit to all.

NAOMI

(*Skeptically*)

Amends?

NEMUEL

Yes, well-- til tomorrow then?

NAOMI

All right, Uncle.

NAOMI and RUTH exit.

NEMUEL
(singing)

I am smart and tall and educated,
Flirty, if we're not related,
Witty, sly, sophisticated
Otherwise, not complicated

I don't want much, just everything
I see and touch, like I was king.
Just plain old me, you've got to see
Is the most important person
That is me

With my wheat and flax and rye all milling
Other land I could be tilling
Plans I have for more are chilling
Greed I find is so fulfilling

I don't want much, just everything
I see and touch, like I was king.
Just plain old me, you've got to see
Is the most important person
That is me

NEMUEL exits.

Act I Scene 3 – Naomi's Story

NAOMI and RUTH are seated on a bench
outside NAOMI's house. (stage left)
MIRIAM enters (carrying a sheaf of grain)
and joins them.

NAOMI

Oh Ruth, I was afraid it would be like this. What have I brought you into?

RUTH

Don't you worry, I can handle the old hens. And that uncle of yours—thinks he's the finest
rooster in town. This could get interesting.

MIRIAM

He's up to something, I'm sure of it.

RUTH

He's the one you and Elimelech were in business with in Moab, right?

NAOMI

Yes...and he worked our fields here. He kept most of *that* profit, too. Elimelech moved us to Moab to save our land- for the boys, and their children. And now I may have to sell it so we can eat.

RUTH

I can help with that. I'm going to go glean.

NAOMI

Nobody in Bethlehem is going to let you glean.

RUTH

Your son told me that you have *laws* that allow foreigners *and widows*, to glean grain at the edges of the fields. I'm both!

NAOMI

Well, yes-

RUTH

He said your God would be generous to me.

Intro to 'O LITTLE TOWN' begins

MIRIAM

Folks here figure God's generosity doesn't apply to foreigners.

RUTH

What makes this little town so -so hard and closed in on itself? It's like it's soul is all wizened up.

MIRIAM

Well...

NAOMI

(singing)

Can a town have a soul?
A town have a life?
Just a tiny little town out in nowhere?
When you start as a tomb-

RUTH

(spoken)

A *tomb*?

NAOMI
(con't.)

It's really hard to bloom.
O little town...

MIRIAM
(singing)

O little town!

NAOMI

Of Bethlehem!
Our town was started with a simple gravestone

RUTH
(spoken)

Really!

MIRIAM
(singing)

The wife of Judah died here giving birth.

RUTH
(spoken)

O dear!

NAOMI

In time dear Rachel's tomb made us well known
The mourners came to stay,
And our town got under way.

RUTH
(spoken)

That explains a lot!

NAOMI and MIRIAM

Can a town have a soul?
A town have a life?
Just a tiny little town out in nowhere?
When you start as a tomb,
It's really hard to bloom

NAOMI

O little town

MIRIAM

O little town

NAOMI AND MIRIAM

Of Bethlehem!

RUTH

It's a lovely day, or it was before we met your lovely neighbors! I'll bring us back some dinner.

NAOMI

Ruth, I don't know if it's even safe.

RUTH

I'll be fine. You can pray for an angel to protect me!

RUTH exits.

NAOMI

All right, my daughter...the Lord be with you. There's no talking to that girl...

MIRIAM

(Indicating the sheaf)

Oh, this is for you.

MIRIAM sets the sheaf in front of Naomi.

MIRIAM (Con't.)

A symbol of blessing for your house. A reminder that good things will come again.
(beat) Our fields are doing well this year. I'll make sure you and Ruth are fed-- til you get your feet under you.

NAOMI

My feet were knocked clean off my legs when my sons died. As if it wasn't enough to lose Elimelech...

MIRIAM

They were wonderful men--who would want you to move on.

NAOMI

To what?

MIRIAM

Well, you have people here who love you very much. Like me. And Ruth—

NAOMI

Who in this town is going to take *us* in? Nobody cares about the estate Elimelech was building--except those who want to add it to their own.

MIRIAM

Well...what about a kinsman redeemer? I know it's not done much these days, but it *is* still in the law.

NAOMI

I've been told that my household has a curse on it for going to live with the idol worshippers.

MIRIAM

Not everyone thinks that, Naomi.

NAOMI

Why did I even want to come back? All that's left for me here are memories...

Act I Scene 4 - Flashback

Orchestra reprises "HAVE YOU HEARD" while the marketplace is stripped of the trappings of prosperity. MIRIAM and NAOMI change cloaks and headpieces but stay in the same general places onstage. MIRIAM adds an apron that has a 'baby bump' pillow under it.

In this flashback marketplace, there is a lot of hustle bustle as if in earnest business, but it soon becomes apparent that there is little or nothing to buy or sell. Merchant stalls are run down and display baskets that are empty or with a few pathetic looking fruits or grain stalks.

A travelling MERCHANT/SLAVER from Moab enters. He has a young SLAVE for sale, tied to a cart full of merchandise which is pushed by one the slave. A few townspeople stop to look at his wares. He offers the SLAVE too in pantomime, which the shoppers decline.

NEMUEL sits on a tall stool near his SLAVE who is standing behind the counter of NEMUEL's stall. There is a bag of grain and a drinking cup on the counter.

NEMUEL

When customers come up, you will demonstrate how *tasty* my new grain is.

SLAVE

I can't get it down, sir.

NEMUEL

You'll eat it *here* or that's all you'll be given at home!

NAOMI heads toward NEMUEL's stall.
She is joined by her young sons MAHLON
and KILION. MIRIAM follows at a
distance.

MIRIAM

Naomi!

NAOMI, MAHLON and KILION turn and
see MIRIAM.

KILION and MAHLON

Miriam!

KILION and MAHLON run to MIRIAM.

MIRIAM

Whoa! How are my future sons in law?

KILION

Oh Miriam—

MAHLON
(*overlapping*)

No we're not –

NAOMI

Good morning my friend!

NEMUEL

Did you ladies wish to do some business, or just chat?

NAOMI

Uncle Nemuel. (*she looks around*) Are you the only one selling grain today?

NEMUEL

Those boys of yours seem to be particularly... 'perky' today.

NAOMI

My boys are growing into strapping lads that will be producing fine sons before many more
harvests pass!

NEMUEL

Indeed.

NAOMI

I'm looking for some seed grain...wheat.

NEMUEL

Can't help you. Remember that dry spell last season...

MIRIAM

How about barley?

NEMUEL

(To NAOMI)

You know, you should let me buy some of that unproductive land of yours.

NAOMI

Our land is just as productive as yours, Uncle.

MIRIAM

Let's see...that would make you the biggest landholder in town, wouldn't it, Nemuel?

NEMUEL

(after a tense pause)

What was it you wanted?

The following interchange must be tight and brisk.

MIRIAM and NAOMI

Barley!

NEMUEL

Barley! Heavens, no. Remember the blight?

NAOMI

What about oats?

NEMUEL

Locusts.

MIRIAM

Rye?!

NEMUEL

Dried up.

NAOMI

(Pointing to the bag of grain.)

Well what is that?

NEMUEL

This is a new kind of grain.

NAOMI

A new grain?

NEMUEL
Yes. I call it “Manna II”

NAOMI AND MIRIAM
Manna II?!

MIRIAM
I’ll stop by later, Naomi.

MIRIAM exits.

NEMUEL
Naomi! You don’t want to miss out on this...

NEMUEL gets a handful of grain from the bag on the counter and holds it out to his SLAVE.

The SLAVE shakes his head nervously. NEMUEL thrusts the fistful of grain threateningly at SLAVE, who then takes it and takes a bite.

NEMUEL
I’m willing to give you and Elimelech a chance to invest in this lucrative venture...

The SLAVE begins to choke during NEMUEL’s line and is whacked on the back by NEMUEL.

NAOMI shakes her head, turns and rejoins the milling, shopping crowd.

SLAVE chokes worse, NEMUEL glances around and shoves him down out of sight. MERCHANT/SLAVER enters
DINAH and MILKAH enter

DINAH
Milkah, look—a traveling merchant—

MILKAH
Aach! It’s a filthy Moabite.

DINAH
Oh. And I was looking forward to getting some ‘news from afar!’

MILKAH
What do I care about news from afar? There’s plenty of news right here.

She points to BOAZ, who is in the midst of a transaction at one of the business stalls.

MILKAH (Con't.)

Your brother is the most eligible bachelor in town! His engagement will be BIG news!

DINAH

What engagement?

BOAZ leaves the stall and walks away stage left.

MILKAH

I've taken it upon *myself* to find him a wife!

She calls to a teenage girl nearby and motions for her to come

MILCAH (Con't.)

Bilhah!

BILHAH trots over to MILKAH

MILKAH (Con't.)

Oh Boaz!

DINAH

He joined the army to avoid Mother's attempts to introduce him to anyone suitable.

MILKAH

He's just shy!

She trots towards BOAZ, BILHAH in tow. DINAH follows closely behind.

MILKAH

Oh, Boaz!

BOAZ

Good day, Milkah—

MILKAH

(In a conspiratorial tone)

I have such news for you!

She pulls BILHAH toward BOAZ

BOAZ

Ah-ah-I...—

MILKAH

Not a tooth missing! Smile, dear...

BOAZ turns to hastily leave.

DINAH

You should listen to her, brother!

Boaz stops and turns to DINAH

BOAZ

Dinah, *please-*

DINAH

Do you want our estate to go to auction after you die? You must produce a son to keep the land in our name!

MILKAH

She's from a very fertile family!

BOAZ

I'm only in town this week--

DINAH

(overlapping)

Joining the army was just running away--

MILKAH puts a quieting hand on
DINAH'S shoulder

MILKAH

We understand, Boaz! Especially your poor widowed *childless* sister--

DINAH

(Overlapping)

Milcah! *(then to Boaz)* You're not getting any younger.

BOAZ

Thank you, sister—

MILKAH pushes BILHAH toward BOAZ.
He turns and flees.

DINAH

Boaz! Boaz, wait...

MILKAH lets go of BILHAH and exits.
BILHAH exits.

During this action, NEMUEL approaches
the MERCHANT/SLAVER and is
obviously evaluating his 'goods'.

MERCHANT/SLAVER

Looking for some domestic help, sir?

NEMUEL glances back at his stall.
His SLAVE rises, struggling, from behind
the stall, grasping his throat.

NEMUEL

Well, I, ah...

The SLAVE tries to drink from the cup on
the counter but alas, it is empty; he collapses
back behind the counter.

NEMUEL (Con't.)

I may be in the market.

SLAVER

These are fresh from Moab, all the best stock is from there these days.

NEMUEL

30 shekels.

MERCHANT/SLAVER

I can get twice that back in Moab!

NEMUEL

Not after they walk all that without food. Now, I would be willing to throw in a bag of very
special grain to sweeten the deal.

NEMUEL points to the bag of "Manna II" at
his stall.

MERCHANT/SLAVER

Hmmm. All right, that will get me and my inventory back to where business is better.

NEMUEL

He pays the MERCHANT/SLAVER and
takes his purchase

Well, there are deals to be had in times like these. I plan to pick up some cheap real estate before
this is over.

Intro for I DON'T WANT MUCH
(chorus) begins

MERCHANT/SLAVER

Ah- hah...

NEMUEL

They'll have to let me on the elder council if I'm the town's biggest landholder. Then your business here, *and* mine could benefit greatly.

NEMUEL (con't)
(singing)

I don't want much, just everything
I see and touch, like I was king.
Just plain old me, you've got to see
Is the most important person
That is me

As NEMUEL sings, the
MERCHANT/SLAVER nods knowingly.
He and NEMUEL shake hands.
The MERCHANT/SLAVER exits, taking
the bag of Manna II on his way out.
NEMUEL gathers his new slave and exits,
singing as he goes.

