

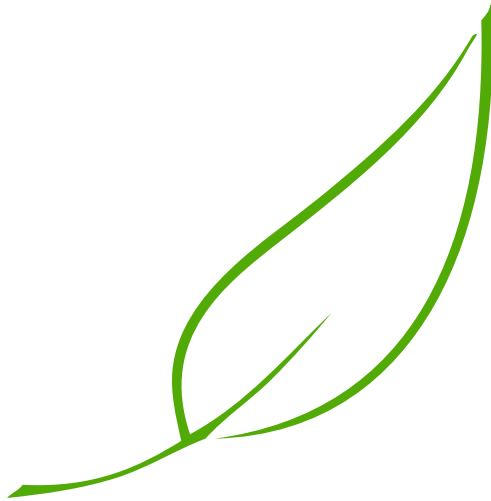
GOD'S FAITHFUL MESSENGER

Music and Lyrics by Larry Nestor

Book by Miriam Schuman

Music Arrangements by Robert Crowder

Title Concept by Randall G. Mielke



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“The Prophet Who Can’t Prophecy” (Elijah, Abigail)

“God’s Golden Sunshine” (Elijah, Ethan)

“Someone” (Elijah, Abigail)

“Turn It Over to the Lord” (Elijah, Abigail, Ethan, Chorus: Townspeople)

“No Fun to Party” (Ahab, Jezebel, Chorus: Court, Banker, Jeweler)

“Hear Us, Oh Baal” (Elijah, Prophet of Baal)

“God’s Golden Sunshine” Reprise (Entire Cast)

SCENE 1**CHORUS:** (*Sings "Wicked Ways"*)

WICKED WAYS, WICKED WAYS;
NAUGHTY NIGHTS, EVIL DAYS;
SINNING LONG, SINNING STRONG;
NAUGHTY, BAWDY, DREADFULLY WICKED WAYS!

Some CHORUS MEMBERS comment, some enact evil.

TO LIE, CHEAT AND STEAL;
TO COVET, CURSE AND KILL;
SIX SUREFIRE WAYS FOR A FREE PASS TO HELL!
THERE'S NO ESCAPE
FOR MURDER, PILLAGE, RAPE,
AND THEY TURN UP THE FLAME
FOR EACH COMMANDMENT YOU BREAK!

JEZEBEL and AHAB enter. JEZEBEL painted heavily. The music, song, and dance build and grow into a frenzy. Pulsing red lighting may represent flames of hell. The intensity of the lights should grow with each word. CHORUS is divided into two sections.

SECTION ONE:

LUST!
GLUTTONY!
ANGER!
ADULTERY!
PRIDE!
ENVY!
SLOTH!
IDOLATRY!

SECTION TWO:

HIGHER!
HOTTER!
HIGHER!
HOTTER!
HOTTER!
HIGHER!
HIGHER!
HOTTER!

Screams of anguish. Red lights go off.

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CHORUS:

WICKED WAYS, WICKED WAYS;
NAUGHTY NIGHTS, EVIL DAYS;
SINNING LONG, SINNING STRONG;
NAUGHTY, BAWDY, DREADFULLY WICKED WAYS!

SOLOIST:

NABOTH, A HARDWORKING MAN,
(SPOKEN.) HAD VALU'BLE VINEYARDS ON HIS LAND.
A JADED JEZEBEL
SET HIM UP—HE WOULDN'T SELL.
HER FOLLOWERS FELL FOR HER PLAN...
THEY KILLED THE MAN!

Enter ELIJAH. He stands Stage Right, his somber brown mantle and leather belt serving as a sharp contrast to the frenetic colors of the costumes of the others. During the last refrain, one CHORUS MEMBER notices him and whispers "It's Elijah" to another. The news spreads—whisper ad-lib: "Elijah's here"; "It's the prophet from Tishbe"; "Not him again!" etc.

CHORUS:

WICKED WAYS, WICKED WAYS;
NAUGHTY NIGHTS, EVIL DAYS;
SINNING LONG, SINNING STRONG.
NAUGHTY, BAWDY, DREADFULLY WICKED WAYS!
NAUGHTY, BAWDY, DREADFULLY WICKED WAYS!

