

SAMPLE SCENES

Act One

Scene 1: Video of wedding

Scene 2: Scene after wedding

Ruth, Mahlon, Naomi, Kilion, Orpah

Scene 3: Deaths of Mahlon & Kilion – music, stage & video

Ruth, Orpah, Naomi

Scene 4: Decision to return to Bethlehem

Ruth, Orpah, Naomi

Scene 5: Conversation about the women

2 women of Moab

Scene 6: On the journey - Ruth follows Naomi

Ruth, Orpah, Naomi

Scene 7: Journey Music

Scene 8: Arrival back in Bethlehem

Naomi, Ruth & 6 voices

Scene 9: Back to the house

Naomi & Ruth

Scene 10: Continued discussion

3 voices

Scene 11: Back to the house

Naomi & Ruth

Scene 12: In the Fields

Four workers & Ruth

Scene 13: Boaz returns

Boaz, foreman, workers & Ruth

Scene 1 - *Video of wedding*

In Bethlehem
in the time of the Judges
there lived the
family of Elimelech.

When the might
of famine struck,
Elimelech took his family
from their home
to the land of Moab.

There they found
the sadness of death
and happiness of love.

Scene 2 – Scene after Wedding

The sound of the party is heard as a door opens, and a shaft of light spills across the stage, and Mahlon and Ruth come out into the night air. They are flushed from the dancing and they obviously delight in one another. Mahlon is walking backwards, dragging an unwilling Ruth behind him.

Mahlon: Three hours married, and you're already disobeying me.

Ruth: It's cold and dark and I'm missing the dancing.

Mahlon: You'd rather spend the whole evening with everyone in there than with me. What sort of start to our married life's that?

Ruth: Mahlon! Tomorrow the party'll be over, and the people'll be gone, but I'm going to be married to you for the rest of my life.

Mahlon: Hmm. I like the sound of that.

Ruth: Good. *(She kisses him)* Now, husband dearest *(she kisses him again)* can we get back inside? *She turns to go back in and Mahlon grabs her arm. They are both laughing.*

Mahlon: No!

Ruth: Honestly, if I'd known how stubborn you were, I'd never have married you

Mahlon: And if I'd known what a defiant wench I was taking on, I would have had second thoughts

Ruth: Well, we were warned

(They say together)

Mahlon: That's what you'll get marrying a Moabite

Ruth: That's what you'll get marrying an Israelite

They laugh

Mahlon: You just promised, before our family and our God, to obey me.

Ruth: Yes, but surely it must say somewhere in all your rules, that a wife must defy the cruelty of her husband

Mahlon: Cruelty? I just wanted to steal a few moments alone with you

Ruth: Aha! "Thou shalt not steal" - number eight. I know that much. Ten rules for living, number eight *(she prods him)* Thou. . .shalt . . .not. . . steal.

Mahlon: Oh, my mother'll be giving you a gold star - teacher's pet!

Ruth: Well, I was told - to get to a Hebrew boy you've got to first win over his Hebrew mother.

Mahlon: You've done that all right. She's gone from doubting you'd ever be good enough to "That girl will be the making of you." I think she'd have liked to have married you herself.

Ruth: Oi! Just you remember rule number five please, - honour your mother and your *(she stops short before finishing quietly)* and your father.

Pause. Mahlon looks rueful.

Ruth: I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking.

Mahlon: Oh, you'd have liked him Ruth. So much.

Ruth: I know. He was a good man. I'd hardly chance to meet him, but I could tell that.

Mahlon: Yes. He was.

Ruth: Tell me about him.

Mahlon: No. . .you know it already, and you want to get back inside.

Ruth: Who's told you that?! *(She leads him gently across to the hay bales and they sit down, he on a bale and she at his feet)* There's nothing more that I'd like to do right now. Besides, I'd better check out this name that I've taken on.

Mahlon: The name of Elimelech is spoken of highly in Bethlehem, Ruth. There's no doubt of that. *(Pause)* Well, it was before we left.

Ruth: And not now?

Mahlon: They won't know of father's death. And if they did they'd be sorry. But many thought us moving was wrong. Especially to this of all places.

Ruth: But the warring between Moab and Israel's long gone. They've so many other enemies at the moment, you'd think our feuds would be as dead and gone as the people involved.

Mahlon: You've married into a nation with long memories, Ruth. Especially for pain.

Ruth: So it was frowned upon, you coming here?

Mahlon: Outwardly by some. With more behind closed doors, I would think. Some were jealous, that we were doing what their loyalty stopped them from doing.

Ruth: Loyalty to what though?

Mahlon: To the place of God.

Ruth: But I don't understand that. I thought your God was everywhere, isn't that what Abraham learned? Isn't that what your mother's stories told me?

Mahlon: Everywhere's special. But some places are more special than others - that's what we Israelites really think. And it wasn't just that. We left our land, our inheritance, our roots.

Ruth: Do you think your father was wrong then? To move? Bring you all here?

Mahlon: Whatever my father did, he did out of love. He just wanted his family to survive the famine.

Ruth: But you've said yourself, others questioned, others stayed.

Mahlon: I don't think everything he did was wise, you know, but I think: it was born out of love. And I'd rather be known as a loving man, than a wise one.

They sit in silence for a time

Ruth: So you don't regret it then. Marrying here?

Mahlon: *(He smiles)* What a question to ask me today of all days. .

Ruth: I still can't quite believe you chose me

Mahlon: Oh Ruth, how could I have resisted? The sweetest mouth I'd ever want to kiss. . . the hand to hold to give me strength. . . . the heart that's purer than any I've known. . . .and the best child-bearing hips in the country

Ruth: I don't believe you sometimes!