Act 1 Scene 5 - Flashback Con't. - The Deal

Inside NAOMI's (and
ELIMELECH's) home. NAOMI is
bending over looking into a
cupboard, her back to the audience.
She removes an earthen jar from the
cupboard and reaches into it to
retrieve a handful of grain. She looks
at it, sighs and shakes her head.

ELIMELECH enters during this
activity, smiles at this rear view of
his wife, sneaks up behind NAOMI
and puts his arms around her.

ELIMELECH

Hello, my bride.

NAOMI straightens with a start,
sending the handful of grain flying.

NAOMI

Whoa! Elimelech! That was our dinner!

He kisses her

ELIMELECH

Man does not live by bread alone!

NAOMI

Well, I hope you and Moses are right or we're done for.

ELIMELECH

Now Naomi, things are rarely as bad as they seem.

NAOMI

That's right—sometimes they're worse! Do you know that your uncle is in the marketplace trying to pass off common weeds as grain?

ELIMELECH

Uncle Nemuel? No, no, he's developing a new drought resistant variety. I was thinking maybe we should invest in the venture--

NAOMI

WHAT?! Husband... we have two hungry boys to feed! They can't grow on speculation and lies!

ELIMELECH

Lies! My own uncle would not try to cheat us—

NAOMI

Oh! Who was it that sold you "*Joshua's trumpet*" from the battle of Jericho?

ELIMELECH

It's a very nice trumpet!

NAOMI

(Overlapping)

Oh Elimelech!

NAOMI drops to her knees and
begins gathering the spilled grain
into a bag.

ELIMELECH

Naomi...

NAOMI

Why don't you go back to market and trade for something we can eat for dinner.

ELIMELECH

Well...I already traded our second best candlesticks...

NAOMI

How about trading that trumpet?!

ELIMELECH

The trumpet?!

NAOMI

And take the boys! Mahlon! Kilion!

She finishes scooping up grain and stands as MAHLON and KILION enter.

ELIMELECH

Now there's an idea! We might get several dinners in exchange for these strapping lads!

NAOMI

(exasperated)

Elimelech...!

She holds the bag of grain out to him

ELIMELECH

I thought this was our dinner.

NAOMI

Not after it was spread all over the floor! Now it's seed grain.

ELIMELECH

Maybe Nemuel would trade for some of his *new* grain...

NAOMI

(as she shoo's them away)

Stay away from Nemuel!

NAOMI exits into an interior room of their home.

ELIMELECH, MAHLON and KILION move toward the marketplace. Other shoppers look at wares at market stalls. NEMUEL and his new SLAVE go to his stall in the marketplace. The new slave

carries a sign reading ‘Quality Stock.
50 shekels’

MAHLON holds up a small bag to
his father.

MAHLON

(holding up the bag)

Look, Father, I caught a cricket!

KILION

I think it’s a locust.

ELIMELECH

Shh! Son, don’t say *locust* around here...

SHOPPER

(alarmed)

What?

ELIMELECH

(pointing to a merchant stall)

Oh—ah, I said *low cost!*

They arrive at Nemuel’s market stall

NEMUEL

Nephew! Looking for some field help?

He yanks the slave over and shows
ELIMELECH the sign.

ELIMELECH

(showing distaste for his uncle’s offer)

Oh—no, Uncle. I did want to speak with you, though--about a different business matter--

MAHLON opens the bag a bit and
holds it up.

MAHLON

Wanna see my cricket?

NEMUEL ignores him, so MAHLON
lowers the bag.

ELIMELECH

If I moved to Moab, I could handle your trade there and I believe I could increase it enough that-

NEMUEL

(Overlapping)

Sounds like you’ve got some extra shekels lying around.

ELIMELECH

Well as a matter of fact, I – we – would need some, ah, assistance - from you in order to get established.

NEMUEL

Assistance.

ELIMELECH

Just til I get set up. And you could take some of the profit from my fields *here* if you worked them while I'm away.

NEMUEL

Profit?

ELIMELECH

Say sixty-forty?

NEMUEL

I am flattered to be included in your little scheme, but you don't want me to put my own estate in jeopardy by assuming all the risk.

MAHLON

Uncle, LOOK!

Holding the bag up higher this time.

NEMUEL glances briefly into the bag.
During the following lines,
MAHLON pantomimes getting the
bug out of the bag, showing it to
KILION.

ELIMELECH

No, it's just that with a family to provide for-- surely you understand—

NEMUEL

Of course! But there must be *some* security for myself if the loan is not repaid. Perhaps ownership of your fields should transfer to me in, say, 5 years – if you default.

ELIMELECH

Five years?

NEMUEL

You'll be wealthy by that time!

ELEMELECH

I suppose so.

NEMUEL

I'm discussing a similar deal with my friend Zabed. You are family, of course, but he wanted an answer this week. Maybe I should just...

ELIMELECH

I don't mean to offend—

NEMUEL

Very well, make it 10 years. *Double* my original offer. With an 80 – 20 split. Just give me your sandal and it's agreed.

ELIMELECH

80 – 20?

NEMUEL

No hard feelings if you want Zabed to have it.

ELIMELECH

Wait--

ELIMELECH removes his sandal.

NEMUEL

So we are agreed?

ELIMELECH

Yes—agreed.

ELIMELECH hands the sandal to NEMUEL.

NEMUEL

When I become an elder contracts will be *written* on lambskin, like in *civilized* places.

ELEMELECH

Civilized?

NEMUEL

(Pointing to MAHLON's cricket)

And let's pray that *locust* doesn't have a family eating up the profits in *our* fields!

KILION

Ha! It IS a locust!

SHOPPER 1

Locusts!?

NEMUEL

A LOCUST!

Not again!	SHOPPER 2	Pandemonium ensues as panic spreads!
Another plague!?	SHOPPER 3	
Protect the fields!	SHOPPER 1	
Locusts!	SHOPPER 2	As the panicked townspeople run every which way to get home, MAHLON is knocked over and loses the bug.
		NEMUEL exits, laughing. His SLAVE cringes and dodges running townsfolk as he follows NEMUEL.
		ELIMELECH and SONS are left alone on stage, sitting askew and rumpled.
I lost my cricket!	MAHLON	
Locust!	KILION	One more scream is heard from off stage at the mention of the word 'locust'. ELIMELECH grabs his head and shakes his head as lights go out.

Act I Scene 6 - Flashback Con't. – Cousins Talk

Light comes up on a richly decorated room. DINAH is sitting, doing some handwork, next to a small table. There is a knock at the door. DINAH rises and goes to the door, opens it to reveal ELIMELECH.

DINAH

Cousin ...this is an unexpected... pleasure.

ELIMELECH

Hello, Dinah.

He peers into the room, looking for Boaz.

DINAH

(in a resentfully envious tone)

How are your boys?

ELIMELECH

The boys are well, cousin. I had heard that Boaz was back home and wondered—

DINAH

(overlapping)

I'm afraid my brother is occupied with some important business--

BOAZ enters.

BOAZ

Elimelech!

He strides to ELIMELECH, who then enters the room. They embrace. DINAH grudgingly goes back to her chair and hand work. She is obviously listening.

ELIMELECH

It's so good to have you back! How long will you be in town?

BOAZ

A week or so.

ELIMELECH

I thought maybe you'd be done with soldiering now. *We are* at peace with neighboring lands, even Moab.

BOAZ

My parents would like that, of course. The time is ripe for settling down, they say.

DINAH

Hard to settle down with no bride.

ELIMELECH

With your wealth and good looks you could have any girl in town, you know!

BOAZ

Oh, you know me. I just-just freeze up with a--pretty face in front of me! (*sigh*) But how are things with *your* family?

ELIMELECH

It's been hard. I'm thinking about moving someplace where it would be easier for us. Just for a year or so.

BOAZ

Where is this place?

ELIMELECH

Moab.

BOAZ and DINAH

(*responding together, BOAZ with surprise, DINAH with disgust*)

Moab?!

BOAZ and ELIMELECH turn and look at DINAH. She rises from her chair.

DINAH

Remember it is almost Sabbath, brother.

She exits.

BOAZ

You think Bethlehem will forgive you for going to live with her old enemy? This town has a long memory.

ELIMELECH

The town elders are my good friends!

BOAZ

Yes, well, what about Naomi?

ELIMELECH

Our family and friends will welcome her back as well.

BOAZ

(*with a glance at the doorway through which DINAH left*)

I'm sure...

ELIMELECH

Is it true what I've heard—that Moab is prospering?

BOAZ

Let me show you! My unit just came from there.

BOAZ picks up a bag from a chair and brings it to the table. He begins to pull out edibles and set them on the table.

ELIMELECH

Figs! Pomegranates! Oh--

BOAZ

It's all there, Elimelech. No famine in Moab! But do you have what you need to get there and get established?

ELIMELECH

I've already talked to Uncle Nemuel.

BOAZ

Uncle Nemuel?

ELIMELECH

I will direct his business dealings in Moab as well as my own. And he will work my land here til we return.

BOAZ

(in an unconvinced tone)

Are we talking about the same Uncle Nemuel?

ELIMELECH

He's my nearest kinsman!

He shows his bare foot.

ELIMELECH (Con't.)

See? The deal is sealed!

BOAZ

And how is Naomi taking this news?

ELIMELECH

Well...I have not talked with her yet.

BOAZ

I see. Here, take these with you.

He begins putting the produce back in the bag.

BOAZ (Con't.)

You can show her that you're headed to a prosperous land that could send you back as a prosperous family!

ELIMELECH

Yes, thank you, Boaz. I'll probably have more trouble with her than with Nemuel!

BOAZ

Let me know how things work out. Maybe I can help if-

ELIMELECH

(Overlapping)

Boaz! You need to save your money for your upcoming engagement!

BOAZ

Ah — You must have talked with Milcah!

ELIMELECH

No, no!

BOAZ

God be with you. And could you...say a prayer for your shy cousin?

ELIMELECH

(Holding up the produce bag)

I will! And thank you!

ELIMELECH exits.

Intro to "HOW HAPPY I WOULD BE" starts.

BOAZ

Engagement...

He shakes his head.

BOAZ

(singing)

If I just had a girl to make my own life
A woman to love and take as my wife
Then how happy I would be!
With domestic serenity

(Spoken)

Ha! I'd be happy to just be able to TALK to a pretty face without—without—
Augh! I can't even think about it without freezing up!

(Singing)

We would have our first son
And when he was one

We'd add number two
 But that is too few
 With a growing infantry, my family!

I know it won't be easy, with famine, plagues, disease.
 But with a son when trouble comes, we'll face it all with ease!
 So please, dear Father above you said it was good
 To marry for love and blessed fatherhood

(Spoken)

A family! (beat) Maybe...I just need to meet the right girl. Surely, Lord, there is someone out there that I could...*talk* to?

(Singing)

So I'm asking on my knees
 That I'd have a son who'd be part of history
 Even just one son to be part of history

Act I Scene 7 - Flashback Con't. - Bread from Moab

Evening, ELIMELECH and
 NAOMI's house. NAOMI is settling
 the boys for the night in bed.

MAHLON

Could we have a little more bread, Mother?

KILION

Yes, please?

NAOMI

You two ate up the last of it. The best thing now will be to get to sleep so you don't feel hungry anymore.

Intro to LAY DOWN LITTLE
 WONDER begins.

MAHLON

I can't sleep when I'm hungry!

NAOMI

I'll sing you a song to get your minds off your stomachs.

KILION

That's for babies!

NAOMI

Oh it's not a lullaby. You two are much too grown up for that.