Soon everyone is quiet; music stops. Only AHAB and JEZEBEL, wrapped up in delight of their wickedness, continue cavorting and singing in the silence. Everyone else has frozen.

ELIJAH: King Ahab.

Abruptly, AHAB and JEZEBEL stop, embarrassed to find they're the only ones carrying on.

JEZEBEL: Not him again. Darling, send him away. He's ruining the party.

Murmur of agreement from CHORUS. All turn to look at AHAB.

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AHAB: See here, Elijah, can't you see I'm engaged right now...

ELIJAH: You're engaged in evil and idolatry.

CHORUS is shocked and delighted. It turns to see AHAB'S response.

AHAB: Now see here, I am King of Israel...

ELIJAH: And you are doing more evil in God's eyes than any other king before you.

AHAB: Now wait a moment...

ELIJAH: I have been sent to tell you that just as certainly as the Lord God of Israel lives—my God that I serve and love—that until I bring a new message from the Lord we will have years without rain—or even dew.

There is a moment of shocked silence.

JEZEBEL: Treason!

Blackout.

SCENE 2

AT START: *ELIJAH is mending his mantle. He sits on a rock.*

GOD: *(Offstage.)* Elijah.

Elijah looks around him, startled to hear his name.

GOD: Elijah

ELIJAH: *(Realizes who is speaking and directs his next lines upward.)* Oh, God, thank heaven it's only you!

GOD: *(Annoyed yet amused.)* Only me?!

ELIJAH: *(Winces audibly and visually. Aside.)* Ah. Stuck my foot in my mouth again. *(Weakly, to GOD.)* Hi, God. How are you? *(He recognizes the stupidity of this question as soon as the words leave his mouth.)* I mean, I'm sure you're doing great. You are Great...

He is babbling on, getting more tangled up in his own words with each sentence. God takes pity on him and interrupts.

GOD: I'm fine, Elijah. How have you been?

ELIJAH: Oh, just great. It's so quiet out here by Cherith Brook. And I have the ravens to keep me company and bring me food—just as you promised—although I don't recognize everything they bring as edible. Still, I take it on trust! And I've been able to catch up on my mending...well, actually God, to be perfectly honest, I'm not totally comfortably. I don't want to complain, but the stream has dried up, and living as a fugitive is getting me down. I just barely escaped after I gave Ahab your last message. Jezebel got her claws on my mantle, and you can see the result. *(Holds up torn mantle.)*

GOD: I was protecting you, Elijah.

ELIJAH: Yes, God, I know that, and believe me, I'm grateful. *(He pauses.)* You know, God, I've been thinking...

GOD: Yes?

ELIJAH: Well, the drought's been lasting quite a while, and now that the stream is dry, I was hoping...

GOD: Yes?

ELIJAH: I was hoping that I could go give Ahab and Jezebel the good news that the drought is over and then go home to Tishbe in Gilead. *(Brief silence.)* I've gotten pretty handy with a needle and thread. I thought I could open up a tailor shop. *(Hopefully.)* You see, God, I'm lonely out here with no one but the ravens to keep me company.

GOD: I'm sorry, Elijah. It's not yet time for me to end the drought or for you to settle down—in Tishbe or anywhere else. I still need you to act as my messenger. However, I will do something to solve your problem with loneliness while you wait for the end of the drought.

ELIJAH: *(He is clearly disappointed. He carefully fastens his needle to the cloth in his mantle, and folds the cloth. He puts it in his pack. He uses the time to gain control of his emotions. When he is done, he stands and says with forced cheerfulness.)* Right, God. What do I do next?

GOD: There is a village named Zarephath, near Sidon; go live there. I have told a widow there to feed you.

Lights fade on ELIJAH as GOD speaks. When the lights are down on him, they begin to rise on a group of WOMEN working on the other side of the stage. ELIJAH exits in the dark and crosses backstage in time to enter when the lights are totally up. Meanwhile ABIGAIL, obviously not a rich woman, is gathering sticks. She is a good-looking woman whose beauty has been marred by hard work and famine. A few other older women surround her. She is clearly the most attractive. ELIJAH enters and stands unnoticed by the side. He sees ABIGAIL and does something of a double take as he notes her beauty.

