

Light Of The World

A Christmas Pageant
from the
Book of Mormon

by

AraMae
Isaksen Hyde

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

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by AraMae Isaksen Hyde

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The idea for this play came at a time when I was putting all of my efforts into teaching of Jesus Christ. It was the middle of December and I was a full time missionary. My companion and I were seeking for ways to use the Christmas festivities to teach about our Savior and to introduce the Book of Mormon, which testifies of him.

During the past few years this story has emerged as I've labored to put my testimony on paper, and then on stage in the form of a play. The characters, with the exception of Nephi, Samuel the Lamanite, Giddianhi, Zemnarihah, and Jacob, are fictional, but the peoples they represent are real and the events they experienced happened. The people of Ancient America knew of Jesus Christ and they showed incredible faith in Him and in our Heavenly Father, especially at the time of His birth.

The purpose of this play is to strengthen the faith of the faithful and to bring a knowledge of Jesus Christ to those who do not yet know Him. It is my prayer that many will use their talents to further this work. To those of you who do, I leave with you my blessing, my love, and my deepest gratitude.

-AraMae Isaksen Hyde-

Dedication

This play is lovingly dedicated to the people of the Kentucky, Louisville mission where I served from October 1996 to February 1998. To every person who opened their door to us and their heart to the Lord, and to the members of the church who so faithfully served me and my companions, you know who you are. I would have you know that this play was inspired by you and I thank you all for the profound influence, which you have had on me.

-AraMae Isaksen Hyde

Dramatis Personae

Rumael (*ro'mel*)-a young Lamanite man

Sabishah (*sa'bish'uh*)-a young Nephite woman

Tarish (*ta'rish*)-Sabishah's brother

Taiah (*tay'uh*)-Sabishah and Tarish's adopted, Lamanite sister, nine years old

Jomon (*jo'mun*)-father of Sabishah, Tarish, and Taiah

Mayomi (*may-o-me*)-mother of Sabishah, Tarish, and Taiah

Deborah-Sabishah's friend

Zenos (*ze'nus*)-Tarish's friend, formerly betrothed to Sabishah

Cassia (*cas-e'uh*)-Tarish's concubine

Nephi (*ne'fi*)-a prophet during the time of Christ

Samuel the Lamanite (*la mun-it*)-a prophet who testified of Christ

Zemnah (*zem na ri'hah*)-the Gadiantons' captain

Giddianhi (*gid e an'hi*)-governor of the Gadiantons

Lamanite Man

Lamanite woman

Prison Guards

Jonathan

Canaan (*can-nan*)

Gadianton Robbers

Jacob

Laban (*la'bun*)

Mahi (*ma'hi*)

Shiz (*shiz*)

Lemuel (*lem'yul*)

Saul (*sal*)

Extras, including three Nephite men with speaking parts, a few small Lamanite children, and a few women, harlots belonging to the Gadianton robbers.

Act I, Scene 1

{The stage is bare. Rumael walks up the center aisle through the audience. He is dressed in simple Lamanite clothing and holds a large copy of the Book of Mormon with the title printed large enough for the audience to read. He carries it as though it is something very precious and sacred to him. He walks onto the stage, faces the audience and speaks directly to them.}

Rumael: Hello, my friends. You don't know me, but I knew many of you before you left our Father's presence to come to this earth. Yes, I knew you well. You are all choice sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, chosen to come to this blessed land at this time, and you are among His most faithful and valiant children. At times I've been allowed a little glimpse of your day, and I've been amazed by many things, but what amazes me most is your celebration of the day you call Christmas, this time when you celebrate the birth of our Savior. And I wonder, how would your celebration be different if you could talk to someone who lived to see the night of His birth?

{He pauses for a moment.}

I lived to see this blessed night. And no, although I greatly respect them, I wasn't a shepherd or one of the wise men, and I didn't live at Jerusalem at the time He was born. I lived here, in America. I was a Lamanite. My people lived here for many centuries before Christopher Columbus discovered this land, and our descendants still live here today.

There is a record of us, this book, the Book of Mormon. *{He shows his Book of Mormon to the audience.}* I invite all of you to read it and ponder it. We, too, knew of Jesus Christ. Our dealings with God are recorded here for you to read so that you may know that we knew.

{Rumael holds his Book of Mormon in front of him.}

I hope my story will help you to remember Him, but it's not only my story. It happened to all of us. *{Stage lights on. The entire cast is on stage looking solemnly at the audience.}* This is a story of love and faith in the midst of great terror and persecution. We have come here tonight not to tell but to show you our story, and as you see it unfold, we hope you will remember the love He has for each one of you.

{The stage lights fade until they are completely off.}

Scene 2

{The stage and theatre are completely dark. A small child is heard crying.}

Man: *{afraid, pleading}* Please, you've taken all the riches we have, but please don't take our grain! It's all we have till the next crop comes in!

Woman: Our children will be hungry!

{Stage lights on. A Lamanite family is standing outside the ruins of their home. The children cling to their mother who clings to her husband. They are surrounded by Gadianton robbers, all holding weapons and bundles of stolen property. The lights are dim and give the

set a dark and forbidding look.

Tarish: *{with mock sympathy}* I'm sorry to hear that, but our men will be hungry if we don't.

{The child cries again. Rumael enters carrying a bundle on his back. He freezes when he sees the Gadianton robbers.}

Rumael: What's going on here?!

Man: They've plundered and burned the whole city.

Rumael: And no one's stopped them?

Man: *{defeated}* We've tried. There's been fighting in the streets all day.

Tarish: *{haughty}* We've won. And now we're here to claim our prize.

Rumael: *{throwing his bundle aside}* Not yet. You haven't won yet! I too am a citizen of this city and I will fight for my people.

Tarish: You? You're not even armed.

Jacob: Do you have a death wish boy?

{The other Gadiantons laugh.}

Rumael: I wish for you to leave my people alone!

{Rumael picks up a strong stick and stands before Tarish.}

Woman: No, Rumael, they'll kill you!

Tarish: So, you want another fight. Well you've got one.

{Tarish draws his sword. Rumael lunges forward and the fight is on. The other Gadiantons stand watching while Rumael bravely fights, fending off Tarish's blows with nothing but a stick. The Gadianton robbers begin to cheer Tarish on. The woman hides her face, still clinging to her husband. Rumael deals Tarish a hard blow right in his chest. Tarish gasps for a minute then recovers.}

Tarish: *{yelling to the other Gadiantons}* Get him! Don't just stand there! Get him!

{The other Gadiantons rush in on Rumael. One of them grabs his stick and wrestles it under his neck, holding him there while Tarish approaches him pointing his sword at his chest.}

Tarish: And you thought you could defeat me.

Rumael: You haven't won! You're a coward!

Tarish: What was that?!

Rumael: You had your men come and save you the minute you saw that you were in trouble. You--

Tarish: *{yelling}* That's enough!

Rumael: You steal what we've rightfully earned! Our people are starving! Why can't you work for a living like the rest of us do, you lazy vermin?!