MAHLON and KILION lay down

NAOMI
(singing)

You are such a wonder, growing up so fast
Where did all the days go, little boys don't last
Elbows, knees and bare feet
Sticking out of bed
Now, come here and be sweet
I'll kiss you on your head.

Soon you will be grown up,
You'll have your own life
Some nice Hebrew girl will
Make a lovely wife
You will love her dearly
And you'll often say
You're a sweeter flower
Than ones that bloom in May

Holding my dear grandson
Little hands and toes
Smelling like the rosebuds
Grabbing for my nose
I will love them dearly
Lay them down to nap

For the greatest pleasure
Are babies in my lap
For the greatest pleasure
Are babies in my lap

NAOMI moves to the dining/living area, where the table is *not* set for Sabbath. She sits at the table.

ELIMELECH enters from outside, holding the bag of food from Boaz.

ELIMELECH

It is almost sunset, my bride.

NAOMI

It is indeed..

ELIMELECH

Shall I get out the Sabbath candles? And call the boys?

NAOMI

We have no Sabbath candles. The boys are in bed.

ELIMELECH

In bed? Well, I'll get them up. Then we can have our Sabbath-

NAOMI

We don't have a proper Sabbath meal to feed them! I can't bear to hear their stomachs growling while you read words about God's care and blessing!

ELIMELECH pulls out a loaf of bread from the bag and sets it in front of NAOMI.

NAOMI

Bread! Bread?

ELIMELECH

Bread, Naomi!

NAOMI

How?

ELIMELECH

Well, I heard that the border patrol was back in the area...so I thought that, ah, cousin Boaz might be back home—

NAOMI

Boaz.

ELIMELECH

He's doing very well in the military.

NAOMI

Hmm. I wonder how much *that* cost him.

ELIMELECH

No—Naomi, he is a good man, he's making it on his own merits...

NAOMI looks suspiciously at ELIMELECH, then the bread, then points the bread at him.

NAOMI

You didn't ask those people for help...

ELIMELECH

I went there to find out what's happening beyond our borders. And wait til you hear what—

NAOMI

(overlapping)

How can you accept anything from them? With the way they have snubbed us, and the things they have said about me!

ELIMELECH

Now will you listen? Yes, Boaz gave me the bread—and something better!

NAOMI

Better?

ELIMELECH

News that there is food in Moab! That's where the bread came from.

NAOMI

Stale bread from a pagan land! It probably has pig fat in it!

ELIMELECH

No, Naomi! It's good. And he had it wrapped in these.

ELIMELECH takes some folded leaves out of his bag and hands them to NAOMI. She unfolds the leaves, revealing figs

NAOMI

Fig leaves--and Figs!?

ELIMELECH

Yes! Figs, pomegranates, plump chickens—they have it all!

He dashes to a cupboard and rummages around.

ELIMELECH (Con't.)

Get the boys up! We're having a proper Sabbath supper tonight!

He pulls out 2 candleholders from the cupboard and sets them on the table.

NAOMI

I'm saving those candles for Passover!

ELIMELECH

We're celebrating Passover in Moab this year! With a feast and dozens of candles!

NAOMI
 What are you talking about?
 ELIMELECH
 We're at peace with Moab these days.
 NAOMI
 So?!
 ELIMELECH hesitates a moment,
 then takes a deep breath, draws
 himself up to his full height and
 plunges ahead.
 ELIMELECH
 I'm going to do business in Moab for a year to get us back on a firm financial footing!
 NAOMI
 So that's what this is all about! Leaving your wife and sons to work the fields--
 She throws the bread at him
 ELIMELECH
(As he ducks)
 No, no! Oh, not the bread, Naomi--
 NAOMI
 So you'll be sending so much money home that we can hire reapers?
 ELIMELECH
 Ah, no. Uncle Nemuel will do that.
 NAOMI
 Nemuel! You want me to have to deal with *him*?
 ELIMELECH
 You won't have to deal with him. You'll be with me!
 NAOMI
 With you!?
 ELIMELECH
 Yes!
 NAOMI
 In MOAB?
 ELIMELECH
 Yes--

NAOMI starts throwing fruit at ELIMELECH. He dodges the flying fruit as he responds.

ELIMELECH

This is good news, my Bride! We can be there in just a few days. Think of seeing our boys well fed and strong.

NAOMI

(Stopping in mid throw)

Oh—

MAHLON and KILION enter sleepily, rubbing their eyes.

KILION

What's going on?

ELIMELECH scoops up one of the boys in his arms.

ELIMELECH

I want to give our boys more than just...survival! I want to give them a heritage. Land that is theirs and family and- and- Naomi, this will be a new start for us! Think of that! Of God's blessings coming our way again!

Intro for PUT ON A SMILE begins.

NAOMI

God's blessings do NOT come out of Moab!

ELIMELECH

They already have!

He sets down his son and begins to sing to the boys, holding their hands and 'dancing' with them.

ELIMELECH

(singing)

Wrap up the candles take down the lights
We're going to pack for Moab tonight
Dust off your sandals, wash up your face.
We're going to move to a whole new place.

To NAOMI

So, PUT ON A SMILE and take off that frown.
Pack up the bags, let's get out of town.
Moab has got the chickens and figs.

We'll just ignore the idols and pigs

NAOMI
(singing)

Then one day soon when famine has past
We'll walk right back and come home at last.

ELIMELECH
(singing)

Don't say good-bye just don't make a sound
We're going to move to a whole new town

ELIMELECH AND BOYS
(singing)

So, PUT ON A SMILE and take off that frown.
Pack up the bags, let's get out of town.
Moab has got the chickens and figs.
We'll just ignore the idols and –

ELIMELECH takes NAOMI's hand
and she joins the dance.

All

PUT ON A SMILE and take off that frown.
Pack up the bags let's get out of town.
Moab has got the chickens and figs.
We'll just ignore the idols and --

ELIMELECH claps his hand over
his mouth and looks playfully at
NAOMI as MAHLON shouts...

MAHLON
(spoken)

PIGS!

Hugs all around after the song ends.

[Flashback ends]

Act I Scene 8 – Naomi’s Lament

Naomi’s house is stage left. The Moab house is minimally staged and dimly lit with blue light stage right.

NAOMI and MIRIAM are seated in front of NAOMI’s house as at the start of the flashback.

In a brief flash forward, Naomi describes her most painful memories to Miriam.

MIRIAM

Those are wonderful memories, Naomi.

NAOMI

If only I hadn’t listened to Elimelech—if only I had insisted on staying here—

MIRIAM

It is not your fault--

NAOMI

Elimelech got sick before we had made enough money to afford the trip back home. I think he held on as long as he did only to make sure I knew how to take over the business.

MIRIAM

And then the boys met Orpah and Ruth.

NAOMI

Yes. After their father died they got so headstrong. When we’d been gone almost 10 years I insisted we move home. I sent word that we were coming back, and we planned a farewell gathering.

MIRIAM

Do you think someone tampered with the food?

NAOMI

I don’t know – several of us got sick. My boys were always prone to illness. It hit them the hardest.

Intro to I CALL TO YOU begins.

NAOMI

My husband...my sons...

NAOMI slowly rises from the bench. As she sings she crosses to the Moab

house. Miriam continues to observe from the bench.

NAOMI
(Singing)

I call to you, Lord every day
I lift my hands upward to pray
Why do you hide your face from me?
Darkness is my close company.
I call to you, Lord every day,
I lift my hands upward to pray.
Why do you hide your face from me?
Darkness is my close company.

Three years ago, he grew so weak.
His smile was gone, he could not speak.
All in one day, living but gone.
Still we went on, dawn after dawn.

I call to you, Lord every day
I lift my hands upward to pray.
Why do you hide your face from me?
Darkness is my close company.
I call to you, Lord every day,
I lift my hands upward to pray.
Why do you hide your face from me?
Darkness is my close company.

'Something is wrong', that's all he
No other words, then he fell dead
Now I'm alone, all my men gone
Still I survive, still comes the dawn

I call to you, Lord every day,
I lift my hands upward to pray.
Why do you hide your face from me?
Darkness is my close company.
I call to you, Lord every day,
I lift my hands upward to pray.
Why do you hide your face from me?
Darkness is my close company.

Act I Scene 9 - Flashback Finish - Ruth's Commitment

NAOMI sits at the table in the Moab house, head in hands. MIRIAM continues to observe Naomi's past from the bench.

RUTH enters the Moab house.

RUTH

Mother Naomi? The caravan is getting ready to go. We need to finish packing.

NAOMI

It's been weeks; and no answers. What kind of mother leaves without seeing justice done for her sons?

RUTH

One who knows they'd want her to go home. Maybe we'll find answers there.

NAOMI

My daughter...I didn't want my sons to marry Moabite girls. Forgive me. I'm just sorry-

RUTH

That we couldn't give them children?

NAOMI

No, Ruth, I don't blame you for that. Maybe...maybe we *are* cursed for coming here. That's what they'll say back home.

RUTH

Not a curse for me.

NAOMI

I was so wrong about you girls. Now you are *my* only joy. You're all I have left, except a bit of land back home that I pray will feed me for the few years I have left in me.

RUTH

But the famine is over now. I'll help you work that land! And we can sew--

NAOMI

Ruth! My family—the whole town—hates anything or anyone who comes out of Moab. Moab was cruel to us in years past.

RUTH

That was ages ago—

NAOMI

Bethlehem remembers! You wouldn't even be safe.

RUTH

But Naomi—

NAOMI

Your sister in law was wise to return to her parents.

RUTH

I hope that works out for her.

NAOMI

Listen, my stubborn one--

RUTH

Your son told me that the God of Israel is a generous God!

NAOMI

Well--

RUTH

And that it is written in your laws that foreigners should be allowed to adopt your God as their own.

NAOMI

Well, yes...

RUTH

He said if God could love his family, He could love my family too.

NAOMI

He said that?

RUTH

That's why I want to come with you.

NAOMI

My Daughter, listen to me! You must return home. I am too old to start over. Even if I thought there was still hope for me--(*Changing to a sarcastic tone*) even if I had a husband this very night and carried a son in my womb--would you wait around for him?

RUTH

(*playfully*)

Maybe I would—

NAOMI

Ruth— going back to your people and your gods is the only security you're going to get.

Intro to WHEREVER YOU GO begins.

RUTH

Go back to that?! No! Mahlon – and you have been the only security I've felt in my life! Don't tell me to leave!

RUTH
(sings)

Wherever you go, I will go with you
Where ever you stay, I will stay there too
For your people will be my people
And your God, my God from today, today!

Where you die, I will die and there be buried with your people.
May the Lord deal with me be it ever so severely
Should anything but death keep us apart.
Where you go, I will go and there will live among your people.
May the Lord deal with me be it ever so severely
Should anything but death keep us apart.

I can see the questions forming on your brow
I don't know the answers, I don't know the hows
But, if God is faithful, just and right and true
Then I will go with you

(Duet)

Wherever you go (wherever you go)
I will go with you
Wherever you stay (wherever I stay)
I will stay with you

RUTH

For your people will be my people (people)
(Duet)

And your God my God from today
From today
Where you die, I will die
And there be buried with our people.
May the Lord deal with me,
May the Lord deal with me
Should anything but death keep us apart.

Curtain on Act One.

Act II Scene 1 – Ruth meets Boaz

Naomi's house stage left, a grain field fills the remaining stage.

As the curtain opens RUTH is walking along the edge of the field.

AHAZ, the field foreman, stands watching some field hands at work. RUTH approaches AHAZ.

RUTH

Sir, would you grant me permission to glean in your field?

AHAZ

Go back to Moab, pagan!

RUTH

(Standing her ground.)

I've heard that the God of Israel is a generous God.