ELIJAH: *(Aside.)* If she's the widow, my life has taken a turn for the better. *(Exits.)*

ABIGAIL: Ethan! *(To another woman.)* Dinah, have you seen my son?

DINAH: Sorry.

ETHAN: *(Coming closer.)* I'm over here, Mother. I just sat down to rest. *(Enters.)* I found you a stick.

ETHAN holds up a pathetically small twig which ABIGAIL accepts gratefully, as though it is a valuable gift.

ABIGAIL: Thank you, Ethan. I have enough sticks now for the fire. Why don't we head towards home.

ETHAN: But, Mother, what about your dream that God wanted you to come out here to meet a man and feed him.

ABIGAIL: It was just dream. If no one's here yet, it must not mean anything.

Enter ELIJAH. He has hastily combed his hair, straightened his mantle and refastened his leather belt. He walks over to ABIGAIL, eager to impress her.

ELIJAH: Excuse me, ma'am, but would you happen to have a cup of water for a thirsty man?

ETHAN: *(Whispering.)* Mother, it's him!

ABIGAIL: *(To ETHAN.)* Hush. *(To ELIJAH.)* If you will excuse me, sir, I will get you a drink. *(She turns away.)*

ETHAN: *(Excitedly.)* Your dream came true.

ELIJAH: *(To heaven.)* Thank you, God!

ABIGAIL: Shh.

ELIJAH: Would you bring me something to eat, too?

ABIGAIL: I tell you, sir, as surely as the Lord is God, I don't even have one piece of bread left. All I have is a bit of flour and a bit of cooking oil. These sticks I've gathered are for building a fire to cook one last meal. When it is over, my son Ethan and I will starve to death.

ELIJAH: Do not worry about your lack of food. Do as you've planned, but first prepare a little for me. The Lord will provide enough so that when we all finish eating there will still be more. The Lord our God has told me that he will fill your jars with oil and flour until the drought ends.

ABIGAIL: *(Shrugging.)* I suppose we've got nothing to lose. *(She turns to go and then stops, realizing ELIJAH has not moved.)* Well, don't just stand there. If I'm going to feed you, you'd better come along.

ELIJAH: Yes, of course.

ABIGAIL: And make yourself useful. *(She thrusts the bundle of sticks into his arms.)*

ELIJAH: *(Fervently.)* Delighted to be of service.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

AT RISE: *The widow's house is Stage Left; Stage Right is a courtyard in the village. The CHORUS gathers there and gossips about the drought. Lights are down on Abigail's house and up on the courtyard.*

WOMAN 1: I used the last of my olive oil today. We already slaughtered our ox, so my husband tried to sell our plow for food, but no one has any food to sell. Tomorrow he's planning to go to Sidon to see if they've got any food to sell.

MAN 1: They don't. The entire land's starving.

WOMAN 2: They say even King Ahab and Queen Jezebel are tightening their belts.

WOMAN 3: Yeah—they only have one feast a day instead of two.

MAN 1: Well we can be sure of one thing...

MAN 2: What's that?

MAN 1: None of the food from his storehouses will ever reach our tables.

ALL: That's for sure. (*Etc. ad-lib.*)

WOMAN 2: Our only hope is that it will rain soon. After all, it's been almost a year since we last had a good rainstorm.

MAN 1: (*Wistfully.*) Rain...

WOMAN 3: (*Sliding into a similarly wistful mood.*) I remember that storm—the raindrops splashing on my roof...

MAN 2: And on the ground feeding our crops...

WOMAN 3: I complained because I wanted to work outside...

MAN 1: Rain...

WOMAN 2: Let it rain...

WOMAN 4: Remember what it's like...

CHORUS: (*Sings "Let it Rain"*)

LET IT RAIN,
LET IT RAIN;
LISTEN TO AND ENJOY,
DON'T COMPLAIN.
EACH LITTLE FLOWER
DOWN THE LANE
MUST HAVE A SHOWER—
LET IT RAIN.