Tarish: *{yelling louder}* I said, that's enough. *{He raises his sword towards Rumael's neck and the Gadianton holding the stick pulls it back, tightening his grip.}* Our band works hard to defeat those like you, who would withhold their substance from us.

Rumael: *{barely able to speak}* Are you going to kill me now?

Tarish: No. *{He pauses and lowers his sword.}* Search his things, men, and take whatever we can use, only save any valuables for me.

{The Gadiantons open his bundle.}

Mahi: It's only more grain.

Tarish: Then we'll use it to sustain our band.

Rumael: No, I've used the last of my father's money!

Tarish: *{with a hint of sarcasm}* Then he'll just have to earn more. *{He pauses, then talks to his men.}* Come now. It's time we move on.

{The Gadianton robbers gather up their stolen goods and exit following Tarish. The man holding Rumael lets him go and he falls to the ground in a heap. The woman rushes to him.}

Woman: Are you all right, Rumael?

{He pauses, not answering right away.}

Rumael: Why didn't he just kill me? He could have.

Woman: I don't know.

Rumael: Now they've robbed me too.

Woman: I know. I--

Man: I'm sorry, Rumael. But I thank you for doing what you could to defend us. *{pause}* It's not your fault. There's just too many of them.

Rumael: Where's my father?

Man: I believe he's safe, but you'd better go to him. He survived the fight, then went home to defend his property like the rest of the survivors. You're lucky to live on the outskirts of

the city; maybe they never found your home.

Rumael: But they've taken our grain, and now we'll be hungry until we can earn enough to go to the marketplace at Zarahemla again.

Man: I know.

Rumael: And look what they've done to your home.

Woman: We'll make do, somehow. We still have each other.

Rumael: If there is a God, why would this happen?

Man: Rumael—

Rumael: If He truly cares about us, why does He let them torment us?

Woman: I don't know. I only know that He does love us.

Rumael: Why then, why would He let us suffer?

Woman: Someday we will understand why.

Rumael: Sometimes I think He's forgotten us, if He's there at all.

Man: He hasn't, Rumael.

Rumael: I don't know. Sometimes I really can't believe that He's real. *{pause}* Look, why don't you come to my home tonight, if it's still there? I can't leave you here.

Man: We'd be very grateful. I thank you. But Rumael, don't give up hope. One day you'll see that the Lord does love us.

Rumael: Maybe.

{The man helps him up and they all exit stage right. Stage lights off.}

Scene 3

{Stage lights on. Nephi is standing upstage center on a small tower. Many people are gathered in front of him, standing in small groups. Others mill about, some pointing and whispering to their companions as they walk past. Sabishah, Taiah, Jomon, and Mayomi are standing together stage right. Zenos is close by them. Rumael enters stage left and starts to make his way through the crowd toward the other side of the stage, but Nephi's words catch his attention. Sabishah notices him when he walks in and watches him throughout the rest of Nephi's speech.}

Nephi: Times are hard for us, my people, but the Lord has not forgotten us. He is watching over us and is mindful of our needs.

{Rumael stops and listens.}

I am but a man. I cannot bring back those whom we have lost at the hands of the Gadiantons. I cannot rescue you from the sins that bind you. I cannot cure the ills you suffer from, nor cure the ills of your hearts, but the Lord will send One who can. He will do for us the things we cannot do. He will be born in our day and we shall know of His birth because of the sign which shall be given to us.

Nephite 1: But why won't He show himself unto us, as well as to the people in that distant land?

Nephi: My brother, have faith and know that God has a purpose for all things. One day we shall see Him and know that He lives. Do not envy those who live in Jerusalem, for God in His wisdom and love has provided a way that we too may know of His coming. The night without darkness, which Samuel the Lamanite spoke of, will come, and God's son will be born.

Do not murmur because of your afflictions, but rejoice, and be thankful for the blessings, which the Lord has given you. Christ will come. I look forward to his coming, for I know that redemption comes only in and through Him. My father testified of these things, as have all of the prophets up until this time. I also know that Christ lives. He is our redeemer. He will die for us so that we might live. The Lord loves us. He will send his son, and He will help us to return to Him.

{People begin to leave. Sabishah, Jomon, Mayomi, Taiah and Zenos remain on stage. Jomon talks with Zenos while Mayomi visits with some of the other women. Rumael stands alone, contemplating what he has just heard.}

Jomon: How is your father, Zenos?

Zenos: He's healing well, but it will still be awhile before he's able to work again.

Jomon: Is there anything we can do for you?

Zenos: We're managing all right. Ammon and I are running the shop now and Mother's doing well, but maybe you can give my father some encouragement. Ever since the Gadiantons attacked him, he's just seemed so sad and withdrawn.

Jomon: Really. I'll come by later tonight then.

Zenos: I think he'd appreciate it. Thank you.

Jomon: Your family is still in our prayers.

Zenos: It's the prayers of our friends that have helped us to endure this.

Jomon: Anything at all, you come to us.

Zenos: I thank you, Jomon. We will. I'd better go back to the shop now.

Jomon: I'll see you tonight then. *{beat}* Goodbye.

Zenos: Goodbye. *{Sabishah is still watching Rumael. Zenos tries to get her attention.}*
Goodbye Sabishah.

Sabishah: *{a bit startled by him}* Oh, uh goodbye, Zenos.

Zenos: Sabishah, your beauty is like a ray of hope in this troubled time.

Sabishah: Thank you, Zenos. You flatter me too much.

{He notices Rumael.}

Zenos: Are you looking towards Lamanite men?

Sabishah: Uh, no. *{pause}* You'd better go back to the shop now.

Zenos: Well then, I'll be seeing you later.

Sabishah: Goodbye, Zenos.

{Zenos exits.}

Sabishah: Mother...

Mayomi: What is it, Sabishah?

Sabishah: That man, I'm sure I've seen him before. He looked like he was going to walk right by, but then he stopped and listened like he's really searching.

Mayomi: That's nice.

Sabishah: I'm sure he'd feel more comfortable among us if he had a friend.

Mayomi: Now Sabishah, you know you can't just go introduce yourself to an unknown man. We'd best be going now.

Sabishah: Mother, I feel that the Lord would have me talk to him.

Mayomi: This is not the place for it.

Jomon: *{overhearing the conversation}* No, this isn't the place for it, but, Sabishah, you are right to want to befriend this man and with a proper introduction, you shall. Go home with your mother and sister. I'll invite him to our home.

Sabishah: Oh, would you, Father?

Taiah: Are we going to have someone over for dinner, Father? Last year we barely had enough food for us.

Jomon: This year's different. Run along now, both of you. You've much to do.

Sabishah: Yes, Father. Oh, thank you.

Taiah: I'll help Mother, but Sabishah still has to fetch the water. The jug's too heavy for me.

{She follows Sabishah, and they both exit.}

Mayomi: I suppose we can't deny her this.

Jomon: No, we can't. I think this is more than another girlish fancy. She wishes to share what she believes.