AHAZ walks toward her threateningly, raising an arm to strike.

AHAZ

Maybe you didn't hear me—

RUTH

It is written that foreigners should be allowed to glean!

AHAZ

(beat) Who told you *that*?

RUTH

My moth—my *father* in law, Elimelech. *(beat)* Did you know Elimelech?

AHAZ

Yeah. I knew Elimelech. *(beat)* Stay in the back.

RUTH

May the daughter of Elimelech glean even among your harvesters - for his widow Naomi?

AHAZ

Well! For Naomi...you can try.

RUTH goes over among the workers and bends to pick up grain stalks.

A WORKER smacks her on the shoulder and points to the back of the field.

WORKER

In the back!

Intro to BLESS YOU begins.

RUTH

I have permission to be here!

WORKER strides over and grabs RUTH's wrist. RUTH yanks it away.

BOAZ enters

WORKER

Who'd give a filthy Moabite permission –

AHAZ
(Overlapping)

Back to work! Boaz is here!

The WORKERS get back to work. RUTH begins collecting loose stalks of grain.

BOAZ doesn't notice the "to do" in the field and begins to sing.

BOAZ (Sings)

People! The Lord be with you; Blessings on this day

CHORUS

Boaz! The Lord BLESS YOU in each and every way.

BOAZ

The singing birds have forecast a morning pure and bright
The harvest will be so vast; we may just work all night!

The WORKERS begin gathering and stacking sheaves. RUTH is excluded from this activity, and BOAZ notices her in her isolation from the others.
He sings his next lines to himself and the audience.

Something new, something blooming, some sweet element
Maybe I should start some grooming and improve my scent.

CHORUS

May the Lord bring blessings on you each and every day.

BOAZ stares at RUTH a few seconds more, then walks to AHAZ.

During the dialog to follow, the WORKERS gradually work their way stage left, gathering and stacking sheaves, then exiting. This leaves RUTH alone in the field by the time AHAZ and BOAZ are done talking together.

BOAZ

Ahaz--

AHAZ

I think you'll be pleased with the harvest, even though we have had more gleaners than usual.

AHAZ glances at RUTH

BOAZ suddenly realizes he is being addressed, but isn't interested in the report being given.

BOAZ

Ahaz, who is the young woman working toward the back there?

BOAZ

You said to let *any* gleaners in, so that is...one of them.

BOAZ

Yes, but do you know who it is?

AHAZ

Well, it's that Moabite that's living with Naomi.

BOAZ nods.

AHAZ (Con't.)

Boaz?

BOAZ

Oh, yes?

AHAZ

She *is* a hard worker. Maybe...you want me to hire her for the wheat harvest next month?

BOAZ

Yes. Good. Uh, Ahaz—

AHAZ

Yes?

BOAZ
 Could you, ah, in-introduce me?

AHAZ
 Me? Introduce *you*?

BOAZ
 Well, she, she may be shy—

AHAZ
 No, I would NOT say she's shy.

BOAZ
 Oh, I, I see.

AHAZ
 Uh-huh...so, shall we go do introductions?

BOAZ
 Yes, yes. Let's...

AHAZ walks over near RUTH then looks back—BOAZ has not moved.

BOAZ smooths his tunic, checks his hair (or headpiece) then walks stiffly over to them, keeping AHAZ between himself and RUTH.

AHAZ turns toward RUTH.

AHAZ
 (coughs)

RUTH's back is to them, she doesn't hear.

AHAZ (Con't.)
 Uh, girl—

RUTH stands and turns toward the men.

BOAZ
(In a stage whisper to AHAZ)
 Her name is Ruth!

AHAZ
 Ah, *Ruth*, this is Boaz. He owns the field.

BOAZ is frozen. RUTH looks guardedly at the men.

AHAZ (Con't.)
(To Boaz)
 I'll be heading to supper now—

He starts to walk away but BOAZ grabs his arm

AHAZ (Con't.)
 Yes?

BOAZ
 Ah...

RUTH
 Your foreman was kind enough to allow me to glean, Sir. Naomi and I appreciate it very much.
(beat) I'll be going now.

RUTH starts to walk away.

BOAZ
 Wait!

He lets go of AHAZ, who exits.

BOAZ (Con't.)
 Ah, Naomi's friend Miriam told me all you've done for your mother in law after the death of your husband.

RUTH
 Naomi has been a wonderful mother to me. I owe her much.

BOAZ
 Yes. I mean, no—ah I'm sure she has—

RUTH
 I'll go find another field now—

BOAZ
 No.

RUTH
 No?

BOAZ
 I-I mean—no need. There's plenty here.

RUTH
 Well—

BOAZ
 Just follow along after the harvesters.

RUTH

They might not like that, I am from Moab, you know.

BOAZ

I'll tell them not to bother you.

RUTH

Why would you—

BOAZ
(*Overlapping*)

May the Lord repay you for what you've done.

RUTH

Ah...

BOAZ bursts forth with his next lines, as with a prepared speech.

BOAZ

For Naomi! May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose cloak you have come to take refuge.

RUTH

Well, thank you.

BOAZ

Yes, well—I, ah, have to go check the morning's harvest before I eat...the others are already at supper.

He begins to back up.

BOAZ (Con't.)

You should too!

RUTH

Should what?

BOAZ

Eat!

He points in the direction the field workers exited.

BOAZ (Con't.)

Ah, with-with us!

He turns and begins to trot off, then stops and turns toward RUTH.

BOAZ (Con't.)

And I'll have the reapers leave some extra grain stalks for you this afternoon!

He turns and continues to exit at a trot.

Intro to HE LOOKED AT ME begins.

RUTH

(As she watches Boaz exit)

May I continue to find favor in your eyes-- my lord...

A soft spotlight comes up on RUTH as the rest of the scene goes dark. She sings...

He looked at me, as though I mattered.
 He looked at me like he cares
 Why have I been shown his kindness?
 I'm a stranger, and they stare.
 But, he looked at me and I know that he cares.
 What is this feeling?
 I think I've felt it once before
 He was revealing
 His eyes searched mine for more
 What do I have that I could give?
 I'm in his debt, he helps us live

A second soft spot comes up on BOAZ who is now standing on the opposite side of the stage. The stage is dark between them, as they are not singing to each other, but voicing their private thoughts.

RUTH (Singing)

He looked at me as though I mattered.
 He looked at me like he cares.
 Why have I been shown his kindness?
 I'm a stranger and they stare.
 But he looked at me and I know that he cares.

RUTH and BOAZ

(singing counterpoint duet)

He let me glean like his own servant	She was so lean and starving
He let me rest, gave me food	I thought it best
Then he told his workmen sternly	So I told my workmen sternly

To be nice and not be rude.
Then he let me know he liked my attitude

To be nice and not be rude.
Then I let her know I liked her attitude

RUTH

What is this feeling?
I think I've felt it once before.
He was revealing
His eyes searched mine for more
What do I have that I could give?
I'm in his debt, he helps us live.

RUTH and BOAZ

What is this feeling?
I think I've felt it once before
My heart is healing
His words soothe where I'm sore

What is this feeling?
I haven't felt this way before
My heart is reeling
She leaves me wanting more

RUTH

What do I have that I could share?
I'm in his debt, I'm in his care

He looks at me and now it matters
I see him look and I care
That he looks at me
He looks at me

RUTH and BOAZ

And I wonder if I dare
To pray for what together
We might share

I wonder if I dare
To pray for what together
We might share

Act II Scene 2 – Gleanings

Scene opens at Naomi's current house.
NAOMI and MIRIAM are in the same
positions and costumes as before the Moab
flashback.

NAOMI

Well, Miriam, you wasted a whole afternoon listening to this old woman rant about her sad past.

MIRIAM

It was time well spent! It needed to be told.

NAOMI

What I really need is to figure out what to do now.

NAOMI goes to the door and knocks.

There is no answer and she opens the door.

MIRIAM

Well I still think your kinsmen in Bethlehem need to--

NAOMI

(overlapping)

Oh Miriam- one of them is a scoundrel and the other thinks he's too good for us. Say, it looks like Nemuel at least got his renters out of my house!

NAOMI and MIRIAM enter the house.

MIRIAM

It's about time!

RUTH enters, carrying a large bundle, several gallons in size, followed by CALEB.

RUTH

Mother Naomi! You have a house again!

NAOMI

It appears we do!

RUTH

I'm sorry I'm late, I hope you didn't worry!

RUTH sets her bundle on the table.

NAOMI

You've been gleaned all this time?

MIRIAM

Your mother in law was telling me more about how wonderful you have been to her.

RUTH

I met your handsome son on the way home. He helped me carry my grain. Such a gentleman!

CALEB goes to his mother MIRIAM. She gives him a squeeze and smiles.

NAOMI
(*Eyeing the bundle*)

Well! All this!

RUTH

Oh, and this... my left overs from supper.

She indicates a smaller grain bag carried by CALEB. He holds it up then puts it on top of the large bundle.

NAOMI

That's left-overs??

RUTH

He kept offering me seconds and thirds, and I didn't want to seem ungrateful.

NAOMI and MIRIAM

He who?

RUTH

The owner of the field. He said you had spoken very well of me, Miriam; thank you.

CALEB

She worked in Mr. Boaz's field, Mama, right next to our field!

RUTH

Yes, and he was—quite civil. He even told his *workers* to be kind to me. (*Beat*)
That's unusual for a field owner, isn't it?

MIRIAM

Well, he *is* one of your kinsman redeemers!

RUTH

He is? He's what?

There is a somewhat 'pregnant' pause as this sinks in, then

MIRIAM

Well! I need to – ah – go to the well. Come along, Caleb.

CALEB

But we went this morning!

MIRIAM

We're going again!

MIRIAM looks at Naomi with a meaningful smile and exits with CALEB.

RUTH

Ah— And I can go back later – for the wheat harvest.

NAOMI

I see. Well, you will be safe there, I think. *(beat)* Yes, it will be good, my dear, for you to stay with his workers.

NEMUEL enters after a brief knock on the door. He bears a bag of grain much smaller than the bag Ruth brought home.

NEMUEL

Naomi? Ah you're home!

NAOMI

Well! Come right in. To what do we owe this...honor?

NEMUEL

I did tell you to expect a call from me.

NAOMI

Ah - yes. I'd forgotten in all the excitement.

NEMUEL

I just wanted to make sure you were provided for.

He notices the other bags of grain

NEMUEL (Con't.)

It looks like someone beat me to it...

NAOMI

Ruth gleaned in Boaz's field today.

NEMUEL

(To RUTH)

My, my. I am your Uncle Nemuel. Your husband's *closest* kin.

NAOMI

How is it I never heard from you in *Moab* after my sons died?

NEMUEL

I, well, I was told one of your daughter in law's families had taken you in. That was a very, ah, *stressful* time for me, you know, trying to salvage what was left of my trade business there—

NAOMI

Our trade business.

NEMUEL

Imagine my relief to find you back home—and with a lovely new addition to the family.

He eyes Ruth.

NAOMI

Ruth, could you go fetch us some water?

RUTH

Gladly. I could use a bath about now...

RUTH picks up a pitcher then exits.

NEMUEL

Dear Naomi, I have brought you a portion of my best grain as a welcome home gift as well as a pledge--

NAOMI

What was it you called it? Manna 2?

NEMUEL

I bring you my finest *wheat* as pledge of my kind intention to restore your property to your family as kinsman redeemer.

He sets his bag of grain on top
of the others

NAOMI

Really.

NEMUEL

Without a male heir your property is about to be lost to you forever.

NAOMI

What is behind this offer?

NEMUEL

Can the years not have changed me as well as you, Niece? I carry a burden of painful regret over what my help with Elimelech's plan has cost you.