ONE BY ONE
COME THE DROPS
AND THE BLESSING THEY BRING
NEVER STOPS
WHenever THERE'S THE THOUGHT OF PAIN—
LET IT RAIN, LET IT RAIN,
LET IT RAIN.

RAINDROPS ON TREE TOPS
SOOTHE MY MIND AND SOUL.
I LISTEN AS THEY CHRISTEN
WITH LOVE FROM UP ABOVE.

LET IT RAIN.
LET IT RAIN.
MAKING HEAVEN AND EARTH ONE DOMAIN.
RED ROOSTER ON THE WEATHER VANE—
LET IT RAIN, LET IT RAIN,
LET IT RAIN.

After the song there's a short, restful pause while the CHORUS MEMBERS dream of rain.

WOMAN 2: I can picture it now.

MAN 1: So can I.

WOMAN 1: Yes... (*Abruptly her voice becomes bitter, shattering the mood.*) But it does no good, just wishing. Nothing does any good.

WOMAN 4: (*Quietly.*) God could help us.

MAN 2: Sure, maybe He *could*.

WOMAN 3: God's the one who sent this drought.

WOMAN 4: (*Timidly.*) But if we prayed to him, he might send...

WOMAN 2: Oh, come on.

MAN 1: God won't listen to us. If anyone needs to pray it's Ahab.

WOMAN 3: Yeah, if the King of Israel prays, God might do something.

MAN 2: God doesn't have time to listen to us.

All ad-lib in agreement. The crowd breaks up; all leave but WOMAN 1 and WOMAN 4. WOMAN 1 seems too apathetic to move. WOMAN 4 approaches her timidly.

WOMAN 4: Agatha...

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WOMAN 1: What?

WOMAN 4: Abigail still has olive oil—and some flour as well. I didn't want to tell everyone, but if you get a dish and take it to her, I'm sure she'd give you a little.

Lights go down on the WOMEN and come up on ABIGAIL and ELIJAH. ABIGAIL is cleaning, ETHAN is sleeping on a mat in a corner, and ELIJAH is mending.

ELIJAH: You keep a beautiful house.

ABIGAIL: Thank you.

ELIJAH: Have you lived here long?

ABIGAIL: I've lived... *(She is interrupted by a knock at the door.)*
Excuse me.

ABIGAIL goes to the door and meets WOMAN 1, who has a bowl in hand. WOMAN 1 makes her request in a low voice. She is embarrassed and can't be heard.

ABIGAIL: Yes, of course. Come in while I get it. *(She takes the bowl and fills it with oil.)*

WOMAN 1: *(To ELIJAH.)* Hello.

ELIJAH: Hello.

They sit in awkward silence until ABIGAIL gives the bowl back to WOMAN 1.

WOMAN 1: *(Reaching into the pocket fold above her belt.)* Thank you. I have a little...

ABIGAIL: No. You don't have to pay me. The oil is a gift from God. Thank him, not me. *(She ushers the grateful woman out.)*

ELIJAH: Anyway as I was asking, how long have you lived here?

ABIGAIL: I've lived in Zarephath all my life.

ELIJAH: Would you ever want to live somewhere else?

ABIGAIL: No.

There is another knock at the door.

ABIGAIL: Excuse me.

There is another person at the door who needs a little oil and perhaps come flour. ABIGAIL repeats her invitation in.

TOWNSPERSON: Hello.

ELIJAH: Hello.

TOWNSPERSON: Are you a tailor?

ELIJAH: No—although someday I hope to be one.

TOWNSPERSON: Sort of old to be without a job, aren't you?

ABIGAIL laughs silently at this.

ELIJAH: *(Seeing ABIGAIL'S reaction.)* I do have a job.

TOWNSPERSON: No one's ever seen you doing anything.

ELIJAH: I'm a messenger. A messenger for—

ABIGAIL: *(Interrupting.)* Here you are. This ought to keep you for a few days.

TOWNSPERSON: Thank you.

ABIGAIL: Now you'd best get home. I'm sure the baby's hungry.

TOWNSPERSON: Oh, he is. And he's so small and thin. He doesn't look like a four-year-old. *(Exits with a word of farewell.)*

ABIGAIL: *(To ELIJAH.)* Don't you have a brain in your head?