Mayomi: Then we must make it possible, though, I still can't help but think what a fine husband Zenos would have made for her. *{She smiles and touches him on the shoulder.}* Don't be long.

Jomon: I'll be home shortly with our guest.

{He kisses her on the cheek and she exits. Stage lights off.}

Scene 4

{Outside Jomon and Mayomi's home, stage left. }

{Sabishah and Rumael walk out the door.}

Rumael: That was the best meal I've had in a long time.

Sabishah: I'm glad you enjoyed it.

Rumael: I'm afraid my own cooking just doesn't compare to yours.

Sabishah: Well, Mother has taught me well.

Rumael: It was kind of your father to invite me. I'm just glad we made it past those Gadiantons in the marketplace without any trouble.

Sabishah: So am I. We try to stay away from them. Even so, I think they know better than to confront my father. The last time one of them drew his sword at him, Father broke it in half with his own.

Rumael: Really. He's a strong man.

Sabishah: And a devout Christian. He says he'll never take up a weapon of war unless it's in defense of his God or his family. In fact he never carried a sword until the Gadiantons entrenched themselves in our land.

Rumael: So, what did these Gadiantons do to provoke him?

Sabishah: They robbed us on our way home from the marketplace. We let them take what they wanted. It wasn't until one of them tried to take me along that Father resisted.

Rumael: So, now they're taking our women from us too.

Sabishah: I'm not the only woman they've attacked, but I was fortunate. There have been others who had no one to defend them.

Rumael: *{softly, to himself}* Why does God let them hurt us so much?

Sabishah: What?

Rumael: Oh, nothing, *{beat}* I shouldn't bother you with it.

Sabishah: It's all right. I might be able to help.

Rumael: I was just wondering out loud I guess. *{beat}* Sabishah, a few months ago the Gadiantons plundered my city. They took everything they could get their hands on. We tried to defend ourselves. Some of my friends were killed in the fighting. Others were left without homes to go to. My father and I were lucky compared to some, but we've still suffered. They took our grain, and we've barely had enough to keep alive ever since. That's why I came to Zarahemla today. I need to find work.

Sabishah: Have you found any yet?

Rumael: Not yet. That's what I don't understand. We've suffered so much. Why? If there is a God in the heavens who truly loves and watches over us as this man Nephi says, then why does he allow the Gadianton robbers to torment us?

Sabishah: I do know how you feel. I've asked that question many times myself, but I believe what Nephi said today. God has a purpose for all things. Someday we will understand why he's allowed us to suffer.

Rumael: There can't be a purpose for it.

Sabishah: But there is. We just can't see it now.

Rumael: How can there be?

Sabishah: Well, let me tell you something.

Rumael: Yes?

Sabishah: I used to have another sister, Miriam. She was just a year older than I, and we were very close, but she died of the fever when we were still young. I was very angry about it for a long time. It wasn't until after I was baptized that I accepted that she was with God and that she was happy with him.

Rumael: Maybe that's why he took my mother.

Sabishah: I'm sure she's as happy with Him as Miriam is. *{pause}* Losing my sister made a difference in me, too. It helped me to be more compassionate towards others who have lost people they love. When Taiah's parents were killed and she came to live with us, I was so happy to have a sister again, but she missed her mother and father so much. I doubt that we could have helped her if we hadn't lost Miriam. We wouldn't have understood. *{pause}* But that wasn't all, my trials helped me want to be closer to God. So you see, horrible as it was, there was a purpose for her death. *{pause}* I don't know all the answers. I, too, suffer because of the Gadiantons and the awful things they do to us, but I believe what Nephi says, there is a purpose for all things.

Rumael: You put a lot of faith in the words of this man. Why?

Sabishah: Because I believe that Nephi is a prophet of God.

Rumael: How can you know that?

Sabishah: Well, let me start from the beginning. Almost five years ago, there was a prophet, a Lamanite, who came to our city.

Rumael: You mean Samuel the Lamanite, the man Nephi spoke of?

Sabishah: Yes, I was there when he came. It was an experience that I'll never forget. I was helping Father in the fields when I noticed that our neighbors all seemed to be going somewhere, so I asked what was going on. My friend, Deborah, said there was a man standing on our city wall yelling something crazy. Out of curiosity, I followed her there. There were crowds of people. Some of them were shooting arrows and throwing rocks at him, trying to drive him out of the city, but not a single one hit him. It was amazing! And what I heard him say didn't sound crazy at all.

{Left stage darkens. Right stage lights up to show Samuel the Lamanite standing on top of a wall with arrows and rocks whizzing past him. There are many angry Nephites standing in front of the wall yelling and persecuting him. Some are shooting arrows; others who are not armed are throwing rocks. It's as noisy as a riot, yet Samuel's voice can be heard above the commotion, and some of the Nephites in the crowd are listening intently to what he is saying.}

Samuel the Lamanite: {Helaman 14:2-8} Behold, I give unto you for a sign; for five more years cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.

And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it will appear unto man as if it was day.

Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of

the sun and also of it's setting; therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless that night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born.

And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you.

And behold this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven.

And it shall come to pass that ye shall be amazed, and wonder, insomuch that ye shall fall to the earth.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever will believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life.

{Right stage darkens. Left stage lights up, and once again only Sabishah and Rumael can be seen in front of her home.}

Sabishah: When I saw this man and realized that the stones and arrows of so many angry Nephites could not harm him, I wanted to listen to what he had to say. I knew his words must be important. *{beat}* I soon came to know that he was a messenger sent to us from God and that the things he told us were true.

Rumael: How?

Sabishah: I thought about it for a long time. One of Mother's friends told her that if God had sent this man, then He would let us know that his words were from Him. So we decided to ask God. It was the first time we ever prayed as a family.

Rumael: So you asked God if this man was his messenger?

Sabishah: Yes, and he answered us.

Rumael: How?

Sabishah: With a feeling.

Rumael: A feeling?

Sabishah: Let me try to explain. There are three members of the God Head; there is God and His son, whom he shall send to us. The third member is the Holy Ghost, who testifies of them. When something is of God, if we will ask in faith, the Holy Ghost will let us know of its truthfulness by the feelings he puts into our hearts.

Rumael: I can't say I've ever felt those feelings.

Sabishah: I'm sure you have. Do you recall a time when you felt the Lord was near?

Rumael: I stopped believing in God a long time ago, but there was a time when I did believe. My mother taught me to pray, but it's been so long since she died. I suppose I felt his spirit then, though it's hard to remember.

Sabishah: When you were walking through the City Square and you heard Nephi speaking to us, you stopped. Why?

Rumael: He said something about the Lord being mindful of us. I thought he might have the answers.

Sabishah: To your questions?

Rumael: Yes.

Sabishah: Did you feel anything?

{Rumael pauses for a while. He doesn't look at her as he answers.}

Rumael: Yes, I did.

Sabishah: The Lord speaks to us through feelings that whisper of him. Do you believe the Lord was speaking to you?