Ruth jumps up and they struggle together. Kilion and Orpah come

Kilion: Hey, you two! Not a domestic already.

Orpah: At least we lasted our wedding day before the fighting started!

Kilion: Don't do it, Mahlon, these Moabites fight dirty, I think it's the warrior in them.

Orpah: Kilion, darling

Kilion: Yes my sweet?

Orpah: Shut up.

Kilion: *(Aside to Mahlon)* I did warn you. You should have listened to your older brother

Ruth: What? When you talk such nonsense?

Kilion: And what's ruffled you? Oh, hang on, we didn't disturb something out here did we?

Orpah: Kilion!

Kilion: I mean, I know you've had to wait a while, make sure it was all proper like, but surely you could have hung on . . .

Ruth: This is your sister now you're talking about. You should be defending my honour, not attacking it

Kilion: I didn't say it was dishonourable

Mahlon: We were talking about family

Orpah: Was he versing you in the great Elimelech traditions?

Ruth: I want to know

Kilion: See? Not everyone's heart's a stone like yours, my little desert cactus

Mahlon: Our family. Children.

Orpah: And don't tell me, he's promised you lots

Kilion: It's in the blood

Orpah: Well don't get your hopes up. Two years. All talk and no produce this husband of mine

Kilion: I knew it. I should have waited for a nice quiet Hebrew wife, who knows how to respect her husband.

Orpah: Yes well maybe you should. But as you didn't, you'd better go and find me another drink, and then take me back to the dancing._____

Kilion: Congratulations! Both of you. Oh and Mahlon - good luck!

He is dragged off by Orpah

Ruth: *(laughing)* I'm glad I got the quieter brother.

Mahlon: Well, he's found his match there, that's for sure.

Ruth: I can't imagine anyone else putting up with him. Not like Orpah.

Mahlon: She's a strong woman

Ruth: Hmm

Mahlon: What, hmm?

Ruth: She's strong, and she's bright, but she's sad too, you know? Can't you see it? She wants her children.

Mahlon: And so does Kilion. *(pause)* And so do I

Ruth: I know.

Mahlon: And what does my wife want?

Ruth: Your wife wants nothing more than to hold a part of herself and her husband in her arms, and know her place in the history of their family. .

They kiss

Mahlon: And not just our family, Ruth, but the family of God Himself Do you remember Abraham, and the stars?

Ruth: Tell me again

Mahlon: Look at the stars, spread in the night sky beyond our imaginations. "Abraham" God said, "See those stars - your children will number them, and even more." See - there's one for father, and me and Kilion. Mother's over there, and Orpah, winking on - and over there, that pretty little star that seems unsure of its place in the sky, that's Ruth - now daughter of Abraham - and beyond her, just out of sight, are our children, waiting to claim their space in the universe.

Ruth: This is my moment to hold forever, here, underneath the stars with you.

Mahlon: And Kilion of course, and mother looking on

Ruth: (*grimacing as the moment is broken*) Oh!

Naomi comes out

Naomi: Talk of the mother and she'll always hear, you know

Ruth: Is that a Hebrew saying?

Naomi: No. It's a Naomi saying. And you don't get wiser than that.

Mahlon: So we've been told. On many occasions. By you.

Naomi: At last he remembers something useful! Kilion told me I was wanted out here. I assume he was up to some mischief.

Mahlon: I think he thought he'd disturbed something.

Naomi: I hope he hadn't.

Mahlon: He'd disturbed a man kissing his wife. That's all. That's all right isn't it?

Naomi: As long as they both have one left for their mother.

They kiss her on either cheek

Mahlon: And are you having a good time?

Naomi: It's a lot of fuss and bother at my age

Mahlon: You didn't seem to be worrying about that in the middle of the dancing. (*He grabs her and dances her round*) I saw you being swung round the floor.

Naomi managed to break away, laughing

Naomi: Enough nonsense. No respect at all.

Mahlon: No respect?! You should ask my wife about that! She kicked up a right fuss when I asked her to come out here with me! Maybe she's bored of me already

Naomi: Or maybe she's just a better host than you, Mahlon. Your guests are waiting for you in there.

Ruth: That's what I told him!

Mahlon: Hang on! What's all this ganging up on me?

Ruth: Just pointing out where you're wrong, dear

Naomi: And now the women outnumber the men in our household, so we'll be able to keep you in check

Mahlon: God preserve us. . . from wives and mothers

Kilion arrives back on stage

Kilion: Has the party moved out here?

Mahlon: Great timing Kilion!

Kilion: Not mine. Orpah sent me out to get you - and I do what my wife says

Ruth: See?

Kilion: When it suits me!

Orpah: I suit you, Kilion, and don't forget it

Kilion: Wouldn't dare, my love

Naomi: I love my daughters-in-law! I only wish

Mahlon: We know. We all do

Naomi: But he'd have been very proud of his family.

Kilion: He would. . . So, shall we go in and make a toast to us all?

Orpah: Not again. We don't need to hear your voice again, darling

Kilion: Come on! They love me!

Orpah: This is their day, not yours

Kilion: Ah, you'll have to kiss me to keep me quiet

Orpah: You never stop talking long enough

Naomi: Well, I feel a chill out here, so I'll leave you to your love, or your squabbling, and trust you'll be in soon.

Mahlon: Of course, mother

Orpah: We'll follow you in now

Kilion: Well, just to the darkest corner and I'll show my wife how I can stay silent.

Naomi leaves and Kilion and Orpah move to the back of the stage, where they stand with backs to audience

Mahlon: It's a good thing it's too late for you to back out of my family now!