ELIJAH: *(Shocked, puzzled and hurt by the attack.)* W-what?

ABIGAIL: You were going to tell her [him] that you're one of God's messengers.

ELIJAH: *(Getting loud.)* Yes—that's what I am.

ABIGAIL: Shh. You'll wake Ethan. Don't you see that it's not safe to let anyone know that you're Elijah the prophet? King Ahab is searching for you and he's spread the word that you and your God are responsible for all our problems. Queen Jezebel is convincing many that if enough of the kingdom turns to Baal, he will defeat you and the Lord.

ELIJAH: But...

ABIGAIL: I've told everyone that you're my cousin and you lost your house and family in a fire. Let people think you're a tailor. Just don't tell them you're a prophet.

ELIJAH: I'm sorry. I didn't realize you were worried. You don't need to be so concerned. God will protect us.

ABIGAIL: He will protect you. Ethan and I don't have that guarantee.

ELIJAH: He's keeping you supplied with food.

ABIGAIL: Because of you.

ELIJAH: He's doing it for you, too.

ABIGAIL: I don't want to argue about it. I just want your word that as long as you are staying here you won't tell anyone you're a prophet.

ELIJAH: *(Sighing.)* Very well. *(He sings "The Prophet Who Can't Prophecy".)*

I'M THE PROPHET WHO CAN'T PROPHECY;
THOUGH I KNOW WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN AND WHY—
IF I SPEAK OUT TOO SOON, I WILL DIE!
I'M THE PROPHET WHO CAN'T PROPHECY.

LIKE A LETTER THAT BEARS A GOLD SEAL,
WHAT'S INSIDE ME I DARE NOT REVEAL.

ABIGAIL:

WHAT'S TO COME, YOU MUST SOMEHOW CONCEAL
LIKE A LETTER THAT BEARS A GOLD SEAL.

ELIJAH:

SOME SAY I'M A SOOTHSAYER;
OTHERS INSIST I'M A METEOROLOGIST.
I'VE THE POWER TO PROGNOSTICATE.

ABIGAIL:

TRUST ME, PROCRASTINATE!
ASK YOURSELF, WHAT WOULD IT PROFIT THEE
TO DISOBEY AND SPEAK OUT HASTILY?

ELIJAH:

I FEEL JUST LIKE A BOOK ON THE SHELF—
KEEPING MY WORDS TO MYSELF.

ABIGAIL:

BE WISE, ELIJAH, PLAY DUMB—
YOUR DAY IS YET TO COME.

ELIJAH:

WHY OH WHY MUST I
BE SILENT AND MY TALENTS DENY?

ABIGAIL:

IN GOD YOU MUST RELY!

BOTH:

I'M/YOU'RE THE PROPHET WHO CAN'T PROPHECY!

For a brief time there is silence.

ELIJAH: So, what do you like so much about Zarephath that makes you want to stay here all your life?

Before ABIGAIL can answer, there is a knock at the door.

Blackout.

SCENE 4

AT RISE: *Lights come up on AHAB and JEZEBEL Stage Right. JEZEBEL and AHAB are reclining together on a couch. JEZEBEL is eating grapes. Occasionally she puts one into AHAB'S mouth. The servants, who stand about her with fans, stare at the grapes in hungry fascination.*

JEZEBEL: I do hope we find Elijah soon. I have plans for him.

AHAB: So do I.

JEZEBEL: I've been trying to decide what is best and I really think we should sacrifice him to Baal.

AHAB grunts gloomily.

JEZEBEL: Well this drought has got to end soon. Unless Obadiah can come up with more, this is the last of my grapes, and we're running out of everything else, too.

AHAB: The drought won't end until Elijah says it will. You can't kill him until after it rains.

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JEZEBEL: (*Winding her arms around AHAB'S neck.*) It's not right that a nasty little man like Elijah should make an important man like you wait for him.

AHAB makes noises of agreement.

JEZEBEL: The people are not turning to Baal as quickly as I thought they would. That's why we still don't have rain—but once we sacrifice Elijah, they'll all turn to Baal and then we'll see rain.

AHAB: Well, we'll see—but you're not to touch him until I've spoken to him.