Rumael: *{looking up at her}* Yes, I guess there's no other way to explain it.

Sabishah: You felt the Holy Ghost. Learn to recognize it. Something tells me you'll feel it again.

Rumael: So that's what you felt when you prayed with your family?

Sabishah: Yes, I felt it when I listened to Samuel the Lamanite, too; only I hadn't learned to recognize it yet.

Rumael: What happened to Samuel?

Sabishah: He spoke to us about many things. He told us to repent and spoke of the faithfulness of the Lamanites who had become Christians.

{Left stage darkens. Right stage lights up. The crowd is still wild and determined to drive Samuel the Lamanite out of the city.}

Samuel the Lamanite: {Helaman 15:17} And now behold, saith the Lord, concerning the people of the Nephites: If they will not repent, and observe to do my will, I will utterly destroy them, saith the Lord, because of their unbelief notwithstanding the many mighty works which I have done among them; and as surely as the Lord liveth shall these things be, saith the Lord.

Nephite 2: *{angrily yelling to those around him}* {Helaman 16:6} Take this fellow and bind him, for behold he hath a devil; and because of the power of the devil which is in him we cannot hit him with our stones and arrows; therefore take him and bind him, and away with him!

Nephite 3: Yes, away with him! Away with him!

{The other Nephites yell in agreement. Several armed men run up some steps leading to the top of the wall, but Samuel jumps down on the other side and runs off the stage. Right stage darkens. Left stage lights up.}

Sabishah: Some say that he returned to his own people and was accepted as a prophet by them. There were many who didn't believe him, but as for me, after I prayed and came to know that he was sent to us by God, I went to Nephi, who is the prophet in our land, and was baptized along with my family.

Rumael: So then after you knew that Samuel was a prophet, you knew that Nephi was a prophet too?

Sabishah: Exactly, it all ties together. I feel the same spirit when I listen to Nephi. And he teaches us of God and his dealings with us today, just as Samuel did then.

Rumael: It can't be, prophets in our day? My mother used to tell me stories about prophets but I've almost stopped believing them.

Sabishah: Why?

Rumael: Because she's gone and I've felt like God has forgotten us.

Sabishah: He hasn't Rumael. He still sends us prophets today.

Rumael: I don't know if I believe that yet, Sabishah. It's wonderful if it's true, but I don't know.

Sabishah: Then pray about it, like we did. Will you, Rumael?

Rumael: It's been so long, *{pause}* but I'll try. I will.

{Mayomi opens the door and pokes her head out.}

Mayomi: Sabishah, it's time you come in and help with the work now.

Sabishah: Yes, Mother, I'll be in in a minute.

{Mayomi shuts the door.}

Rumael: I better go now.

Sabishah: Thank you for letting me tell you about Samuel. You don't know how much it means to me.

Rumael: No, but I can tell it means a lot to you. Goodbye, Sabishah.

Sabishah: Goodbye, I hope you find work soon.

Rumael: Thank you. And I hope to see you again soon.

{Rumael exits stage left. Sabishah smiles proudly and looking towards heaven, clasps her hands together and mouths the words "Thank you." Stage lights off.}

Act II, Scene 1

{Tarish's home in the Gadianton's secret city. The room is richly decorated and cluttered with articles of clothing, jewels, goblets and wine bottles. Tarish enters stage right with Cassia following at his heels.}

Cassia: *{in a singsong voice}* Oh Tarish.

Tarish: *{turning around to face her, with an edge in his voice}* What now?

Cassia: Oh nothing, *{putting her arms around his neck}* I just wanted a little attention that's all. Saul used to smother me with affection.

Tarish: *{pushing her away}* I'll pay attention to you later. Now go help the servants or something.

Cassia: *{offended}* Help the servants? When did I become a servant? You didn't even bring me home any of the jewels from your last plunder. And now you expect me to be your servant? To think I considered myself lucky when I was chosen to be your concubine. The girls all drooled over you and said how handsome you were. If only they could have seen what you're really like—

Tarish: Don't start this again, Cassia.

Cassia: You're- you're- selfish; that's what you are. You never give me anything--

Tarish: *{yelling}* Enough already!

Cassia: I've about had enough, you—

{She's interrupted by loud knocking at the door.}

Tarish: Now who's that? *{He walks to the door and opens it. Zemnariyah walks in followed by Saul.}* Oh hello Zemnariyah.

Zemnariyah: Tarish! I am your captain! You will address me as such!

Tarish: My deepest apologies, Zemnariyah.

Zemnariyah: You will show respect, boy, or I will lash you myself!

Tarish: All right, Captain, what brings you here?

Zemnariyah: Tarish, I've been told that you haven't been paying tribute to the governor, that you've been hiding the spoils from the last cities we plundered. Is this true?

Tarish: The governor will be well enough off without my tribute.

Zemnariyah: *{yelling}* Tarish! What treason is this? I could have you thrown in prison for refusing to pay tribute!

Tarish: There's no place left for me in the prison. If Giddianhi keeps throwing all his subjects in prison, then he will have no one left to pay him tribute.

{Zemnariyah draws his sword.}

Zemnariyah: You agreed when you joined our band that a portion of all the riches that we obtain would be given to our governor for his support, and the support of the women of our harems. And as for the women, he has given you one of the best. It is unfitting for our men to rebel and withhold tribute money. *{beat}* As for the prison, there will always be room for one more!

Tarish: Go ahead then.

Cassia: Tarish, no!

Zemnariyah: The prisons are an appalling place, full of rodents and infested with fleas and lice and the smell of sewage. The screams of those being tortured will keep you awake at night. I've sent many there. I would not hesitate to send you.

Tarish: *{yelling}* I'm nothing but an addition to your numbers, just one more man to fight on your side. I'm nothing! Go ahead, condemn me, sentence me, kill me! Go ahead it doesn't matter!

Cassia: *{screams}* No!

Zemnariyah: Think it over, Tarish, I'll give you your choice but I assure you, you will not die peacefully, or quickly.

Tarish: Kill me now.

Cassia: *{still screaming}* Noooo! Tarish, no! *{She tries to run to him, but Saul holds her back.}*

Tarish: You've done it before! I know you're not afraid to kill your own men! Do it!

Zemnariyah: I know your tricks, boy! I will not kill you, but I will see you suffer in prison! When you see what the prison is like, you'll wish I had killed you! But you'll not be so lucky.

{Tarish waits for a moment before he speaks.}

Tarish: Come back tonight. I'll have my tribute ready by then.

{The captain puts his sword back in its sheath.}

Zemnariyah: Very well. The governor's guards will be with me.

{Zemnariyah exits through the door. Saul follows, closing it behind him. Stage lights off.}

Scene 2

The marketplace in Zarahemla

{Rumael is at one of the stands, selling fruit to the customers. Jomon enters stage left and notices Rumael. The customers at Rumael's stand leave. Rumael looks away when he sees Jomon and occupies himself with arranging the fruit. He continues with this task throughout the following conversation and seldom looks at Jomon when he talks.}

Jomon: *{approaching him}* Hello, Rumael.