Ruth: I wouldn't want to. I love them. . . and I couldn't imagine life without them

Mahlon: And now you don't have to.

Ruth: That's a good feeling

Mahlon: You and me for life, Ruth

They kiss. But as they pull away, they freeze. As music plays, Kilion goes off stage and brings back a cloak for Orpah, and then Mahlon walks back and off and comes back with a cloak for Ruth. He puts it on her and only as he leaves again does she move. She drops her flowers to the floor.

Scene 3 - Deaths of Mahlon & Kilion

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Scene 4 - Decision to return to Bethlehem

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Scene 5 - Conversation about the women

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Scene 6- On the journey - Ruth follows Naomi

Naomi, Ruth and Orpah walk onto the stage with their bags. They have already walked some way. Video shows view from the top of a hill, looking down to the village below.

Naomi stops and puts her bags down. Ruth and Orpah are chatting and walk past her before they realize she's stopped.

Orpah: I shouldn't have packed so much! I'll never make it at this rate -too much comfort eating these last few months!

Ruth notices now mid turns back

Ruth: Naomi? What are you doing?

Naomi: Looking back

Ruth: Isn't the point we look ahead?

Naomi: This is the last view of Moab. *(pause)* I remember doing this, all those years ago - looking back at Bethlehem, thinking we'd never go back.

Orpah: and here you are returning. So why dwell on it? We're going to a new life now

Naomi: No. I'm going back to the life that I had. . .and I want you to do the same

Orpah: Naomi, your not making sense. Let's just stop for a while, have a break and . .

Naomi: *(getting frustrated)* I'm not the foolish old woman you think I am

Ruth: Orpah didn't mean. .

Naomi: and I'm not talking of things I'm ignorant of, like the arrogance of youth

Ruth: Naomi!

Naomi: Look. I know what it's like to live in a country that's not your own, among people who see you as an outsider . . .and I know what it's like to be alone.

Orpah: But we're not going to be alone. We've stayed with you in the family we married into, and we'll continue to do that. For you, and for the memory of our husbands.

Ruth: Why now, Naomi? Why start talking like this now? Our bags are packed, the journey's begun. We made our decision and we've said our goodbyes, and we've made our peace with that. Why start trying to change our minds? Are we too much trouble for you? Too much baggage?

Orpah: (*getting angry*) That's it, isn't it? You've decided you want a fresh start. We're part of your old life. We bring too many memories with us for you. So why talk of loyalty and love, when you want to leave all this behind and run back to safety?

Naomi: (*shouts*) It's because I love you, you stupid girls.. (*Quietly*) It's because I love you. . I wish my boys were here now, and you're their memory for me. And kind and strong and good company. Of course I want you with me. But as a mother, I know your families will welcome you back. What safety are we going to? It's not selfishness that makes me say this to you, it would be selfish to keep you with me. I want you to go back and find new husbands, and have families of your own. How could I not want that for my daughters?

Ruth: And what about the God you love? Would He not want you to have the comfort we can give? Especially when things ahead are so uncertain?

Naomi: You have learnt so much about our God, dear Ruth. And my prayer is that He'll continue to move in your hearts. That He will bless you, and be as good to you as you've been to me and to those who've died. And He'll give you homes and happiness - but not with me.

There is a moment of quiet as all three take in what is happening. Then Naomi picks up her bags and her mood is evidently more determined

Naomi: The day moves on, and so must I. If you love me, then do what I ask. Come, let's not dwell on our - goodbyes any longer. Kiss me, and go home.

Ruth and Orpah exchange a look and go to kiss Naomi, but as they do so, they take her bags from her hands

Orpah: So, let's go home

Naomi: But ...

Ruth: Our home's with you, Naomi. In all your thinking, you've not thought about what we might want.

Naomi: And if you loved me . .

Orpah: You don't have the right to tell us how our love's worked out. We'll go with you, to your people. And that will be our home.

Naomi: Oh the stubbornness of the Moabites!

Ruth: Is a match for the stubbornness of the Israelites it seems!

Naomi: No. I'm sorry, but no. You must go back. Why would you want to come with me? Look back. This is where you belong. It's too easy to get caught up in the feelings of the moment. Think about it. You're young enough to be wives again - but not in Bethlehem. Who'd want to marry you?

Orpah: We were good enough for your sons, weren't we?

Naomi: Only just

Orpah: Well thanks very much

Naomi: If they'd been at home, they'd have married from their own. That's the hard truth of it.

Orpah: So, I was right. We're part of your regret.

Naomi: Orpah, I couldn't have wished for better daughters-in-law, but what do you want me to do? I can't provide you with any more sons to marry can I? I'm too old to get married again, and even if I did - even if I got married tonight and if I got pregnant on my wedding night, and if they happened to be sons, what then? Would you wait all those years for them to grow up and marry you?

Orpah: *(laughing)* Now you're being ridiculous

Naomi: Only to show you how ridiculous you're being. . . The Lord has turned against us, and my husband's family will die with me. I'm going home with nothing - no sons and no hope of other children. I don't want that for you as well. . . Please, go home, and have your life. And may it be blessed with love.

There is a long silence, then Orpah, head bowed low, moves towards Naomi. Face to face with her, she kisses her, and then hands Naomi's bag back to her

Orpah: I'm sorry.

Naomi brushes Orpah's face with her hand in a moment of painful intimacy

Naomi: Don't be, my precious child, please don't be

Orpah: I need the hope of a husband and a family

Naomi: I know. . . God bless you daughter of mine, always.