JEZEBEL: Of course not, darling. (*Pause.*) I just had a horrible thought.

AHAB: What's that?

JEZEBEL: What if that wretched man has gone and gotten himself starved or something? I can't sacrifice a dead man!

Quickly the lights go down on JEZEBEL and AHAB and the lighting returns to ABIGAIL'S house.

SCENE 5

AT RISE: *Abigail's house. ELIJAH is sitting at a table, sewing. The table is roughly made and new. ETHAN is watching him.*

ETHAN: How'd you learn to sew so good?

ELIJAH: Practice. My clothes always needed mending, and there was no one to do it except me.

ETHAN: How come you always ripped your clothes?

ELIJAH: Well, as a prophet, part of my job is to show God's wrath and grief when his people do evil.

ETHAN: So?

ELIJAH: The best way for me to do that was to tear my clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes.

ETHAN: I see.

ELIJAH: I also had to comfort and share the grief of the mourners of a person who died.

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ETHAN: And of course you had to tear your clothes to do that.

ELIJAH nods.

ETHAN: That's a lot of mending!

ELIJAH: I try to always tear my mantle in the same place. It makes it a little easier.

ETHAN: That's smart.

ELIJAH: Thank you.

ETHAN: Elijah, it sounds like being one of God's messengers is hard work.

ELIJAH: Sometimes it is.

ETHAN: Well, why do you do it? I mean, you're smart and everything. Couldn't you find a job that wouldn't make you tear your clothes and wouldn't make you give people bad news so they get mad at you?

ELIJAH: *(Laughing.)* It is quite a job, isn't it? And to tell you the truth, I really would love to settle down as a tailor... but that's up to God.

ETHAN: Don't you have a choice?

ELIJAH: Oh, yes. I decided to leave it up to God.

ETHAN: But don't you mind?

ELIJAH: No—at least not most of the time. You see, there are so many good things about being God's messenger.

ETHAN: Like what?

ELIJAH: Like talking to God and listening to him talk to me. Like helping other people learn about God and God's love.

ETHAN: If God sent the drought, it seems like God isn't very loving.

ELIJAH: God sent the drought because so many of the people of Israel had stopped loving him and started loving Baal.

ETHAN: I don't understand.

ELIJAH: God wants the people to repent and turn to him again. He knows they won't turn to him unless they're in trouble.

ETHAN: Oh. I never thought troubles could be good.

ELIJAH: The troubles aren't good, but sometimes because of the troubles, something good happens.

ETHAN: Like the people loving God again.

ELIJAH: Right. And sometimes the troubles help you appreciate the good things more. Just think how much more you'll enjoy the rain when God sends it. (*ELIJAH sings "God's Golden Sunshine".*)

WHEN YOUR MIND IS TROUBLED BY ADVERSITY
AND NOTHING SEEMS TO GO THE WAY YOU PLANNED;
YOU MAY FIND IT HARD TO KEEP FROM CRYING;
YOU MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO REACH OUT AND LEND A HELPING HAND.
BUT IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN DOWN IN THE VALLEY,
THE MOUNTAINTOP YOU'LL NEVER RECOGNIZE;
SO, MY FRIEND, YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP ON TRYING
NO MATTER HOW YOU FEEL INSIDE.
LIFT YOUR HEAD UP HIGH AND LOOK TO THE SKY.

AND WITNESS GOD'S GOLDEN SUNSHINE,
HEAVEN'S REFRESHING RAIN.
WASHING AWAY ALL THE DREARINESS
AND HELPING TO EASE THE SORROW AND PAIN.
GOD'S GOLDEN SUNSHINE,
HEAVEN'S REFRESHING RAIN,
WARMING THE JOYFUL FEELINGS BURIED DEEP WITHIN,
AND CLEANSING YOUR SOUL SO YOU CAN LIVE AGAIN.

NOW AND THEN WHEN THINGS ALL GO AGAINST YOU
AND FAITH AND HOPE ARE GROWING RATHER THIN,
YOU MAY FIND IT HARD TO COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS,
YOU MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SAY, "HELLO, THERE, HOW'VE YOU BEEN."
JUST REMEMBER THAT THE GOOD LORD LOVES YOU
AND HE'S ALWAYS THERE WHEN E'ER YOU CALL;
ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS LOOK AROUND YOU—
HE MADE THE WORLD FOR EV'RYONE,
SO RISE AND SHINE AND LOOK TO THE SUN.
AND WITNESS.