Rumael: *{He glances at him, and then looks away.}* Hello, Jomon.

Jomon: I see you've found work.

Rumael: Yes, one of the merchants here in town was looking for help.

Jomon: That's good to hear. It must be a blessing to you and your father.

Rumael: It is. I'm able to earn money and bring home food, sometimes.

Jomon: That's good. Listen, we really enjoyed having you over for dinner. I was wondering if you might come again?

Rumael: Thank you, but no. I don't think it would be a good idea.

Jomon: Why?

Rumael: Well, I suppose you know about the conversation I had with Sabishah the last time I came.

Jomon: Yes, Sabishah has mentioned it.

Rumael: Then you know what we talked about.

Jomon: Some.

Rumael: She told me about a prophet who came here to tell the people that the Son of God would come to us.

Jomon: Yes.

Rumael: Well, I told my father about it and he wasn't happy. He said it's not reasonable to believe that Christ will come.

Jomon: Well, what do you believe?

Rumael: I'm not sure anymore. I did believe that there is no God, or if there is, that he's not mindful of us.

Jomon: And now?

Rumael: I don't know, but my father will be angry if I talk to you about it anymore. I appreciate your offer, but I can't see your family again.

{They are both silent for a moment. Jomon does not say anything, but looks hurt. He turns to leave but Rumael stops him.}

Rumael: *{looking at him}* Jomon, tell Sabishah, I'm sorry. I truly am.

Jomon: Yes, Rumael. *{He starts to leave again, then turns around.}* I want you to know that you will always be welcome in my home.

Rumael: For that, I thank you. Goodbye.

Jomon: Goodbye, Rumael.

{Jomon exits, stage lights off.}

Scene 3

{Tarish enters carrying a large sack. Cassia follows.}

Cassia: Even after the tribute you're still a rich man. I don't see why you can't buy me new dresses. And how about those headdresses that Giddianhi's women have started wearing, why should they dress finer than me? Don't I deserve the best? I wear the same jewels day after day; can't you buy me something new?

Tarish: *{setting down the sack}* Cassia, what I give you is never enough. Don't you see, it never will be. You're never satisfied.

Cassia: I would be if I didn't have to beg for your affection; after all, I've never had to beg before.

{She puts her arms around him and runs her fingers through his hair. There is a knock at the door. Tarish pushes away from her and she falls to the floor with a little cry. He opens the door and lets Zemnariyah in. He's followed by Saul and two armed guards, Jonathan and Canaan.}

Zemnariyah: I trust you have your tribute ready, Tarish.

{He pushes the sack towards them. The captain motions for Saul to pick it up. He does so, and they start to leave.}

Tarish: One more thing, Captain.

Zemnariyah: Yes.

Tarish: I have something else to give to the governor. *{He looks towards Cassia who has gotten up and brushed herself off.}* Take her.

Zemnariyah: The governor has given you one of our best women.

Tarish: I don't want her.

Zemnariyah: He will not take this defiance well.

Tarish: Tell him I no longer desire a concubine.

{Cassia looks crushed as she stares at him in disbelief.}

Zemnariyah: As you wish.

{The captain motions to her. She puts on a stoical look and obediently follows him out the door. Stage lights off.}

Scene 4

Inside Jomon and Mayomi's home

{The one-room home is simple, but neat. There are sleeping mats piled on one side of the room and a large fireplace in the center, casting a warm and inviting glow. Jomon is playing with Taiah stage left, and Sabishah is helping her mother, who is cooking center stage.}

Sabishah: Oh Mother, it's just so discouraging. Why does there always have to be something that gets in the way?

Mayomi: Because the devil will try his hardest to keep a person away from God. Don't give up hope, Sabishah; someday, he'll remember what you taught him.

Sabishah: I hope so.

{There is a knock at the door. Jomon answers it. Rumael stands in the doorway.}

Rumael: Hello, Jomon.

Jomon: Well, hello, we didn't expect to see you tonight.

{Sabishah doesn't notice him.}

Mayomi: *{speaking softly to Sabishah}* But it doesn't always happen this fast.

Sabishah: *{looking up from her work}* Rumael!

Taiah: Rumael! *{She runs to him and hugs him.}*

Jomon: Come in, Rumael. As you can tell, we're happy to see you again.

Mayomi: Hello Rumael.

Taiah: Mother and Sabishah didn't think you'd come back, but I knew you would. Sabishah was supposed to marry Zenos, but I think she likes you better.

Rumael: Really.

Sabishah: *{embarrassed}* Taiah!

Taiah: *{also embarrassed}* Oh, sorry Sabishah. I'm not supposed to talk about him, am I?

Mayomi: Its all right, dear. Your sister just gets embarrassed easily.

Sabishah: Zenos was my intended.

Rumael: I didn't know you were betrothed.

Sabishah: I'm not, anymore.

Jomon: Zenos and his family are some of our closest friends, but I've decided never to force my daughters to marry. I'm sure you didn't come here to find out about broken betrothals though.

Rumael: No, I didn't expect to learn about that. I wasn't going to come here anymore, but *{beat}* I had to talk to you again—

Taiah: Sabishah said she talked to you about the prophets.

Rumael: That's right. What did she tell you?

Taiah: She said you wanted to know how she knew that Nephi is a prophet, and she told you about Samuel the Lamanite and how she felt the Holy Ghost when he spoke to us.

Rumael: Well then, I guess she's told you everything. Do you remember Samuel the Lamanite?

Taiah: No, I was too little to remember when he came, but I was baptized just last year.

Rumael: Really, so you also believe that Nephi is a prophet?

Taiah: Yes, I know he is, and so is Samuel the Lamanite. My real mother and father taught me about prophets.

Jomon: *{putting his arm around Taiah and beaming with pride}* My daughter is growing up fast, but she still has the faith of a child.

Taiah: Only my brother, Tarish, doesn't believe in prophets, but I pray for him every day...

Rumael: *{turning to Jomon and Mayomi}* You have a son?

Mayomi: *{painfully}* We do, but we haven't seen nor heard from him for over a year.

Rumael: Oh, I'm sorry. Where is he? Do you know?

Sabishah: No, we don't. Tarish has joined the Gadianton robbers. We don't know where he's gone.

Rumael: What? Your brother's a Gadianton robber?

Sabishah: *{she sighs}* Yes, he is.

Rumael: With a good family like this? What happened?

{Jomon moves to comfort his wife.}

Jomon: Come, Rumael, sit down, you've walked a long way. *{He sits down center stage with Mayomi and motions for Rumael to do the same. Rumael sits next to him along with Taiah and Sabishah.}* My son has been taught the ways of the Lord, but he has chosen a different path. After Samuel the Lamanite came to our city, Tarish was baptized along with Sabishah, Mayomi, and I. He believed in the prophecies and looked forward with joy to Christ's coming, but there were some things that he didn't fully understand. He never repented of some of his old ways, and finally, wickedness overtook him.