Orpah moves back, and Naomi turns her attention to Ruth

Naomi: And you Ruth. Orpah is going back to her people and her gods. Go with her.

Ruth is now between the two women, she looks at them both and then moves towards Orpah and hugs her

Ruth: You understand.

Orpah: Don't look back

Orpah leaves. Ruth then turns to Naomi

Ruth: Don't say anything. Please. Just listen

Naomi: Ruth, I meant. . .

Ruth: Don't ask me again to go back and leave you; you're wasting your breath. I chose my family the day I married Mahlon, and nothing will change that. It's my decision not yours. . . So, let me come with you - to Bethlehem, to anywhere you go. I'm not like Orpah, I don't long for any other family apart from you. And you've taught me of the love of your God - and I want to know more. Your people will be my people, your God will be my God too.

Naomi: How can you be so sure?

Ruth: *(laughing)* So, the taught becomes the teacher - because I trust you and I trust your God. *(more serious now)* And I'm decided. Wherever you die, I will die and that's where I'll be buried and may the Lord punish me if I'm not true to my word today.

(She picks up her bag)

Ruth: Anything to say?

Naomi: *(smiling because she knows she's beaten)* No. Apparently not.

Ruth begins to walk

Ruth: Right then, shall we go?

They smile at each other and walk with a sense of warm friendship between them. Just before they're off stage, Naomi leans over and kisses Ruth on the cheek

Naomi: Thank you

They exit.

Scene 7 – *Journey music*

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Scene 8 - *Arrival back in Bethlehem*

The video and music are interrupted abruptly by a large spotlight on Naomi., standing in the centre of the stage, looking straight ahead, with her bags at her sides. Ruth is standing behind her, for the time being literally in her shadow,.

The 6 voices are heard from the darkness around the room:

- 1:** All 3 dead you say?
2: It's what I've heard, Elimelech first and then the two boys
1: Poor lads. Hardly had chance to start their lives.
2: They had time enough to find themselves wives
1: What? Over in Moab?
2: That's what they say
3: It is her then? Naomi? I didn't recognise her at first
4: Well it's been ten years. We've all changed
3: Some more than others
4: That's what grief does to you I suppose
3: her choice to leave
4: And hers to come back
3: Yeah. Now that the harvest's good
5: I can't believe it's really Naomi
6: I didn't think we'd ever see her again
5: Praise God for her return
6: I've often wondered what'd happened to them
5: I'm sure God will look after her now
6: She always had such faith in Him
1: And is that one of the wives with her?
2: Could be, she's not from round here, is she?
1: They'll find it a struggle

2: I think they will
3: And she's brought another mouth to feed to see
4: At least that'll be some comfort to her
3: Well I hope they don't bring trouble back with them
4: What do you mean?
5: Life's obviously been hard for her
6: Naomi of all people. She didn't deserve that
5: She'll be strong though
6: Strong in nature. Strong in faith
1: What'll they do for work?
2: Is there any family left here?
3: Most likely expect someone to bail them out
4: It doesn't affect us though does it?
5: God will provide
6: He will, I'm sure
3: Why should He?
4: What about us who could have died?
1: But we didn't and they did
3: Exactly
6: We all live under God's grace
4: But we don't all run away from it, try and make it on our own
5: Where's your sense of mercy?
2: look at her. She looks broken
1: I can't imagine what she's been through
3: And has she stopped to think what we've all been going through?
6: They were just trying to do what was right for their family
4: And look where it got them
5: Surely there's still some family to look after them?
2: As long as they take their responsibility
4: I wouldn't
3: Why should they?
4: Each to his own, that's the best way
6: But it's not God's way, is it?
1: They did a lot for this town when they were here
2: Naomi, and her family
3: Well let's see how your precious Naomi copes now then shall we?

4: Naomi on her own

5: May God's grace rest upon you Naomi!

6: *(as though calling to her)* Naomi, welcome home. Welcome home, Naomi!

The other voices add their greetings or grumble to themselves. Naomi breaks into their speech

Naomi: Why? Why call me Naomi? I don't recognise the woman that you talk about - Naomi the strong, the blessed, the good. And those of you trying to be nice, please don't. I'd prefer you all joined in with the ones that scorn me. I understand why you do. In fact, call me Mara - for that name means "bitter" and that's what my life is. You don't say anything that I have not thought already. Just don't be pleasant. That's not who I am any more. And don't worry, I'm not expecting anything from any of you, I know I don't deserve it, except to be allowed to return to my house, and maybe make the most of the fields we had, in years to come. But that's for the future. For now, just let me be. And give me time to make sense of how God's treated me.

Scene 9 - Back to the house

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Scene 10 - Continued discussion (3 voices)

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Scene 11 - Back to the house

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Scene 12 - In the Fields

The 2 male workers, Samuel and Jacob, come onto the stage, although we hear their voices before we see them. Their mood is light and jovial, as they work, collecting the grain as they go

Samuel: So I said to him, "I'll give you a tanner for it, if you want it off your hands"

Jacob: Aye, you got a good deal there then

Samuel: Tell our missus that will you, Jacob? I thought I was going to be out in the yard with the dog last night

Jacob: Your Rachel certainly has some fire in her belly, and no mistake.

Samuel: As long as that's where it stays. I'd rather just have a quiet life meself

Jacob: Come on our Samuel, we all know that's not true. You'd not have got wed at all if it were!

Samuel: Ah, but they catch us unawares, Jacob. And don't tell me you don't know what I mean, 'cos your Sarah will have done just the same. A little suck of the cheeks, a demure gaze beneath her lashes, a coyness in her stand and a smile playing on her lips just for you. And we think. they're the sweetest thing on God's earth and only when the ring's on the finger does the devil come out.