NAOMI

Your help?

NAOMI becomes more agitated as she talks
and becomes physically aggressive.

NAOMI (Con't.)

Did you say *help*? You had Elimelech take over ALL your Moab work while you kept MOST of the profit!

NEMUEL

Our agreement stated--

NAOMI

(Overlapping)

And then kept pressuring him for more and *more* profits til his heart gave out from the strain!

NEMUEL

Perhaps this is not the best time to discuss your future.

NAOMI

And the evil, crooked business contacts you sent us—

NEMUEL

I think you mean paying customers!

NAOMI

I think they poisoned us!

NEMUEL

Naomi! How dare you suggest—

NAOMI picks up NEMUEL's bag of grain and shoves it against his chest as she speaks, pushing him out the door.

NAOMI

(Overlapping)

I *suggest*, Uncle that if you want our land, you'll have to consider all these things in your bid!!

NEMUEL

(As NAOMI shuts the door in his face)

NAOMI!

NEMUEL stands, seething, outside the door.

NEMUEL(Con't.)

Fine—no more pretending.

NEMUEL exits.

Act II Scene 2 - Love Grows

Several days later in NAOMI's house.

MIRIAM

I've seen Ruth in Boaz's fields every day since I last saw you.

NAOMI

Yes.

MIRIAM

He is the answer to your needs, Naomi!

NAOMI

Perhaps...

MIRIAM

Elimelech thought very highly of Boaz.

NAOMI

Elimilech also expected God to take care of us, and...his hand went against us. *(beat)* Nemuel came by after you left the other night. He offered to be our kinsman redeemer.

MIRIAM

Nemuel?

NAOMI

I...told him no.

Intro music to TIME TO LIVE begins.

MIRIAM

Good! But you've got to encourage Ruth and Boaz somehow.

NAOMI

I can't rush them.

MIRIAM

I think you're all wasting time!

NAOMI

Now, Miriam!

MIRIAM (singing)

A time to live, a time to die
A time to laugh, a time to cry
A time to mourn, a time to dance
Our time is planned by God, not chance

Lights come up on BOAZ's field,
opposite to Naomi's house.

Our time is planned by God, not chance

RUTH and BOAZ and other workers are there harvesting by hand. RUTH looks up and sees BOAZ looking at her. They smile and wave to each other.

WORKERS (singing)

The cry of birth, the cry of pain
Tears of joy and tears of shame
Winning love and grieving loss
Crucibles reveal the dross
Time bends quickly round the curves
Days go fast and nights a blur
The seasons of our lives are swift
Passing on like fading mist
Passing on like fading mist

Instruments continue. Lights dim briefly, then come up only on the field. The time is several weeks later. RUTH is in the field wildly swinging a scythe. BOAZ enters and briefly observes RUTH.

Pardon me—

BOAZ

RUTH continues to swing the scythe.

I'm working, Boaz!

RUTH

Yes, I see—but— If I could—ah--

BOAZ

RUTH stops and plants one fist on her hip, looking impatiently at him.
BOAZ steps tentatively toward her.

It's not going to get away. You don't have to subdue it.

BOAZ

It might rain.

RUTH

As BOAZ looks up at the sky RUTH hands the scythe to him. BOAZ jumps at its touch.

Show me. RUTH (Con't.)

All right. BOAZ

He demonstrates a controlled, golf- swing with the scythe.

It's all about the follow through. BOAZ (Con't.)

He leans the top of the handle toward RUTH.

Looks easy enough- RUTH

Instead of taking the handle she steps behind it with her back to BOAZ's chest. Then she takes the handle.
BOAZ has a 'deer in the headlights' look.

Like this? RUTH (Con't.)

Ah... BOAZ

RUTH does a practice swing. This helps BOAZ to recover.

Oh, yes, that's better...maybe one more. BOAZ (Con't.)

He puts his hands over hers and they swing together this time. Then their eyes meet. BOAZ straightens up.

Well! I think you've got it! BOAZ (Con't.)

I think so too. RUTH

BOAZ lays down the scythe. He and RUTH walk in among the other workers and sing and work side by side. NAOMI enters and stands near the field, observing.

COMPANY (singing)

A time to sow, a time to reap
 At time to grow, a time to keep
 A time to work, a time to rest
 Our time is planned by God and blessed
 Our time is planned by God and blessed

NAOMI (singing)

The loom on which our lives are kept
 The Weaver plans the warp and weft
 Threads of gold and threads of pain
 'Till a tapestry remains
 Lives pass quickly through the years
 The weeks flow by, the end soon nears
 The glory of our youth does pass
 Like flowers gone, like fading grass
 Like flowers gone, like fading grass

Lights briefly dim again between verses.
 (signifying the passage of more time. Some
 simple costume changes too.) The company
 sings and turns the next chorus into a fun
 “harvest dance”. NAOMI, BOAZ and
 RUTH join the dance.

COMPANY (singing)

A time to sow, a time to reap
 A time to grow, a time to keep
 A time to work, a time to rest
 A time for love to be expressed
 A time for love to be expressed

BOAZ and RUTH join hands and
 sing to each other as the COMPANY
 also sings the last chorus.

A time to live, a time to die
 A time to laugh, a time to cry
 A time to mourn, a time to dance
 Our time is planned by God not chance
 Our time is planned by God not chance

Everyone exits.

Act II Scene 3 - Nemuel's Plan

The threshing floor. A curved wall at the back with a shorter low wall inside that.

CALEB enters, chasing a cricket. He catches it and leans against the outside wall, seen by the audience but concealed from the threshing floor itself. He peers into his cupped hands at the bug. NEMUEL and DINAH approach the opposite side of the wall, not seeing him.

DINAH

Uncle Nemuel, I need to talk to you about my brother Boaz and that Moabite.

NEMUEL

Yes, she is an irritating complication--

DINAH

(overlapping)

You know she's only interested in his money.

NEMUEL

He is not really serious about the woman?!

DINAH

The *idea* of him putting that family's interests above his own!

NEMUEL

Well...

DINAH

You are the closer kinsman, Uncle. You could marry her and then say she displeased you - send her back to Moab. No one in Bethlehem would blame you.

NEMUEL

Hmm, I *had* decided against offering myself in that way for obvious reasons, but you bring up a good point.

DINAH

You won't have to keep her long.

NEMUEL

(As he 'helps' her head off stage)

I'm sure you're right.

Intro for FIRST CITIZEN begins.

DINAH

I could accuse her of stealing, if you like. She took my shawl the first time I met her!

NEMUEL

That's my girl.

He waves as she exits back the way she entered. They do not notice CALEB exiting in the opposite direction.

NEMUEL
(*Singing*)

I know what I want to do now
It's more simple than a marriage vow
I don't need her promised to me
I can sell her off in slavery
This blight from Moab has to go
She'll fight but no one has to know

I can be the man I always wanted to be
A man respected, such integrity
Then this gnawing hunger that is growing inside
Will be filled at last, filled at last
I will stand with pride, I will stand with pride

Once I bring her to the slaver
No one else around to save her
With that fertile soil in my hand
I'm the biggest owner in the land
I'm sure to be head elder then
Wealthiest man, first citizen.
Wealthiest man, first citizen.

The SLAVER enters

SLAVER

Nemuel--I don't have much time. You wanted to speak with me about a slave?

NEMUEL

Yes.

SLAVER

I've sold all my stock for this trip, you'll have to wait til—

NEMUEL
(*overlapping*)

Not for me, you idiot, I have one for you.

SLAVER

You're going into the slave trade now?

NEMUEL

Perhaps in time. Right now there's a troublesome foreigner trying to marry her way into an inheritance.

SLAVER

So where is she?

NEMUEL

I'll have her on the road at the edge of town at first light tomorrow morning.

SLAVER

You want me to commit without seeing the goods?

NEMUEL

Payment upon receipt. 60 shekels.

They walk off stage together
as they finish haggling.

SLAVER

Forty!

NEMUEL

60 is a bargain, as you'll agree when you see her.

SLAVER

50 and I'll keep quiet about you selling off your niece's daughter in law.

The SLAVER exits. NEMUEL glares at his back
then exits in the same direction.

MIRIAM and CALEB enter from the opposite
side. They each carry a sheaf of grain which they
drop on the floor during the following dialog.

CALEB

I think ol' Nemuel is too old to get married again.

MIRIAM

What makes you think he wants to get married?

CALEB

I heard Dinah say he was going to marry somebody and send her back to Moab.
Does she mean Ruth?

MIRIAM

What are you talking about?

CALEB

I heard Nemuel talking to Dinah.

MIRIAM
When was this?

CALEB
When I was here catching my cricket

MIRIAM
Did they know you were there?

CALEB
Nah, I was on the other side of the wall.

MIRIAM
Caleb, it's very naughty to listen to other people's conversations. Come with me.

She grabs Caleb's hand and strides quickly
off stage.

Act II Scene 4 -Naomi's Plan

In NAOMI's house.

NAOMI
The harvest feast is tonight. But somehow I don't feel like celebrating.

RUTH
I think it would do you some good—

There's a knock at the door, it opens a bit,
and Miriam pokes her head in.

MIRIAM
(To NAOMI)
I have to talk to you!

RUTH
Miriam! Just the thing to cheer us up.

MIRIAM
Oh, Ruth!

NAOMI
What is it?

MIRIAM enters with CALEB.

What? MIRIAM

You need to talk to me? NAOMI

Oh, well -- MIRIAM

I caught a cricket! CALEB
He holds up a small twig cage.

A cricket! Where'd you find it? RUTH

Near the threshing floor. CALEB

The threshing floor! MIRIAM
(*Pointing at RUTH*)

The threshing floor? NAOMI

Wanna see him up close? CALEB
Holds cage up to RUTH and opens it.

It's time to go to the thresh- MIRIAM

Careful! You don't want to lose him- OH! RUTH
(*Overlapping*)
Jumps back a bit - it has jumped out

There he goes! CALEB

Don't let him get away! RUTH

Don't let him get away! MIRIAM
(*to NAOMI with meaningful head nods*)

Who? NAOMI

RUTH and CALEB scramble around after the cricket

Boaz! MIRIAM
MIRIAM claps her hand over her mouth.

Got him! CALEB
He pounces on the cricket

What about Boaz? RUTH

Uh, that's the cricket's name. MIRIAM

No it's not! CALEB
(*indignantly*)

As he looks up to say this, the bug escapes again.

He went out the window! C'mon,! CALEB (Con't.)

CALEB heads to the door after the cricket. RUTH hesitates, looking suspiciously at MIRIAM and NAOMI.

What's going on? RUTH

Nothing. NAOMI and MIRIAM

CALEB tugs on RUTH's arm. They exit out the door.

What's going on? NAOMI

Nemuel is planning to marry Ruth just so he can deport her back to Moab! MIRIAM

What?! NAOMI

MIRIAM

Caleb overheard Nemuel and Dinah talking about it! After he married her he'd concoct some grievance and send her back to Moab! I thought you told him no!

NAOMI

I DID tell him no!

MIRIAM

Well he's hatching some kind of plan, and soon! Have you told Ruth about your idea?

NAOMI

Not yet.

MIRIAM

Naomi! It's now or never! Boaz has the threshing floor tonight!

NAOMI

Tonight?

MIRIAM

You've got to force his hand, Naomi—He'll take til Jubilee comes before he gets around to proposing on his own!

NAOMI

It's such a risk.

MIRIAM

You've seen how he looks at Ruth and talks to her. I don't think it's such a risk.

NAOMI

If she's seen going alone to the threshing floor –

MIRIAM

Just have her put on her good clothes—she'll look like she's headed to the harvest feast.