Rumael: That must be hard for you.

Mayomi: He's our only son. I want him to have the blessings promised to the righteous, but hard as it is, we must allow Tarish to choose for himself. God allows each of us to choose between good and evil, and I'm sure our choices grieve him sometimes, too. Yet, he still lets us choose.

Sabishah: It hurts to think that I've lost a brother to the Gadiantons, but we haven't given up. Like Taiah said, we still pray for him.

{Rumael pauses for a moment before he speaks.}

Rumael: I just don't see why someone would choose to be a Christian and then become a Gadianton robber. It just doesn't make sense.

Sabishah: I don't understand it either. *{beat}* Tarish just got too caught up with getting rich, he forgot what was most important.

Mayomi: This has been hard for all of us. I wish there were more we could do, but our faith and prayers will have to be enough for now. We can do little else; except live our lives the best we can, and hope that someday he will want to change.

Rumael: Then you must know how I feel. My father's a good man. I love him, but he's stubborn. He doesn't want me learning about Christ. I think that when my mother died, something died in him too. He's become bitter.

Jomon: That does sound familiar. When we decided to join the church there were many of our kindred and friends who did not agree with what we were about to do. It's hard. I know. *{pause}* I loved them. I always will, but I cannot deny what I've found to be true.

Sabishah: But what do you feel, Rumael? Do you want to keep learning?

Jomon: Your father may not approve, but this is a choice that needs to be yours.

Rumael: I don't want to disappoint my father, but— *{He pauses for awhile.}* I've thought a lot about the things you've told me. Something inside me longs to hear more, but there's so much telling me no.

Sabishah: We can teach you, Rumael, but as I told you before, the answers come by prayer and by the Holy Ghost.

Rumael: It's hard to pray when I've believed that there is no God for so long.

{There is an uncomfortable silence for a little while.}

Mayomi: The scriptures teach us of God. That's where you need to start.

Rumael: The scriptures? My mother used to tell me stories from them, about a man who saved his people from slavery and led them through the wilderness to a land promised to them.

Mayomi: You mean Moses.

Rumael: Yes, I believe that was his name.

Mayomi: When our fathers came to this land they brought these sacred records with them. They tell us stories of great prophets, such as Moses, and they have been of great worth unto us.

Taiah: I remember the stories about Moses, but I like the stories Mother tells me of Nephi the best.

Rumael: You mean the prophet?

Taiah: No, Nephi our father who's in the scriptures, he was a prophet too. Our prophet today shares his name.

Rumael: I think I do remember my mother telling me about Nephi. You Nephites are descendants of him and his followers, and we are descendants of his brother Laman and his followers.

Mayomi: That's right, they were some of the first people to come to this land, our fathers.

Taiah: Nephi and his family came here because God told them to, and they brought the brass plates; those are the scriptures. They had to get them from a wicked man named Laban. God helped them. He even gave them a compass called the Liahona to help them find their way here, but it only worked when they did what was right.

Rumael: I do remember those stories. Didn't Nephi build the ship they sailed on?

Sabishah: Yes he did. Like Noah, he had no knowledge of how to build a ship, but he was able to do it because the Lord instructed him.

Rumael: Sometimes I wish I could remember more of what my mother taught me. I was so young when she died, but I remember her love for me, and for God. My father never was united with the church of God, and I guess he never wanted me to be either.

Taiah: I was little when my real mother died too, but she taught me about the scriptures. I'll never forget her.

Jomon: It's amazing how much the faith of a child can do for a family. We adopted Taiah just before Samuel the Lamanite came. The Gadianton's killed her family, yet the faith of her parents' lives on through her. She taught us in ways that only a little child can, and because of her, we were ready to believe when we heard the words of the prophets.

Mayomi: You may have lost your mother, but as you can see, a mother's love and teachings never die. You may be surprised by how much you recall. We're fortunate to own a copy of the scriptures, and we read from it every evening. We'd love to have you join us. Will you, Rumael?

Rumael: Yes, I would like to.

Jomon: You can even join us tonight. There is one more thing we must ask of you, though; that is, if you truly want to know if the things we have been telling you are true.

Rumael: Yes?

Jomon: Will you pray about what you learn and ask the Lord if it is true?

{Rumael pauses for a moment before he answers.}

Rumael: Yes, I will.

Taiah: Then will you be baptized, Rumael?

{Rumael looks a bit bewildered.}

Sabishah: Rumael, when you know for yourself that the scriptures are true and that we do have a prophet of God today, will you be baptized and join us as a follower of Christ?

Taiah: Yes, you need to be baptized like I was, Rumael. Will you?

{Rumael looks overwhelmed and hesitant. He looks down and seems to study his hands for a while. Just as the silence begins to get uncomfortable, there is a knock at the door. Sabishah gets up to answer it. Deborah enters, looking very worried.}

Sabishah: Hello, Deborah.

Deborah: *{urgently}* Sabishah, there's something I must tell you!

Sabishah: Can it wait?

Deborah: No! And it concerns all of you. You must listen to me.

{She is oblivious of Rumael who looks as if he's not sure whether to leave or stay.}

Jomon: What is it, Deborah?

Deborah: I was on my way home from the marketplace and I heard the Gadiantons talking in the streets. I kept myself well hidden. They never saw me, and I heard all of their plans.

Jomon: Yes, go on.

Deborah: They've held a secret meeting. They say that the time is far past for the signs spoken of by Samuel the Lamanite to come.

Sabishah: We've been told that before.

Jomon: Yes, we've heard those arguments.

Deborah: Listen to me! You've got to stop being Christians! You must deny that you believe in Christ!

Jomon: That is something we will never do.

Mayomi: The Gadiantons can rob us of our money and possessions, and even of our son, but they cannot take away our faith and the beliefs that we cherish.

{Deborah looks to Sabishah.}

Sabishah: I feel the same way they do. I will never deny Christ.

Taiah: And I won't either.

Deborah: But, you've got to. The Gadianton robbers are plotting against you. They plan to exterminate you! –Kill you! Everyone who will not deny Christ!

{There are gasps of shock and fear from everyone except for Rumael who remains silent, looking as frightened as though he's just been given the death sentence.}

Deborah: I had to come warn you. They've set apart a day when they plan to kill all Christians, unless the signs come before then.

Jomon: When is this day?

Deborah: Only thirty days from now.

{Sabishah and Mayomi cling to Jomon for comfort, one on each side of him. He puts his arms around them both. Taiah buries her face in her mother's skirt.}

Jomon: They may have taken my son away from us, but they will not take my wife or my daughters, and they will not take me away from them. How dare they threaten my family and my people!

{Sabishah breaks away from them and goes to Rumael. She places her hand on his shoulder in a comforting gesture.}

Sabishah: Are you all right?

Rumael: *{turning to look at her}* How can I be?

Deborah: I'm sorry to bear such terrible news, but it's true.

Sabishah: *{turning to Jomon}* Oh, Father, what will we do now?