Jacob: (*laughing*) You'd be lost without your Rachel

Samuel: Aye, true enough. How would I know where me own house is, if I didn't hear her nagging bellowing out from it to welcome me back.

The two women appear on stage, collecting the grain that the men have missed. Again we hear their voices just before we see them

Anna: (*mimicking Samuel*) How would I know where me own house is? (*in own voice*) You don't deserve a woman like Rachel.

Samuel: Exactly, at last someone's recognised it. I mean, really, what did I do to deserve a woman like her?

Maggie: Oh you're so funny Mr Blacktoft.

Anna: And so brave. . . when your wife's not here to listen. Honestly Maggie, you should see him when Rachel's around. He wouldn't say boo to a goose, not if she didn't let him

Jacob: Aye you've been caught there all right, Samuel

Anna: And you're just the same Jacob, and don't tell us otherwise, or what you say in this field might just get back to your Sarah.

Jacob: You're a hard woman, Anna!

Anna: And don't you forget it. And if you two ever got on with some work, you'd see I was also tough enough to keep up with you.

Samuel: You cheeky minx! We've done a good morning's work, and in this heat.

Maggie: I know. I'm parched again. I've got no energy when it's hot like this.

Samuel: Maggie, love, you're half our age, so you should have twice the energy.

Anna: Speak for yourself, Samuel Blacktoft, I'm nearer Maggie's age than you

Samuel: By, life's been hard on you, Anna Walsh.

Anna: Hard on us all these ten years gone

Samuel: Aye true enough, just some of us have weathered it better than others, eh?

They all react with good humour, and continue to work, as Ruth appears behind them, gleaning what's left They ignore her as they continue

Jacob: We've all weathered it better than we might have, thanks to old Boaz

Anna: Aye. You couldn't want for better

Maggie: (*dreamily to herself*) I couldn't want for any more, I know that much

Anna: Now then I Maggie's gone the way of many before her!

Maggie: No, I was just saying

Anna: Aye. We've all just said in our time

Maggie: But surely it's time now for him to look for a wife?

Anna: Well I dreamt the same afore I got wed .. and I've been married some eight years now.

Jacob: My Sarah says he's been married all along.

Maggie: What?

Jacob: Oh aye. To his first love

Maggie: Surely not!

Anna: *(laughing)* Don't look so upset Maggie love. He means to all this - the land God gave him charge of. He doesn't notice much else besides.

Maggie: *(looking crestfallen)* Oh. I see.

Samuel comes over to Maggie and puts his arm round her

Samuel: Ah, but I reckon our Maggie might be the one to change all that

Maggie: Do you?

Anna: Don't you start giving her false hope, Samuel Blacktoft

Samuel: No seriously! I think she's got something that none of the others have had and it might just do the trick.

Jacob: Oh aye?

Samuel: Well we all know of her sweet nature, if not her hard work

Maggie: Eh?

Samuel: But how will Mr Boaz be able to resist her. . .with all that chaff between her ears!

Maggie shrugs him off sulkily as the others laugh and join in

Anna: And maybe if we gave you some ears of corn!

Jacob: *(doing an impression of Boaz)* Aye, Mr Smith. She's strong, fun and ripe all right!

Maggie: Get off

Jacob: I know my corn, Mr Smith, and I know what I like

Anna: Aye, he knows about corn, but knows nothing about women. . . Sony Maggie love, but really, there's no chance. He sees nothing more than his work.

Jacob: Well, it might not have pleased the ladies over the years, but it's done us no harm that he's been so caught up in the work and the land. We might not be here working this harvest if he's not

Samuel: True enough. And we need to get it in for him now.

And they go back to work

Anna: Of course, there are some people who have just come along, to enjoy the harvest they've not worked towards

Maggie: Aye, funny how rich pickings bring out the rats

Samuel: And where there are rats, there's also little cats, eh girls?

Anna: Just saying it as we see it. Why should outsiders gain from all our hard work?

Jacob: Naomi's one of us

Anna: And she's right to come back to us. But she should have come on her own

Jacob: And how would she have survived then? We should thank that young girl for looking after her
Anna: And would you say the same if she weren't young and pretty?

Maggie: Do you think she is?

Jacob: I'm not going to complain if there's something pleasant to see while I'm working

Maggie: Do you think she is?

Samuel: It's not like she's taking any work away from us is it?

Anna: You're as bad as he is

Maggie: I think she looks a bit odd meself

Anna: She must have charmed Mr Smith as well, to give her a job

Samuel: Or maybe he knew it would be what old Boaz would want

Maggie: Why would he want her?

Jacob: *(laughing)* Not because he's seen her, but because he believes in doing right by those in need

Anna: So she's a case of charity, not hard work

Samuel: Well she seems to be working hard enough now

Jacob: And Boaz follows the laws of God, even when others don't.

Samuel: Aye. He's a good man.

Maggie: Not too good I imagine

Jacob: He's a god-fearing man, Maggie

Samuel: And wouldn't have time for a little heathen like you

Anna: Sounds like you need to get yourself to church

Samuel: Either way, she hasn't got a prayer!

Jacob: Let's get to the fence post and then we'll take it in

Maggie: Then will it be lunch time?

Anna: What did you say about her being ripe and fun?

Samuel: You might want to think about that Maggie, when there's a pretty face and a nimble figure behind you

Maggie: Do you think she is?

As she looks round the others have laughed and moved on. She turns back and follows them off

Scene 13 - *Boaz returns*

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End of Act One

Act Two

Scene 14: Boaz meets Ruth

Foreman, Boaz, Ruth & workers

Scene 15: Ruth returns home

Ruth, Naomi

Scene 16: Harvest scenes

Boaz, Ruth, foreman, workers

Scene 17: Naomi's plan .

