

## Naomi or Mara?

From Ruth chapters 1 & 2

Characters

Narrator

Ruth

Naomi

Boaz

Foremen

Nar: Naomi, Ruth and Orpah were alone. Naomi's husband had died, and then her sons, who were married to Ruth and Orpah, had died as well. They were all very sad. Naomi had told Ruth and Orpah to go back to their families as they were still young and could maybe marry again. Orpah left, but Ruth stayed with Naomi.

Ruth: Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.

Nar: So Naomi and Ruth travelled on together until they reached Bethlehem. When they arrived everyone was surprised. They asked: 'could this be Naomi? She went away so happy, but now she is so sad!'

Naomi: Don't call me Naomi anymore. Call me Mara, for my life is now bitter and sad. I went away full, but now my life is empty.

Nar: In those days a woman was not allowed to ask for help no matter how poor they were. They had to wait and hope that someone would help them. Naomi didn't have any relatives in Bethlehem, apart that is from a man called Boaz. But would he help them? Did he even know about them? They found a room to stay in. Ruth worried about her mother-in-law. She was so sad and nothing seemed to comfort her. They had very little to eat. It was the time of the barley harvest.

Ruth: Let me go to the fields today. I can go behind the harvesters and pick up some of the grain they miss. At least then we can have bread to eat.

Naomi: Go to the fields my daughter, and may God bless all that you do.

Nar: So Ruth went to the barley fields where the harvesters were busy at work. She followed them, picking up the stalks they missed. She didn't stop working from morning until the middle of the day. Then the farmer came to see how his workers were getting on. Ruth didn't know it, but his name was Boaz. The same Boaz who was Naomi's relative. He was a kind man who worshipped God. When he saw Ruth he asked his foreman about her.

Boaz: Who is the woman who is gleaning in the field?

F'man: Why that is Ruth. She is the Moabitess who came back with Naomi. She is a good worker. She's been hard at it since morning until now. She's only had one short rest all day!

Nar: Boaz saw how hard Ruth was working. He went over to talk to her.

Boaz: Stay here in my field and don't go anywhere else. Follow the harvest girls and pick up what you can and if you are thirsty get a drink from the jug in the shelter. You will be safe with my men, they will look after you.

Ruth: That is very kind of you sir. I don't know why you should treat me with such kindness, for I am a foreigner and should not really be here.

Boaz: I have heard about you and how you have come here with Naomi. You have done a wonderful thing for your mother-in-law. May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

Nar: Boaz went back to his foreman.

Boaz: Look after the girl and make sure she is safe, and tell the men and girls to pull some extra stalks from their bundles and leave them for her to collect.

Nar: Ruth worked hard all day and then took all she had collected back to Naomi.

Naomi: This is a lot of barley my daughter. Whose field did you work in?

Ruth: A man called Boaz. He was very kind to me. He even said he had heard about us and asked God to bless us.

Naomi: Boaz? But he is my relative! He is the one who could help us! Pray to God that he will help us. Pray to God that he will show us the same kindness he has shown you today.

Nar: And Naomi and Ruth prayed and waited to see what God, and Boaz, would do.

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