Jomon: There's only one thing we can do. We'll pray. Would you like to join us Rumael? Deborah?

{They all kneel down center stage. Deborah looks a little hesitant but kneels down with them. The lights fade as Jomon begins to pray.}

Scene 5

{Sabishah is alone sitting center stage, illuminated by a shaft of light. The set for her home is gone and the stage is bare.}

Sabishah: Why? Why this? Why now? Deborah meant well. She didn't know we had just invited Rumael to be baptized, nor would she have understood. What would happen to Rumael now? Would he have the strength to endure this? Would we? *{She faces the audience.}* I never thought we would have such a great trial of our faith. We, the believers, had been threatened with our lives. All we wanted was to worship our God and to hold onto our faith and the beliefs that we treasured. We had been tormented by them before, but now,

we couldn't go anywhere without knowing that the Gadianton robbers were watching and plotting against us. I counted the days, secretly fearing that each day would bring me closer to my death and the death of my family and friends. I knew there must be a reason, but as it is with most trials, I didn't see the reason behind it until long after it was all over.

I had been told this before, but I had to experience it for myself before I really learned that God allows his children to bear persecution to prepare them to be with him again. He gave us this trial to see if we would remain faithful to Him. I prayed for strength and courage in this troubled time, and although He didn't take this trial away, the Lord did not leave me alone. He gave me the strength I needed to endure it.

Even when my life and the lives of those I loved had been threatened; I could not deny what I knew was true. Christ would be born in Jerusalem. Although I had no proof, nothing but the prophets' words, I knew this. He had already given us so much light and understanding, and He would be our light after the sun had set, on the night of His birth.

And as for Rumael, it took some time, but my prayers for him were answered, and in time, so were my prayers for Tarish.

{Stage lights on. Sabishah stands and sees Rumael who is sitting alone on the ground, downstage left, looking out into the audience. She looks disturbed when she sees what he is looking at. In back of the audience and in the aisles, there are many Gadianton robbers. Some of them are obviously drunk; others have harlots with them. They are all dressed in fine, colorful clothing with lots of jewelry. Rumael looks at them as though part of him wants to join them. Sabishah approaches him.}

Sabishah: Rumael.

Rumael: *{startled}* Oh, Sabishah, hello.

Sabishah: Rumael, we shouldn't be here.

Rumael: Life seems so easy for them.

Sabishah: Let's go. Please come with me.

Rumael: Look at them, Sabishah. They have no rules. They do whatever they want, take whatever they want, and anyone who's not one of them gets terrorized by them. And you Christians, you get the worst of it. It's just not fair.

Sabishah: Don't envy them. God gives us commandments because he knows we will be happier if we obey them, and besides that, our rewards in heaven will be great if we are righteous.

Rumael: I don't know, Sabishah. Being a Christian seems awfully hard to me. First, my father's disapproval, and now, a threat from them. I just don't know if I can do it.

Sabishah: They'll see us, Rumael! We've got to get out of here!

{Jacob notices them and walks towards them.}

Jacob: Well, what have we here? Another woman to join in the fun?

{He walks up the steps, onto the stage. Rumael scrambles to his feet and stands between him and Sabishah.}

Rumael: Leave her alone!

Jacob: Oh, I wouldn't hurt her. Actually, I believe I've seen this young lady before. *{turning to Sabishah}* Remember me, sweetheart?

{Sabishah clings to Rumael for protection.}

Sabishah: Of course I remember you. You robbed my family.

Rumael: He did? That time you told me about, when you were coming from the marketplace?

Sabishah: Yes, he was one of them.

Jacob: So nice to be remembered. I always try to leave my mark. In fact, one of my fellow Gadiantons wanted this pretty young thing for a concubine, but her father wouldn't have it.

Rumael: And neither will I! I demand that you leave us alone!

Jacob: And who are you to speak to me like that? We will take what we want!

Rumael: *{removing his purse from his belt}* Well then, here *{He throws it at the Gadianton's feet.}* take all the money I have, but leave us alone. A woman is not a prize to be won, or stolen.

Jacob: *{He picks it up and opens it.}* I thank you for your generous offer. *{turning to Sabishah}* And I will inform my friend that I have seen you again. I advise you to reconsider. Our concubines are given nothing but the best. *{He turns to leave.}*

Sabishah: Our God will protect us in the day you come against us! *{She immediately realizes her mistake and clasps her hand over her mouth.}*

Jacob: What was that?

Rumael: It was nothing! She meant nothing by it!

Jacob: *{to Sabishah}* What God were you referring to?

Sabishah: The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will not be ashamed of him.

Jacob: So you're a Christian. You'd better pray hard then. *{He yells to the other Gadiantons.}* We have a Christian among us!

{There is an immediate hush, the Gadiantons and harlots all stop what they are doing and look to see what's going on. Rumael and Sabishah stand boldly before them, but inside they

are trembling. One of the Gadiantons breaks the silence. He is very drunk and slurs his words as he speaks.}

Laban: Where is 'e. I'll put a spear through 'is gullet.

Mahi: You're too drunk to even take aim. Let me at him.

Jacob: It's a woman. *{turns to Rumael}* Unless of course you are a Christian too.

Rumael: I am not. But I will not allow you to harm Sabishah, or any of my Christian friends.

Jacob: And I'd love to see you stop us. We've warned your friends. They must deny what we know cannot be true. There will be no Christ. The time is far past for your prophet's signs.

Rumael: And what if it is true? What if the night without darkness comes before this day you've set apart?

Jacob: It will not.

Mahi: I'm afraid your Christian friends will die. There's nothing you can do to protect them from us.

Laban: Yeah, we'll slaughter 'em all, an' you can't stop us.

{There is a chorus of cheers from the rest of the Gadiantons}.

Jacob: *{to Sabishah}* Now, sweetheart, do you have any last words before we take you and your friend as prisoners?

Rumael: *{screaming, almost in panic}* Nooo!

{Sabishah silences him.}

Sabishah: Yes, I do. I'd have you know that there is a God in heaven, the God our fathers worshiped. I trust that we are in his hands, for he will keep his people. I wish for you all to know that He will send His son. He is coming to save us all, even you, who do not believe in Him.

Jacob: Well said. I'm sure your prophet has taught you to be bold, but your boldness won't save you. In fact it may make your fate worse. Our governor, Giddianhi, shows little mercy when deciding the fate of our prisoners, especially when they annoy him. Bind them, Jonathan.

{Jonathan walks up the steps to the stage. He grabs Rumael who struggles as he takes a rope from his belt and starts to bind his hands behind his back while Jacob holds Sabishah, not wanting her to get away. Rumael cries out as Jonathan pulls the ropes tight around his wrists.}

Sabishah: Stop it! You're hurting him! *{Jacob pulls her arms behind her and she cries out.}*
Let us go! Please stop!

Jacob: Quiet! Hold your tongue, or your fate will be worse than that of a concubine!

{Nephi enters stage right and boldly marches towards them.}

Nephi: Stop! I demand that you let these people go!