Naomi, Ruth

Scene 18: The evening_

Ruth, Naomi & Boaz, foreman, Samuel, Jacob

Scene 19: The night & the morning

Ruth, Boaz

Scene 20: Waiting for the Answer

Ruth, Naomi

Scene 21: The Deal

Boaz, kinsman, witnesses

Scene 22: The Marriage

Boaz, Ruth, Naomi & others

Scene 23: Looking Back

Ruth & others

Scene 14 – *Boaz meets Ruth*

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Scene 15 – *Ruth returns to home*

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Scene 16 – Harvest scenes

16(1) – Ruth & Boaz in field

Boaz is walking across the stage, as Ruth walks the other way. Both seem rather awkward as they see each other, and pass each other, as Boaz says:

Boaz: Ruth

Ruth: Sir

They are both virtually off stage before Boaz continues

Boaz: Your hard work continues, they tell me

Ruth: I just do the best I can

Boaz: And Naomi - is she well?

Ruth: Well enough sir

Boaz: Good, good

Ruth smiles and goes to continue on her way

Boaz: And the workers don't bother you?

Ruth: No more than I can handle. I like them

Boaz: Right. . well, give Naomi my best, won't you?

Ruth: Of course. We're very grateful to you

Boaz: And look after her

Ruth smiles again

Boaz: And yourself, my child

They look at each other

16(2) - Toughen up

All the workers and Ruth are working. Maggie has stopped to wipe her brow. Samuel looks back and shakes his head

Samuel: Oh come on Maggie, love, toughen up a bit

Anna: Hey Samuel Blacktoft, leave the girl alone

Jacob: He's right though, Anna. She's leaving as much as she's picking up

Samuel: And I don't know why you're being so soft. It'll not look good on you if she doesn't buck her ideas up

Maggie: I'm dong my best

Samuel: Who for? The gleaners?

They turn back to their work

Jacob: And she thinks Boaz would be interested in a work-shy lass who's virtually giving his grain away

Ruth has collected much of the grain that Maggie has left. She walks forward and puts it into the women's sack and then walks off again leaving a stunned silence

Maggie: What's she up to?

Jacob: Why should she be up to anything?

Samuel: saving your job by the looks of it

Maggie: What does she want?

Anna: Maggie love, maybe she was just trying to be nice

Jacob: You should be thanking her not calling her

Maggie: You lot have all gone soft. I still don't trust her

Samuel: And I thought it was us oldies who were meant to be stubborn

Anna: It's not her fault she's pretty you now

Jacob: Or where she's from

Maggie: I think we should stop talking and get on, don't you?

Maggie leans back down as the others grin at each other

16(3) – Maggie's cheeks

Anna and Maggie have stopped for a drink. Maggie is pouring it, and Anna notices Boaz approaching

Anna: Looks like old Boaz is doing his rounds.

Maggie: (*looking shocked*) What? Heck, here, take this

She passes Anna the jug and turns away from Boaz, and as he and Anna are talking she busies herself pinching her cheeks, and fussing with her hair

Boaz: Anna, Maggie

Anna: Morning sir. It's coming in all right, isn't it?

Boaz: Certainly is. Thanks to all of you and your hard work

Anna: Well, we do our best, that's for sure

Boaz: I know I expect a lot from you

Anna: That's the way at this time of year. We've done eight weeks, I'm sure we can keep going for a few more.

Boaz: And you young Maggie - are you working hard?

Maggie turns round with her most winsome manner

Maggie: Oh I always do my best to please, Mr Boaz

Boaz: (*oblivious*) Aye. Good, good

Maggie: And if there's any more I can do, you just tell me, sir

Boaz: Very good. Well, keep up the good work

Maggie: (*crestfallen*) Aye, I will sir - for you

Samuel has come on to get a drink and realises what Maggie 's been up to, so purposely says in Boaz 's hearing, as he takes Maggie 's face in his hand

Samuel: By 'eck our Maggie, your cheeks don't half look all pinched and red. Have you been in a fight?

Samuel ruffles her hair as he walks past, Boaz turns to look and Maggie turns away mortified

16(4) – Apologies to Mrs Smith!

Boaz and Mr Smith are looking over the ledgers. Mr Smith is just closing the book

Mr Smith: So, ten weeks in and all on target. We can enjoy the Sabbath rest this week I think

Boaz: Aye a day of rest will do us all good

Mr Smith: And Mrs Smith is expecting you to join us for a meal

Boaz: Ah yes, well I'm afraid that won't be possible this week

Mr Smith: You'll get me into trouble if you don't come

Boaz: I'm sorry for your trouble, Mr Smith, but I'm afraid I've other plans

Mr Smith: Now don't tell me you're working. You must have some rest yourself you now

Boaz: No, no. . . Naomi has invited me to spend the evening with her household

Mr Smith: Oh. I see

Boaz: And I thought it was a good chance to catch up with an old acquaintance

Mr Smith: (*with eyes still on the book, as though to himself*) And new ones, I wonder

Boaz looks at him squarely, and in rather a reserved manner says

Boaz: Give my apologies to Mrs Smith and thank her for her kindness

He takes the book, closes it and makes a swift exit with the foreman watching him go

16(5) – Cloth Ears

The workers are in their formation in the fields with Ruth at the back

Maggie: I still don't see why we should leave grain for her?

Anna: Does it matter, really?