NAOMI

She could be accused of stealing, and—

MIRIAM

No, no-- the crowds will be an advantage!

NAOMI

Pray for us, Miriam.

MIRIAM

I'll pray all night!

RUTH and CALEB re-enter, triumphantly holding the cricket cage.

CALEB
Ruth caught my cricket!

RUTH
I had some practice with that when I was a girl.

MIRIAM
Well, we need to be going.

CALEB
See you tomorrow!

NAOMI
Bye bye.

MIRIAM AND CALEB exit

RUTH
What was that all about?

NAOMI
I was so selfish to let you come with back me. You've got so little chance here to have a home, let alone a heritage.

RUTH
Don't say such things! I would never leave you—

NAOMI
Well you need to!

RUTH
What?

NAOMI
I mean, I have some connections. Well, precious few. But I mean to try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for-

RUTH
We're doing fine now—

NAOMI
Boaz is a kinsman of ours.

RUTH
A kinsman redeemer, I'm told, but --

NAOMI
We could lose everything, Ruth. The land, this house, it's the law. (*beat*) I believe he would gladly fulfill his role as a kinsman redeemer to you, for us. But if he keeps dragging his feet, Uncle Nemuel plans to... concoct some reason to have you deported back to Moab!

RUTH

Oh! So he *was* up to something!

NAOMI

We need to move quickly, there might be more to his plotting. And tonight Boaz will be winnowing his grain on the threshing floor.

RUTH

Yes, so?

NAOMI

Go get cleaned up and put on your best clothes.

RUTH

What are you proposing--

NAOMI

No, not me—you.

RUTH

What?

NAOMI

I'm getting ahead of myself. Now- when you're ready, go down to the threshing floor and hide. Stay hidden while Boaz comes in to guard his grain for the night--

RUTH

What if someone sees me sneaking around?

NAOMI

Notice where he lays down so you can find him after the torches go out. There will be no moon tonight to help you see.

RUTH

You're serious--

NAOMI

I'm very serious! When he's asleep, go uncover his feet and lie down. The rest will be up to him.

RUTH

The rest?

NAOMI

It's a symbolic gesture—what I'm telling you to do. And a very old tradition with our people. When he wakes up, remind him that he *is* a kinsman redeemer, and ask him to cover you with part of his cloak. If he does, he's agreeing to protect you...to marry you.

RUTH

I see. And...if he doesn't...

NAOMI

It's a good plan, Ruth. Well, it's *a* plan. It's our best hope.

RUTH

Ah...well, let's see...in the middle of the night, I sneak in on our rich relative, pull the blanket off him, and propose. Is that all?

NAOMI

Yes, that's about it!

Intro for WHEREVER YOU GO
REPRISE begins

RUTH

All right, then!

NAOMI

God be with you. I'll pray through the night for you. For us.

RUTH sings

Where you go, I will go and there will live among your people.
May the Lord deal with me be it ever so severely
Should anything but death keep us apart.

NAOMI JOINS IN SINGING

May the Lord deal with me ever so severely
Should anything but death keep us apart.

Act 2 Scene 5 - The Threshing Floor

Late evening. The Threshing Floor.
There is a large pile of grain covered
with a blanket.

RUTH approaches stealthily, hesitates near the wall, looks around, and then hides herself between the low wall and the higher wall. BOAZ and AHAZ approach, singing, from the direction of the distant party.

BOAZ AND AHAZ
(singing)

And the ground will yield its crops
and the trees will yield their fruit
And the threshing will continue
til the harvest of the vine...
and you will eat your fill
and live in safety in the land!

Amen!

BOAZ

AHAZ
(Indicating the pile)

I see why you got first crack at the threshing floor!

BOAZ goes to the grain pile and throws off the blanket covering it.

RUTH can be seen by the audience trying to crouch smaller in her hiding place.

BOAZ

God has been good.

AHAZ

Indeed! This is a lot of grain to guard—I'll stay with you.

BOAZ

I think I'll be all right- but I would be glad for the company.

AHAZ

Got something- or *someone* on your mind?

BOAZ

Me? Oh, no, no.

AHAZ

(As he settles himself in his place)

No, eh? Well, I'll take the back door.

BOAZ

(laying himself near where he entered)

Ahh. It was a good night.

AHAZ

Even with the absence of a certain young field worker?

BOAZ

Hmm? Oh yes, ah no...*(yawns)* wine always makes me sleepy.

RUTH is now 'trapped' between the two men. RUTH slowly stands behind the wall and looks in consternation at the two men in their places. A cricket's chirp startles BOAZ and RUTH. RUTH drops back into hiding.

BOAZ

What? What was that?

AHAZ

(sleepily)

Cricket. Just a *(yawn)* cricket.

After 2 or 3 more tense seconds AHAZ begins to snore.

RUTH cautiously stands up again. She carefully picks her way around or over AHAZ. He briefly stirs but doesn't waken and RUTH steps out the back door. She walks a few steps then... a shrouded figure jumps up from behind a bush. (It's NAOMI)

NAOMI

(In a 'loud whisper')

Ruth?

RUTH

(Jumping back)

AAH!

Shhh!	NAOMI	
Naomi?	RUTH	
What happened?	NAOMI	
What are you doing here?	RUTH	
Why are you leaving so soon?	NAOMI	
Ahaz is in there!	RUTH	
Ahaz?!	NAOMI	
And your plan won't work anyway.	RUTH	
You haven't even tried yet—	NAOMI	
No- I heard them talking—	RUTH	
Don't pay attention to that male bluster. And I'll take care of Ahaz.	NAOMI	
How?	RUTH	
Just hide by the door.	NAOMI	
		NAOMI turns to face the main door.
Ahaz? Excuse me, is Ahaz here?	NAOMI	
		BOAZ wakes up.

BOAZ

Hello? Who's there?

NAOMI

Leah sent me to see if Ahaz was here—she ah, needs him.

BOAZ

Naomi? I didn't see you at the feast.

AHAZ wakes, gets up and walks over near BOAZ.

NAOMI

Oh, you know, I'm always late...

AHAZ

I'll say. The feast is over. Leah went home.

NAOMI

Yes! That's right—she needs you at *home*.

AHAZ

Three teenage sons and her mother in the house and she needs *me*?

NAOMI

Well, they, your sons, are ah--

AHAZ

They sent *you* to get me?

NAOMI

No, no—I just knew – well, ah, maybe I was --mistaken. Ahaz, could you accompany me back to the party? I mean home? I hate walking alone in the dark.

AHAZ

Oh, I can see that. Boaz, can you do without my keen ears tonight?

BOAZ

Keen ears, yes...I'll be fine. Thanks.

NAOMI and AHAZ exit, talking as they go.

BOAZ lays back down.

NAOMI

This was my first Harvest Feast since we left for Moab! Thank you so much, Ahaz, for walking me home.

Intro ARE YOU THERE Begins.

AHAZ

My pleasure, but how—

NAOMI

(Overlapping)

It's so good to see everyone again. You can't imagine...

A soft light comes up on RUTH as she leans against the wall near the door.

RUTH

Are you there?

RUTH

(singing)

Are you there or am I whispering in space
To a God who shows no image of his face
Do you know that I am full of many doubts
And I question how a God I cannot see
Can still care for me?

Then I look upon this man that's lying here
Is it better just to wonder what my life with him could be
Than to know for sure that he does not want me?
What a tragedy for her strategy

I could say it was a big mistake
Then he'd look at me when he's awake
But the truth will always rise and I can't tell lies
He would realize, see it in my eyes

Are you there?
Are you there?
Are you there?

RUTH hesitates, then goes directly to BOAZ, kneels down and uncovers his feet.

BOAZ

What? Who's there!

RUTH

It's me! I mean it's—Ruth.

BOAZ

Ruth?! Ruth? Oh-- Lord bless you! What –

RUTH

(overlapping)

Sir...spread the corner of your cloak over me since you are a...a kinsman redeemer.

BOAZ

I'm a kins...I'm- oh, yes, I am.

RUTH

Your kindness gave us hope...

BOAZ

My kindness? Ruth...your kindness to me is greater than you think.

RUTH

I don't know how I've been kind...

BOAZ

And I know that your love for Naomi is part of this.

RUTH

It's not like that, Boaz--not all like that....

BOAZ

It's all right. I would love to do for you all that you ask.

RUTH

You would?

BOAZ

Why are you so surprised?

RUTH

Well, it has certainly not come up before.

BOAZ

Any man would be lucky to have you...

RUTH

But?

BOAZ

Well, there is, a ah, complication.

RUTH

Nemuel.

BOAZ

(Overlapping)

Nemuel is a closer relative and—you know the kinsman redeemer law?

RUTH

He already talked to Naomi. But he only wants the land.

BOAZ

He has the stronger claim to the property, and to you, even if we were already—

RUTH

(beat) Betrothed?

BOAZ

That's how the law is written.

RUTH stands and prepares to leave

BOAZ

What are you doing? Wait!

RUTH

For what?

RUTH turns toward the exit.

BOAZ strides to her and takes her hand.

BOAZ

If we rush into a public engagement Nemuel could challenge it. His objection would stand up in our court.

RUTH

He intends accuse me of some crime so he can have me deported back to Moab.

BOAZ

No! I will talk with him--I promise, Ruth... I will find a way. I—I will.

RUTH

Is that all?

BOAZ

I'll need to talk to the elders before Nemuel gets to them. I think I can call his bluff. Stay here for the night.

RUTH

What?

BOAZ

I—I mean I don't want you seen outside at this hour by a night watchman

RUTH

I can handle the night watchman. I need to pack.

RUTH walks away. BOAZ grabs her.

BOAZ
 What do you mean pack?

RUTH
 If I go back to Moab it's going to be on *my* terms.
 She tries to turn away.

BOAZ
 You can't go back!

RUTH
 (*Angry*)
 There's a Moab *slave trader* in town – I can tag along with him!
 RUTH pulls away

BOAZ
 I can't let you go!

RUTH
 I don't know why not!
 BOAZ grabs her

RUTH
 Stop it!
 They struggle. RUTH kicks BOAZ.

BOAZ
 I love you!

RUTH
 Let me go! (*beat*) What did you say?
 RUTH stops struggling
 Intro for OUR ONLY NIGHT begins.
 BOAZ winces from the kick.

BOAZ
 I love you.

RUTH
 Oh...

BOAZ
 I don't know what will happen tomorrow. But I know I want to see your face while I know I can. Will you stay?

RUTH

I will stay.

They kneel down together.
BOAZ covers her legs with his cloak as he sings.

BOAZ
(singing)

Watching you work ceaselessly to care for Naomi
Never in my wildest dreams did I'd think you'd want me
So young, so strong, you should belong to someone half my age
Yet here you lie right by the side of this old battered sage

This may be our only night and I want to behold you
Let me have just one soft touch of your sweet tender face
For this may be our only night
This may be the only place
This may be the only time
I will touch your face, your face, your face

RUTH

Coming here to Bethlehem was harder than I thought.
We didn't carry much with us we'd eaten all we'd brought
I happened to start gleaning in a field of your by chance
But now I am believing God had caused the circumstance

BOAZ and RUTH (singing in duet)

This may be our only night and I want to behold you
Let's not let the morning light start shining till we say
May this not be our only night, may this not be the only day
May this not be the only place
I will touch your face, your face, your face

As the song ends, he is touching her face, drawing near. They kiss briefly; a rooster crows.

RUTH
(*Reluctantly pulls away*)

I should go before the sun can show my face.

BOAZ

Before you go—I want to give you something.

He pulls off a ring from a finger, takes her hand and puts it on her.

RUTH
(with a chuckle)

It's too big, Boaz--

There.

She moves it to a thumb

She holds up her thumb with the ring
and smiles at him.