Jacob: Let them go? They are our prisoners.

Nephi: Then I would like to pay for their release.

Jacob: How much are you willing to pay?

Nephi: All that I have.

{He holds his purse out to Jacob who motions to one of the other Gadiantons to take Sabishah. He grabs her roughly by the shoulders, and Jacob takes the purse, opens it, and runs his fingers through the coins.}

Jacob: It's not enough, not for the lives of two prisoners.

Nephi: If ten onties of silver is not enough, *{He looks at his bracelet, the only finery he wears and removes it from his wrist.}* then I'll have you take my father's gold bracelet as well.

{He reluctantly hands it to Jacob, who grabs it and caresses it lustfully.}

Jacob: Well, would you look at that workmanship, I bet it's worth a fortune.

Mahi: You can't take all the booty for yourself. Give it here.

Jonathan: Not so fast, these are my prisoners. The gold that pays for their release belongs to me.

{They all argue for a moment until Jacob raises his hand to silence them.}

Jacob: As you can see, your offer is not enough to satisfy all of us. We will take your money and the bracelet, and we will take these two as prisoners.

Nephi: If it's riches you want, take all that's in my house, but let them go.

Jacob: Are you a rich man?

Nephi: I am well enough off. I have what I need for myself and my family, but take it and leave us alone.

Jacob: Well now, we might be able to strike a bargain after all. What do you say, men?

{The Gadiantons talk among themselves for a minute. Then there is a moment of silence.}

Jacob: Well?

Mahi: We'll take our prisoners on the day we've set apart. But for now, I get first pick on whatever's in this man's house!

{The other Gadiantons yell in disagreement.}

Laban: Oh no you don't. Not if I get there first!

Jacob: Release them.

{The Gadianton holding Sabishah lets go of her. She rushes to Rumael and works the knots free until she has untied his hands, then gently massages his wrists.}

Nephi: My home is on the far end of town, next to the marketplace.

{The Gadiantons cheer and run up the steps, across the stage and exit. Sabishah goes to Nephi and hugs him. He holds her for a moment.}

Sabishah: *{relieved}* Oh, Nephi, thank you.

Nephi: Your father will thank me for saving you. I couldn't bear to see your parents lose another child.

Sabishah: *{suddenly worried}* Nephi, what about your family?!

Nephi: They're all right. Rebecca has taken the children to see her mother. I would have gone too, but I felt that the Lord wanted me to be here, and now I know why.

Sabishah: Rebecca will be devastated when she finds your home in ruins. What they don't steal, they'll destroy!

Nephi: She would be more devastated to hear that the Gadianton robbers had taken you prisoner. You're her friend, and so is your mother.

Sabishah: Oh, Nephi, I'm sorry.

Nephi: Think nothing of it, my child. Your life is far more precious than my home. We will get by. I will ask my brother to take us in. *{He pauses, then turns to Rumael.}* And you, you were brave. Thank you for protecting her.

Rumael: It was the least I could do. Her family has welcomed me into their home and taught me of Christ.

Nephi: Really, I would expect no less of Jomon and his family. They are a great strength to the church.

Rumael: It was my fault she was even here.

Sabishah: Don't blame yourself, Rumael. I came on my own.

Rumael: Yes, but it was because you were worried about me.

Sabishah: That I was. When I saw you looking towards them, I was afraid that I might lose you too.

Rumael: I would never follow them, Sabishah; it's just that— *{He pauses, not sure of what to say.}*

Nephi: That it seems easier to be one of them.

Rumael: Yes.

Nephi: I can see how you would feel that way. This is a perilous time for us. But remember, my son, the rewards given to the righteous will be great.

Rumael: You're, you're Nephi, the prophet. I heard you speak from your garden tower. I wanted to meet you, but I never imagined it would be like this.

Nephi: And I am happy to meet you, despite the circumstances. What is your name, my son?

Rumael: Rumael. My mother was a Christian, but she died when I was young. I haven't forgotten her teachings, and I've longed for the spirit I felt when she told me stories of the prophets. I felt it again when I heard you speak.

Nephi: That's good to hear.

Rumael: There's something I must ask you though.

Nephi: Yes?

Rumael: How did you become the prophet?

Nephi: It was a call from the Lord. My father was the prophet before me. Just as your mother taught you, he taught me, and instilled in me a desire to do all that the Lord would ask of me. In fact, the tower you heard me speak from is the same tower where my father prayed and called upon the people to repent.

Rumael: Really.

Nephi: Yes, it was there that he announced by inspiration that the Chief Judge had been murdered.

Rumael: I believe I've heard of that, though it happened before I was born. Wasn't it his brother who murdered him?

Nephi: Yes. The Lord told my father these things, and when the people found that they were true, he was set free along with the others who had been accused.

Rumael: I remember my mother telling me about that. *{beat}* So, the Lord wanted you to be the prophet after your father?

Nephi: Yes. Not long ago, my father departed out of this land. No one knows where he went, but I know he is with the Lord. Before he left, he told me that I was chosen by God to be the next prophet.

Rumael: So, is it always passed from father to son?

Nephi: No. The Lord calls whomever he chooses.

Rumael: Isn't being a prophet at a time like this an overwhelming responsibility?

Nephi: *{smiles}* It's no more than what other prophets have endured. Abraham was asked to offer his only son as a sacrifice, and Moses endured forty years in the wilderness with his people. Even our father Lehi had to leave all that he had and take his family into the wilderness where they suffered much.

Rumael: Yes, but you're all about to be killed. Sabishah and her family asked me if I would be baptized, but how can I, knowing that my life will be in danger too?

Sabishah: Rumael, do you believe that Christ will come?

Rumael: *{meekly}* Yes, I do. The times I talked with you and your family- I felt so good about it then, but I'm still afraid.

Nephi: My son, it's hard for me too. Christ will come, yet whether or not he will come before the day set apart for our destruction, I do not know. I only know that we are in the Lord's hands. If we die, we will be in His presence.

Rumael: I've never thought of it that way.

Nephi: He is watching over us. He protected you today by sending me. Be it according to His will, but I pray that he will protect us on the day the Gadiantons have set apart to destroy us. If it is His will, we will live. But one thing I know, He will send His son. He is coming, and the world will never be the same. So many prophets have testified that he will come and have looked forward to this time. We have been called to endure much, but I thank God for his great blessings and I rejoice in my redeemer.

{There is a pause while each of them reflect for a moment on this.}

Nephi: Come now, Sabishah, after I take you home, I would like to talk with Rumael some more.

{Sabishah smiles knowingly.}

Sabishah: Yes, Nephi. *{She pauses then turns to Rumael.}* I was so frightened, but I guess I don't need to be, when you're around.

Rumael: *{laughs}* I hope you're right about that, Sabishah. *{beat}* Nephi, I can't thank you enough for what you've done. I'm sorry you lost your home to save us.

Nephi: I'm just thankful that I came in time.

{They all exit stage right.}

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