ELIJAH and ETHAN:

GOD'S GOLDEN SUNSHINE,
HEAVEN'S REFRESHING RAIN.
WASHING AWAY ALL THE DREARINESS
AND HELPING TO EASE THE SORROW AND PAIN;
GOD'S GOLDEN SUNSHINE,
HEAVEN'S REFRESHING RAIN,
WARMING THE JOYFUL FEELINGS BURIED DEEP WITHIN
AND CLEANSING YOUR SOUL SO YOU CAN LIVE AGAIN.
GOD'S GOLDEN SUNSHINE,

ABIGAIL enters.

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ELIJAH and ETHAN:

HEAVEN'S REFRESHING RAIN!

ABIGAIL: Ethan, you go outside for a bit. You haven't had any sun all day.

ETHAN: But I was talking to Elijah...

ELIJAH shakes his head and the boy sighs.

ETHAN: Yes, mother. *(He exits.)*

ABIGAIL: Jotham wants to order a new mantle. He wants it in two weeks. *(ABIGAIL sinks down on a cushion. She is tired.)*

ELIJAH: Thank you. *(For a while, there is silence.)* You are a very attractive woman.

ABIGAIL: Thank you.

ELIJAH: I admire your strength—the way you take care of Ethan. The way you deal with people.

ABIGAIL: Thank you.

ELIJAH: When I sit here all day, sewing, I have a lot of time to think.

ABIGAIL: I have a lot of time to think during the day, too.

ELIJAH: I find that more and more my thoughts keep drifting to one special person.

ABIGAIL: Yes, that's how it is with me, too.

ELIJAH: My thoughts bring me joy and comfort. The person—the woman—I think of is a very wonderful human being. She is gentle, loving and giving. She works hard, and she has a great deal of responsibility, yet she has not become hardened or callous. She is beautiful, both physically and spiritually.

ELIJAH pauses. ABIGAIL, who is not looking at him, does not response. He takes this as encouragement to continue.

ELIJAH: She is a joy to think about and a joy to be with. I find I want to spend more time with my special person. To help ease her burden. To share in her life... Abigail. *(Silence.)* Abigail. *(Silence.)* Abigail.

ABIGAIL: *(Starting.)* Excuse me?

ELIJAH: (*Hurt.*) Abigail, did you hear what I said?

ABIGAIL: (*Embarrassed.*) Some of it. I'm sorry. I started thinking...

ELIJAH: (*His face clearing.*) About one special person?

ABIGAIL: Yes.

ELIJAH: Do your thoughts bring you joy and comfort?

ABIGAIL: No.

ELIJAH: No?

ABIGAIL: My thought bring me worry and fear.

ELIJAH: Worry and fear?

ABIGAIL: Yes.

ELIJAH: Is there anything I can do to make you feel better?

ABIGAIL: No.

ELIJAH: Not anything?

ABIGAIL: No. Not unless you can heal him.

ELIJAH: (*Blankly.*) Heal him?

ABIGAIL: Yes. Yes, heal Ethan. I just told you. I think about him all the time, and I'm so afraid that by the time the rain comes, it will be too late to help him. His health is not getting any better and I worry about him all day.

ELIJAH draws in a deep breath in preparation of speaking, but he seems to have nothing to say. Instead he releases his breath, slowly shaking his head. He reaches out with both hands to take one of ABIGAIL'S hands in his and give it a comforting squeeze.

Blackout.

SCENE 6

AT RISE: *ELIJAH is alone on stage.*

ELIJAH: (*Calling.*) God. (*Silence.*) God! (*Silence.*) I know you're here, God, why don't you answer me. (*Yelling.*) God! (*Silence.* *ELIJAH'S shoulder's sag. He sinks to the floor and buries his face in his hands. After a few moments he says, rather hopelessly.*) I wish you'd answer me, God. I really need someone to talk to.

GOD: Yes, Elijah.

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