Maggie: She'll be taking more home than us if this carries on

Anna: So join the gleaners if you're that worried

Maggie: Gleaning? My family'd be that ashamed if one us were forced *to* do that. No thank you.

Anna: Right. So think about it

Maggie: Yeah, but it's good enough for the likes of her, coming in when the year's work's almost over. You said it yourself, Maggie

Anna: Aye, I did. And now I've changed my mind. She's been nothing but civil and kind. Give her a chance.

Maggie: *You* sound just like the men now. Don't tell me she's taken you in with her "pretty little Moabite face, and pretty little Moabite eyes and pretty little Moabite ears"

Ruth: (*angrily*) My ears might be little and they might Moabite, Maggie, but they're not cloth, and I'm tired of hearing you bad mouthing me. You don't have to like me, but you could at least let me get on with the work I've come here to do to feed my family, without going on all the time.

They all work in silence for a few moments

Maggie: (*to Anna:* I didn't mean anything by it. Not really.

Anna: It's not me that needs telling.

Few more moments of work

Anna: Right, I'm going for a drink. Are you coming?

Maggie: Aye, I will.

Anna goes off with the men as Maggie waits behind She slowly turns to Ruth

Maggie: Are you coming for a drink?

Ruth: I suppose so, aye.

Maggie: Right. Good.

16(6) – Flowers for Ruth?

Boaz is standing with a bunch of flowers looking nervous. Ruth comes in with a bucket. He speaks suddenly as though having built up the courage to do so

Boaz: Ruth! I've been waiting for you, I mean I was hoping you'd be coming this way, I mean. Here.

He thrusts the flowers at Ruth

Ruth: *(delighted)* Oh!

Boaz: For Naomi.

Ruth: *(not so delighted)* Oh!

Boaz: To thank her for the lovely meal, and the hospitality and the good company. . . of both of you.

Ruth: *(smiles)* Thank you. . .and I'm sure she would like to invite you again.

Boaz: Well that would be delightful

Ruth: You were a great help in advising her to sell the field

Boaz: Right, of course. Only too glad to help. In any way I can.

16(7) – Ruth's an angel

Ruth is sitting with the other workers eating lunch. Jacob does a big yawn

Anna: Hey! Are we boring you Jacob?

Jacob: Oh sorry lass, I can't help meself

Maggie: I know, every bone in my body hurts

Samuel: From what? Standing still too long?

Jacob yawns again

Anna: Oh give over will you? You're making me tired

Jacob: I could fall asleep here and now, I tell you

Samuel: Aye I know. At this time in the harvest by the time I get home I feel like I'm on my way back again

Anna: Think yourself lucky. I have to start cooking for my brood when I get in. I bet you all have your tea on the table

Samuel: For what it's worth. Have you tasted my Rachel's cooking?

Jacob: Aye and it's wonderful stuff as you know, as is my? We're blessed with good wives Samuel and don't you forget it

Ruth: And so am I. Naomi really takes care of me

Maggie: As you do her. And you've got such a walk home with Naomi's house right on the edge of town

Anna: True enough. And you carry all your grain

Jacob: Now you must really meet yourself coming back, lass

Ruth: I can't complain

Samuel: No. Not like some we know

Maggie: I've told you Ruth. You should move into the worker's cottages with me and the other girls for the harvest. By the time you're home, we've eaten and I'm almost ready for my bed

Samuel: That'd be right!

The workers are finishing their lunch and beginning to pack away and stand up ready to go back to work

Maggie: And we have lots of laughs. You'd love it

Ruth: I'm sure I would, Maggie and I appreciate the thought, I really do

Maggie: But?

Ruth: But I can't leave Naomi on her own. I wouldn't want to.

Jacob: You're a good lass, Ruth

Ruth smiles and is about to walk away to get back to work

Samuel: Good? She's an angel! Hard working, beautiful and loyal to the end! I tell you Ruth love, if I were twenty years younger. . .

She turns back before she goes

Ruth: With all due respect Mr Blacktoft, you'd be already married and I'd still be in my pram

She turns back and walks away and Samuel shows mock shock as the others all laugh heartily

Anna: Good on you girl!

Maggie: I like her, I really do!

16(8) – Penpushers

Samuel, Jacob, Mr Smith and Boaz are on stage. They each put a load of grain down, and stand back exhausted

Mr Smith: Nearly there, sir, nearly there!

Boaz: Aye. A week at most and it'll all be in.

Jacob: If we last that long

Mr Smith: We've not been tested like this for some years

Boaz: And it's a great test to have let's not forget

Samuel: Oh aye we know.

They all grin at each other and nod

Samuel: Of course, it's tougher on some than on others

Boaz: Samuel?

Jacob: Oh ignore him sir, you know what he's like

Samuel: No, it's just that some of us are more used to hard work than others

Mr Smith: Meaning?

Samuel: Well, some of us are labourers and built up our muscles . . .and others have more strength in their fingers, due to all the pen pushing

Boaz: I see, Mr Blacktoft, you have a bold tongue

Jacob: Which runs away with him at times

Mr Smith: Of course, we could argue our case

Boaz: Or - shall we, Mr Smith?

The two men pick up Samuel and cast him onto the grain, as he cries out in surprise

Boaz: Now, some of us have work to do -if we're all up to it. . .

Scene 17 – Naomi’s plan

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Scene 18(a) – With all due respect

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Scene 18(b) – Naomi & Ruth 1 - Butterflies

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Scene 18(c) – Post-threshing

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Scene 18(d) – Naomi & Ruth 2

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Scene 18(e) – Another toast

XX

Scene 18(f) – Naomi & Ruth 3

XX

Scene 18(g) – Post-feasting

XX

Scene 19 – The Night & the Morning

XX

Scene 20 – Waiting for the Answer

The music finishes and the light comes up tightly on Boaz, standing centre stage.