BOAZ
I'll replace it with something better as soon as I square things with Nemuel.

He stands, goes to the grain pile
and motions her to follow.

BOAZ
And take some grain— here, hold out your shawl.

As she does, he scoops grain into the
shawl. He scoops while speaking and
also helps her arrange it so she can carry
it.

BOAZ (Con't.)
Take this back to Naomi - it will look like you are just out on a morning errand.

RUTH
Thank you, Boaz.

BOAZ
Don't tell *anyone* that you were at the threshing floor tonight.

RUTH nods. She exits. BOAZ gazes
after her retreating form then turns and
exits in the opposite direction.

Act 2 Scene 6 - Ruth Sold

Setting: dawn. On the road outside of town.
There is a bit of wall to one side, indicating
the edge of town, with some shrubbery near.

NAOMI enters looking about anxiously as
she hurries across the stage.

RUTH enters from the opposite side, with
her shawl full of grain that Boaz just gave
her. NAOMI throws out her arms in a
relieved welcome. They talk far enough

away from the wall to be ‘out of earshot’ of anyone hiding behind the wall.

NAOMI

(Out of breath)

Ruth! What happened? How did it go?

RUTH shows NAOMI her load of grain and sets it down.

NAOMI (Con’t.)

And what is this?

RUTH

It’s a gift from Boaz to you!

NAOMI

Ohhh... so...

RUTH

(guardedly)

He wants to marry me.

NAOMI

Praise God! What’s the matter?

RUTH

He insists on talking with Nemuel and the elders. He thinks Nemuel could block our marriage.

NAOMI

Oh, Nemuel...

RUTH

What if he is actually set on being the kinsman redeemer?

NAOMI

I don’t think he could force the marriage to go through. He must have some other scheme in mind.

RUTH

You’d have enough to live on for yourself if you just sold the land and I went back to Moab.

NAOMI

Ruth—we have a chance at keeping our family’s legacy alive – our descendants, and our land. You’re part of this family now. And I want to keep it that way.

NAOMI puts a hand on RUTH’s cheek.

NAOMI (Con’t.)

Boaz will work it out. He is a good man. Now let’s go home so I can make us a celebration meal!

RUTH

You go on ahead; this load will slow me up.

NAOMI

I'd kill the fattened calf, if I had one!

NAOMI exits.

RUTH picks up her load and follows. When she reaches the far edge of the wall,

NEMUEL, with his SLAVE, steps out from behind it.

NEMUEL

It's a bit early for gleaning, isn't it?

RUTH is startled-she stops.

NEMUEL (Con't.)

I saw you go out last night... What *have* you been doing all this time?

RUTH

Just picking up an order of grain for Naomi.

She begins to walk past.

NEMUEL

He grabs her arm.

You mean stealing grain?

RUTH

(As she tries to pull away)

No! I'm not a thief! Let me go!

She kicks him, drops her load and runs. NEMUEL yelps, hobbles around as he yells to his SLAVE.

NEMUEL

Get her!

The SLAVER enters (opposite of where the struggle is taking place)

NEMUEL (Con't.)

If you don't, you'll be living with the livestock for a month!

RUTH and the SLAVE disappear off stage—we hear sounds of a struggle, mostly yells of pain by the SLAVE.

NEMUEL nurses his leg and looks off stage, yelling instructions.

NEMUEL

Grab her hair!

SLAVER
(amused)

Looks like you have things well in hand.

NEMUEL
(To the SLAVER)

Perhaps you could lend a hand!

NEMUEL (Con't.)
(To his SLAVE)

Keep your guard up, man!

RUTH and the SLAVE reappear, struggling together, onstage.

The SLAVER trots over and loops a rope around RUTH'S neck. He snugs it up just enough that she has to settle down somewhat.

SLAVER

I'll deduct capture fees from my purchase price.

RUTH

What do you think you're doing?

The SLAVE and NEMUEL hold her secure while the SLAVER works at tying her hands behind her.

NEMUEL

Really, my dear—what kind of a question is that, coming from a Moabite, idol worshipping sponge on our town!

She breaks an arm free and tries to hit NEMUEL, but he catches her wrist, and sees the ring. He pulls it off of her thumb and gives her wrist back to the SLAVER. NEMUEL holds up the ring and looks at it, then puts it on his own finger.

NEMUEL

And a jewel thief as well—you're making this too easy for me.

RUTH

You wicked, greedy old miser, Boaz—

Her line is cut off by NEMUEL tying a gag on her.

SLAVER

That ring should be part of my deal, if it's on her.

NEMUEL

She probably stole the ring off of my drunken nephew- along with that sack of grain. It belongs to me.

RUTH struggles and tries to protest through the gag.

The SLAVER ties a rope around RUTH's waist and his own with some slack between them.

NEMUEL (CON'T.)

(Patting RUTH's cheek)

Now, now. I hate having to do anything to mar your best selling point!

RUTH jerks her head away NEMUEL eyes her frame.

Well, one of your best.

The SLAVER produces a money bag and hands it to NEMUEL who opens it up to inspect it.

SLAVER

And you say I can look forward to doing more business here?

NEMUEL

It will be lucrative for both of us.

NEMUEL (Con't.)

(To his slave)

Bring the grain.

The SLAVER pulls on RUTH's neck rope.

SLAVER

Let's go. And no struggles, all right? I've got a knife.

He shows her the knife.

They exit, The SLAVER leading RUTH, heading away from town.

The SLAVE looks apologetically at RUTH, then follows NEMUEL off stage toward town, carrying the bundle of grain.

Act 2 Scene 7 - The City Gate

Still morning, at the town gate; a stone wall with a wide opening. There are stone benches to one side.

NEMUEL stands, looking about, obviously waiting for someone.

DAN enters followed by Nemuel's SLAVE.

DAN

Nemuel! What have you got going that requires a meeting at this hour?

NEMUEL

Just a simple family business deal that doesn't require the whole elder council to work out.

DAN

Will we need to include Boaz in-

NEMUEL
(overlapping)

He's too busy handling his own business affairs.

DAN

I see.

NEMUEL

He holds up Elimelech's sandal.

This needn't take long. I have a promissory note that has come due. I believe the payment needs to be witnessed by an elder – to protect the debtor, of course.

DAN

(suspicious)

Of course. What debtor are you seeking to....protect?

NEMUEL

Elimelech signed his land over to me 10 years ago, if the substantial loan I gave him for his Moab venture was not repaid in that time.

DAN

(With sadness)

I remember his hopes of coming back prosperous within a couple of years.

NEMUEL

Hmmph!

DAN

Surely the profits you gained by working his land all that time would cover this loan?

NEMUEL

Profits! The harvests barely covered the costs of managing it. And it's obvious that Naomi can't deal with it, in her depression and her attachment to that Moabite woman.

DAN

I've been expecting Naomi to put the land up for sale since they have no heir. She has to eat, you know.

NEMUEL

I'll see that Naomi is fed.

DAN

Of course, a kinsman redeemer such as yourself could arrange it so Elimelech's family name could continue, *and* provide for Naomi. But that wouldn't add to your estate, would it?

NEMUEL

Well, I can't be expected to marry a woman that Elimelech never would have agreed to as a match for his son.

DAN

And I'm sure the other elders will agree that Naomi has at least this last day to try to sell her property before this loan can be called.

NEMUEL

No one is interested in that land.

DAN

In any case, there will need to be another witness to the transaction.

NEMUEL

Fine. I'll meet you back here later to close the deal. Agreed?

DAN

At the close of the business day.

NEMUEL heads back through the gate, as
BOAZ is seen coming from the other
direction toward the gate

DAN

Boaz! I was hoping to see you...

BOAZ

Dan! I'm having a very important meeting here first thing this morning. Can you stay?

DAN

Of course—and I need to ask--

BOAZ

As AHAZ enters

AHAZ! Urgent meeting! Dan will fill you in.

BOAZ gestures to the benches. AHAZ looks
ad DAN, who shrugs. They sit.

While the above action is happening
NEMUEL, his SLAVE and RAPHU enter.

BOAZ

Nemuel, my kinsman, come and sit down, I have some important business to discuss!
Raphu--can you also stay?

NEMUEL eyes the assembled
Elders.

RAPHU sits with DAN and AHAZ.

NEMUEL

This is a bad time--

BOAZ Gestures to a nearby bench

BOAZ

(Overlapping)

A financial opportunity, Uncle!.

BOAZ (Con't.)

(To the seated elders)

Friends! You make our meeting complete.

NEMUEL motions for his SLAVE to go stand behind the group. NEMUEL then sits down, looking very guarded

BOAZ (Con't.)

Fellow elders, you honor me with your presence and the favor of witnessing my business proposition with my kinsman, Nemuel. As you know, Naomi needs to sell the piece of land that belonged to my kinsman Elimelech.

DAN

The widow of our beloved neighbor!

BOAZ

Yes!

DAN

I imagine this property would bring enough money for Naomi to pay any outstanding debts, and still have enough to live on?

BOAZ

Yes, this is land with great potential for future harvests. You in particular, Uncle, should know this, having worked that field for so long. So I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that *you* buy it.

NEMUEL

Buy it?

BOAZ

If you will redeem it, tell me, for you have the right to first chance at it, and I am next in line.

NEMUEL

Nephew, your continuing grief over the loss of your dear cousin Elimelech is clouding your business sense. That piece of ground is practically worthless—

DAN

My friend—Boaz *has* offered to buy it if you are not interested.

NEMUEL glares at BOAZ, then DAN

NEMUEL

(*defiantly*)

Fine. I *will* redeem it - *if* it's not too overinflated in price.

BOAZ

As I expected, Nemuel. You are an astute businessman. And a compassionate one, for of *course* on the day you buy the land from Naomi – *and* from Ruth the *Moabitess*, you acquire Ruth, your grand nephew’s widow, as kinsman redeemer, so that Elimelech’s name will continue with *his* property.

NEMUEL

So MY hard work and MY seed should promote Elimelech’s forgettable legacy.

BOAZ

His heirs through your union would bless you for your generosity to them!

NEMUEL

But I mustn’t jeopardize my leadership in the community by marrying a Moabite- our law prohibits such a union!

AHAZ

Not if the woman has forsaken her idolatry and worships the God of Israel. Which I understand to be the case?

DAN

And what leadership position were you worried about jeopardizing?

NEMUEL

As, ah, holder of the most land Bethlehem, it would be my *responsibility* to serve on the elder council

AHAZ

Such a generous act would recommend you for service on the elder council even without full ownership of the land.

All eyes turn to NEMUEL
NEMUEL looks unsmilingly at BOAZ, and
clears his throat. He glances around, looking
for any supportive faces but sees none.

NEMUEL

Yes, though ... I’m afraid my own estate would suffer if I were to take on this added responsibility. But Nephew, I think you should, ah, proceed very carefully.

NEMUEL (Cont.)

(In a confidential tone, directed to Boaz)

She’ll probably bolt for Moab at her first opportunity with as much of your treasure as she can carry. She may have already left—

BOAZ is scrutinizing NEMUEL as he
speaks.

NEMUEL decides he may be saying too much, and looks challengingly at BOAZ, having no clue that what he's about to say is just what BOAZ wants.

NEMUEL (Con't.)

Suit yourself.

He removes a sandal and holds it toward BOAZ.

You redeem it!

To NEMUEL's surprise, BOAZ quickly takes the sandal and holds it aloft.

BOAZ

I am in your debt, uncle, for granting me this opportunity!

Then, to the whole group, and onlookers who have assembled

BOAZ (Con't.)

Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon.

Assembled Elders applaud.

BOAZ (Con't.)

I have also acquired Ruth, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain his name with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today, you are witnesses!

DAN, AHAZ and a few other ELDERS

We are witnesses!

