

Ruth

- (Ruth 1:1-4) There was a woman named Naomi, who married a man Elimelek, and had two sons named Mahlon and Kilion. They were married to Oprah and Ruth.
- They lived in Moab and unfortunately, Elimelek, Mahlon, and Kilion died.
- Naomi heard the the Lord had been aiding people. So she prepared herself and her daughter-in-laws to return back to their original homes. “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.” (Ruth 1:8 and 9)
- So Oprah agreed and she left but, Ruth stayed and said: “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” (Ruth 1:16-17)
- So Naomi and Ruth traveled to Moab. Naomi changed her name to Mara because “The Almighty has made my life bitter” (Ruth 1:20)
- They made to Moab just in time for the barley harvest.
- Ruth went to the field of Naomi’s rich relative, Boaz. This phrase is often used in the Bible to suggest that God is setting the scene for something significant. It also implied, with a touch of Jewish humour, that Naomi and the people of Bethlehem saw a good match for Ruth and edged her into meeting Boaz.
- Naomi knew that Ruth was beautiful and respected, and she knew that a rich husband for Ruth would solve all their problems. Boaz was the ideal choice. He was available, childless, well respected and rich. He was also a relative of Naomi’s through her husband’s family, so he had a legal obligation to help Naomi. Boaz was second in line to the position of go’el in Naomi’s, and therefore Ruth’s, family. (A go’el was a close male relative with the duty of looking after a family when the male head of the family was absent. In earlier times, the go’el of the family was expected to marry the widow of an Israelite man if she wished it)
- By great good luck, Boaz seems to have been smitten from the outset. He went to great lengths to get extra grain for Ruth, to protect her from young men who might harass her, and to see that she was properly fed.
- **Read Ruth 3:1-18**
- **‘When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came stealthily and uncovered his feet, and lay down.’**

- Lying beside Boaz, Ruth suggested that he, as the go-el of Naomi's family, should 'cover her with his blanket', a euphemism for marriage. She had the right to demand marriage of the go-el of her family, so that she could have the children that Israelite women longed for. Boaz happily agreed, but pointed out to her that there was another man who had that right, a closer relative even than himself. Boaz had to square matters with him before he could marry Ruth. He seems to have been at pains to do everything correctly, so that there could be no question about the legality of the marriage.
- **So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife.**
- **When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son.**
Then the women said to Naomi **"Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next of kin. May his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourishment for your old age. For your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him"**.
- **Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse.'**
- **Read Ruth 4:1-22**

God will give us many obstacles for our happy ending.