Boaz: What could I do? I love her. I only realised how much when I woke up to her last night. I'd wanted to approach her myself. I suppose I just didn't know how - it's not a feeling I'm used to. . . I don't like not being in control. - - .It un-nerves me, and right now I can't think straight and I feel like my whole future, my chance of proper happiness is in someone else's hands. And it annoys me. I'm not even sure she believed that I was serious about her. As soon as I can get this sorted one way or the other the better. If I'm going to lose her, I'd rather know, and get on with it . . . if it's going to hurt, I just want it done with. And how could I show her she means that much to me, when I might lose her to someone else? Wouldn't it be easier to run around pleasing myself like so many others? ... But I need to trust that God will bless my faithfulness. I just hope what I want is part of His plan. . and if not, that he gives me the strength to understand . . . and for Ruth. At least I showed her as best I could that she means everything to me, at least I showed her that

Light off Boaz and onto Ruth

Ruth: (*frustrated*) And now I don't know what to think. (*quieter, more thoughtful*) He was so kind, so gentle last night. . . he stirred in me feelings I'd not dared dream I'd feel again. . but then this morning! (*quite angry*) He shoved me out of there as though I was a thief in the night. Told me not to tell anyone, piled me with more grain and sent me packing, then raced off into town. ... (*quiet again*) I want to believe that he was just showing me kindness, a glimpse of grace, but what if he's

just buying my silence, or it's a guilt offering. . . or he's embarrassed by the whole thing. He said he wanted to marry me, he said it like he meant it, he looked like he felt it right in his heart, but did I give him any choice turning up like that. . I don't know, because I don't really know him. Am I just being stupid to trust?

Light off Ruth and onto Naomi

Naomi: You can doubt your trust in me, Ruth, but cling onto your trust in God. I know how hard that is, and if you want to rage, then do it 'cos He'll let you, by His grace He will. But don't lose your trust in Him, not after everything we've been through. And Boaz is a God-fearing man, and a man whose heart is packed full with love, and anyone with a pair of eyes in their head can see that. It's nerves doing this to you, that's all. . . Wait and see. Boaz is probably in town right now, trying to sort this out, do the right thing. None of us can make that decision for our kinsman, that's out of our hands, but I tell you this, and mark my words - trust Boaz. That man will not rest until the matter's settled today.

Light off Ruth, as she and Naomi freeze at either side of the stage.

Scene 21 – The Deal

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Scene 22 – The Marriage

Lights fade up on Ruth and Naomi on opposite sides of the stage. In the centre, Mr Reubens has now gone and Boaz has his back to the audience. He turns round slowly, rubbing the back of his head

As music plays, Boaz goes first to Naomi. He speaks to her and her worried look breaks into a smile as she nods. He then slowly turns to Ruth, walks towards her, and kneels down. She takes his head in her hands and they kiss as he stands up, and twirls her round, as her cloak falls off. Others come onto the stage to congratulate them. As the music progresses, Ruth's wrap is taken from her and made into a "baby", that's presented to Naomi, sitting in the larger chair.

Ruth watches the rest of the scene, contentedly from the back of the stage

Boaz turns to Mr Smith

Mr Smith: I wished you well when you married. I wished her to be like the great women of our faith, like Rachel and Leah, and like Tamar, who bore Perez to Judah.

Boaz: And here we are Mr Smith, and here we are

Mr Smith: To see you with your wife and child. I can't tell you how it gladdens my heart, sir. May your family take its place in God's story. I can't wish better for you.

Boaz: No, Mr Smith. You've wished us well indeed.

They shake hands warmly and walk away together. Boaz stands on the other side of the stage as Mr Smith exits. Boaz continues to look out.

Anna's looking at the baby with Naomi

Anna: Your heart must be full of love, Naomi. And praise to the God who provides. . . .Look at him (*calls quietly to him*) Obed. . . .Obed . . .A little gift he is. He'll be famous throughout Israel, this one! Yes, you will. . . .How renewed you must feel, with your family all around. God's gift. . . .God's gift. . . .and this one a gift of love from Ruth. You are blessed indeed.

She kisses Naomi gently and quietly leaves her still looking at the baby.

Scene 23 – *Looking Back*

The lights fade right down on Boaz and Naomi and up on Ruth as she walks to sit down on the bale that she first sat on with Mahlon

Ruth: And there's Naomi and Kilion and Orpah . . . (*she smiles*) And Mahlonand Boaz and Obed, but I didn't know that then, didn't see them in the universe. . . . I didn't know the sadness ahead, or the family waiting just beyond. How could I have ever guessed the way you had ahead for me God? I wonder . . .if I'd known, would I have walked it? (*She nods to herself*) . . .Mahlon, Naomi, Boaz - just one of them would have been enough, and yet you blessed me with all of them. And each has shown me a piece of your heart, and helped me find a home within it.. .and now I know my place in the universe - just here. . . just now. And I don't want for anything else. It's enough.

Music & text

- 1) “*And Boaz became the father of Obed,*”
 “*whose mother was Ruth*”
- 2) “*Obed the father of Jesse*”
- 3) “*Jesse the father of King David*”
- 4) “*The line of Christ*”

Instrumental.. Ruth has gone to Naomi to take Obed from her, and now stands looking down at him

Ruth: To stand before God and say I did my best . . .It's enough. . .It's enough

5)

“And Ruth,

the Moabite,

the widow,

the poor,

the refugee,

became a part of God's own family”