Simultaneously, NEMUEL stands and starts to hurry out, but BOAZ steps over and takes his hand to thank him.

NAOMI enters in a hurry, out of breath

BOAZ

Thank you, uncle--

BOAZ notices the ring.

NAOMI

Boaz!

BOAZ

What's wrong?

NAOMI

I can't find Ruth anywhere! I talked to her early this morning at the edge of town—she had the grain—she never got home—I've looked everywhere!

BOAZ

Uncle Nemuel, where did you get this ring?

NEMUEL

Ring?

He looks at his hand

Oh – I *found* it outside of town-- along with a shawl—I hope no one has been caught by wild beasts--

BOAZ

That's very interesting, because I gave *this* ring to Ruth just last night.

NEMUEL

No! Nephew, I'm so sorry- the shawl had blood on it—

AHAZ

You should have told us!

BOAZ

BOAZ grabs NEMUEL

Show me!

NAOMI

Where is the shawl?

NEMUEL

At my home.

NEMUEL'S SLAVE looks very nervous and fidgety – he starts to edge away from NEMUEL.

BOAZ

(*To NAOMI*)

You get the shawl-- Nemuel will take me to where he found it!

NEMUEL

My slave can take you! I'll get the shawl.

BOAZ

That shawl was full of grain for Naomi and Ruth when I sent her home from the threshing floor.

NEMUEL hesitates a moment then breaks free from BOAZ and bolts.

Get him!

BOAZ

DAN and AHAZ take off after NEMUEL.

BOAZ dashes to NEMUEL'S SLAVE, who is just beginning to take off in the opposite direction. BOAZ grabs his arm.

NAOMI joins them.

I'd like a word with you—

BOAZ

SLAVE

Sir, please, I just obeyed my master! Please, sir—

NAOMI

What did your master have you do?

NEMUEL, closely followed by DAN and AHAZ, come running through from stage left. They nearly catch him.

SLAVE

I...helped him catch her and tie her for the slave trader.

NEMUEL, DAN and AHAZ re-enter from stage right, and NEMUEL is caught.

BOAZ
(To NEMUEL)

Where is she?

NEMUEL

She's long gone, Boaz. Good night, I'll give you half of what I got for her—

BOAZ lunges at him. NEMUEL collapses in a heap, yelling.

Don't hurt an old man! I'm your uncle—

BOAZ hauls NEMUEL to his feet-

NEMUEL (Con't.)

Such carrying on over a Moabite —

NAOMI
 Her line and BOAZ's next line are spoken together
 Nemuel!
 BOAZ
 WHERE IS SHE?!!
 BOAZ takes NEMUEL'S arm.
 NEMUEL Pulls his arm free. His SLAVE walks toward stage left, looks at BOAZ and gestures stage left –that he can show them the way.
 BOAZ
 This way!
 BOAZ grabs NEMUEL again and the whole group runs off stage left.

Act II Scene 8 - From Manacles to Marriage

On the road out of town.
 RUTH and the SLAVER are sitting on rocks stage left. She no longer has the gag, but her wrists are still tied behind her and she is still linked to the SLAVER with a rope from her waist to his. The end of the rope around her neck lies loose on the ground nearby.

The SLAVER drinks from a water bag that is slung over his shoulder by a strap or rope.

RUTH
 I need water – I won't be able to go on without water.

The SLAVER stands and stretches, his back to RUTH.

SLAVER

Now, you don't want me to put the gag back on, do you?

RUTH stands and jumps back so the rope that ties them together pulls him off balance and he falls. She keeps moving and jerking away from him so he can't get his feet back under him. She also wiggles her wrists to try to free them.

SLAVER

Augh! You'll be sorry-- Ow! Nobody can- OW- hear you out here—

RUTH

Yelled over the SLAVER's previous line.

Help! Somebody help!

RUTH frees her wrists, still keeping the SLAVER off balance. She picks up a rock and smacks him on the head with it. The SLAVER is out cold. (He falls with his face toward the audience).

RUTH pokes him to see if he's faking. She unties herself and looks around. She carefully approaches the SLAVER and reaches for the water bag. As she does this his eyes open wide. As RUTH picks up the water bag the SLAVER grabs her wrist. She tries to pull away but the SLAVER pulls out his knife. RUTH stops.

A MERCHANT enters. He has a slave bound by a rope with him. They approach RUTH and the SLAVER.

SLAVER

You are getting to be more trouble than you're worth.

MERCHANT

What's going on here?

RUTH

He's a kidnapper!

SLAVER

(putting away his knife)

I'm a merchant and I have a receipt for this slave. She's for sale too, still very fresh.

RUTH wrenches free and bolts.
The MERCHANT chases and quickly catches her.

SLAVER (Con't.)

Lots of spirit! 70 shekels.

MERCHANT

Looks like trouble. I'll give you 40

The MERCHANT re-ties RUTH's hands and connects the rope to their other slave.

RUTH

(Spoken over the SLAVER and MERCHANT haggling and payment being made)

I was kidnapped! In Bethlehem – by Nemuel. He wants me out of the way so he can get my husband's land! I was betrothed – I have a ring! Had a ring – Nemuel took it--

MERCHANT

I'll give you fifty.

SLAVER

Fifty-five.

MERCHANT

Done.

SLAVER

You might want to use a gag on her.

MERCHANT pays the SLAVER.

BOAZ and AHAZ enter at a jog.

BOAZ

(Running to Ruth)

RUTH!

RUTH

Boaz?

BOAZ begins to untie RUTH.
MERCHANT 1 tries to stop him.

MERCHANT

Hands off unless you're buying!

BOAZ

(In unison with RUTH)

She's not a slave!

RUTH

(In unison with BOAZ)

I'm not a slave!

BOAZ

She was kidnapped and sold under false pretenses!

MERCHANT

That's not my problem!

DAN, MEHU and NEMUEL enter.
AHAZ joins the struggle over RUTH.

SLAVER

(To NEMUEL)

You! You owe me restitution!

NEMUEL

Ha!

RUTH

He's the kidnapper!

BOAZ

Wait—

BOAZ walks toward the SLAVER.

SLAVER

I want my money back, Nemuel!

BOAZ grabs the money bag that
MERCHANT had given the SLAVER and
tosses it at MERCHANT .

SLAVER (Con't.)

Hey!

The SLAVER lunges at NEMUEL.

Give me my money!

SLAVER (Con't.)

SLAVER and NEMUEL struggle briefly. SLAVER gets NEMUEL's money bag.

You've ruined my business!

SLAVER (Con't.)

RAPHU and DAN separate NEMUEL and the SLAVER. BOAZ finishes freeing RUTH.

BOAZ

Bethlehem's done with your kind of business! You three clear out of here!

NEMUEL

This is madness!

RUTH

(Pointing to the slave she was bound to)

Boaz, there's someone else who wants to go home.

BOAZ takes out a small money pouch and tosses it at MERCHANT .

BOAZ

We'll take this one too.

DAN takes the slave from MERCHANT and unties him.
The SLAVER and MERCHANT exit.

NAOMI enters, out of breath. She runs to RUTH and embraces her.

NAOMI

My daughter! Oh thank the Lord!

RUTH

Mother!

BOAZ motions for the newly freed SLAVE and NEMUEL's SLAVE to come to him.

BOAZ
(to Nemuel's slave)

I'll pay my uncle for you later.

BOAZ turns to NEMUEL.

BOAZ (Con't)
(To Nemuel)

Before you protest, I suggest you return to me any items that do not belong to you.

BOAZ extends his hand. NEMUEL stares at the hand a moment before remembering the ring.

NEMUEL

Oh.

He removes the ring and hands it to Boaz.

BOAZ

You can bring back the shawl full of grain to me at the city gate.

NAOMI

See that you do not tear Ruth's shawl!

NEMUEL stalks off stage toward town accompanied by DAN. NEMUEL stops and looks resentfully at DAN.

NEMUEL

Am I under arrest?

DAN

Not yet.

DAN grasps NEMUEL's arm and gestures forward. They exit.

BOAZ

He turns to the SLAVE

You can go home now.

SLAVE

Your home, sir?

BOAZ

I don't have any use for slaves. I'll get you on the next caravan heading to your town.

SLAVE

Yes, sir!

RUTH
 What about this slave?
 BOAZ takes RUTH's hand and puts the ring
 back on her while saying—
 BOAZ
 As I said, I have no use for slaves.
 They kiss.
 BOAZ and RUTH and the others in the
 rescue party walk toward the city gate.
 The elders from the meeting are still
 standing at the meeting place. They exclaim
 and crowd around the rescue party.
 AHAZ
 Our blessings to you were rudely interrupted!
 BOAZ
 Indeed, they were!
 DAN and NEMUEL re-enter with the
 bundle of grain. NEMUEL takes it to
 BOAZ and holds it out to him.
 BOAZ
 Not mine!
 He points to NAOMI, and NEMUEL goes to
 her.
 NAOMI
 Take it to my house.
 AHAZ
 Nemuel! You'll want to be at the next elder meeting!
 DAN
 Yes, we'd like to look closely at ALL your business dealings in Bethlehem.
 NEMUEL drops the grain and bolts off
 stage, chased by DAN.
 The Intro to THE LORD BLESS YOU
 REPRISE begins. BOAZ takes RUTH's
 hands and faces her.
 BOAZ
 See! The winter is past—the rains are over and gone—

RUTH

--And the season of singing has come!

AHAZ

May the Lord bless your household!

MIRIAM

May the Lord make Ruth be as Rachel and Leah who together built up the house of Israel!

AHAZ

May you be famous in Bethlehem!

MIRIAM

(To NAOMI and RUTH)

Praise be to the Lord, who has not left you without a kinsman redeemer!

May he become famous throughout Israel!

BOAZ

(sings)

Elders! Be witnesses of what you see today

ELDERS

Boaz! The Lord bless you in each and every way

During the next lines of the song, NAOMI and RAPHU put wedding finery on the couple as the ELDERS sing, in view of the audience. Then NAOMI joins the couple's hands and they stand facing each other.

ELDERS

A Kinsman can be evil and full of plots and schemes
I'd rather be a Kinsman who honors and redeems

May the Lord make this woman
Coming to your house
Fruitful just as Tamar was
And loving as your spouse
May the Lord bring blessings on you each and every day.

The music transitions to a reprise of TIME
TO LIVE.

CHORUS

A time to live, a time to die
A time to laugh, a time to cry

A time to mourn, a time to dance
 Our time is planned by God, not chance
 Our time is planned by God, not chance

During the next stanza, lights dim and perhaps some swirling light effects and other scene changes signify the passage of time. NAOMI, BOAZ and RUTH exit.

The cry of birth, the cry of pain
 Tears of joy and tears of shame
 Winning love and grieving loss
 Crucibles reveal the dross
 Time bends quickly round the curves
 Days go fast and nights a blur
 The seasons of our lives are swift
 Passing on like fading mist
 Passing on like fading mist

NAOMI, BOAZ and RUTH re-enter during the next stanza. They are back in 'every day' clothes, and BOAZ carries a baby. He tenderly hands the baby to NAOMI, then he and RUTH join in the choreography. MIRIAM comes over and hugs NAOMI and admires the baby.

COMPANY (singing and dancing)

A time to sow, a time to reap
 A time to grow, a time to keep
 A time to work, a time to rest
 A time for love to be expressed
 A time for love to be expressed

A time to live, a time to die
 A time to laugh, a time to cry
 A time to mourn, a time to dance
 Our time is planned by God not chance
 Our time is planned by God not chance

During the final lines of the song, BOAZ and RUTH rejoin NAOMI and tenderly touch their son, then kiss each other while the townspeople cheer.

Curtain