

LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN: A SEQUEL

Characters: Reader, Narrator, Servant, Levi, Hannah, Isaiah, Simeon

Reader: [*Read Luke 16:19–31.*]

Narrator: Ten years have passed since the deaths of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man's four children, now in their teens and early twenties, are gathered around the same dinner table, elegantly dressed and about to enjoy another superb meal. At the gate of their mansion are the children of Lazarus, pleading, as he did, for just a share of the crumbs. A servant enters the dining room.

Servant [*whispering to Levi*]: They're back again, sir—begging as usual.

Levi [*pounding on the table and startling the others*]: Why don't they leave us alone? Our days are filled with all sorts of demands—overseeing the vineyard harvest, negotiating in the marketplace—

Hannah [*chiming in*]: Don't forget that some of us spent a tough day in school.

Levi [*with increased annoyance*]: —and now when we finally have a chance to relax in peace, they show up, with pleading eyes and wretched hands. [*His voice continues to rise.*] Get rid of them—and tell them if they bother us again, we'll make sure it's the last time.

Isaiah: Wait a minute, Levi. I find them irritating too—but I don't think we can just ignore them. Why don't we send them out a few scraps and tell them if they want to occasionally come by after supper's over, we'll have a few leftovers available for them? That way, they'll stay alive and content—but they won't be interrupting our lives.

Hannah [*hesitantly*]: We're talking about them as if they're animals. The rabbi was explaining just today how the Law of Moses reminds us that such people are human beings. Maybe if we brought out the leftovers, we'd remember that—and they'd appreciate it more. [*Levi and Isaiah react with disgust; Hannah turns to them, with greater hesitancy.*] I'm not suggesting we do it all the time—just once in a while. [*Pause.*] Well, if we do decide to send out scraps, I guess I could do it—sometimes.

Isaiah [*turning to Simeon*]: What do you think, Simeon? You're being awfully quiet.

[*Without a word, Simeon stands up and removes his elegant outer cloak, laying it over the chair.*]

Levi [*irritated*]: Where are you going? You haven't even touched your meal.

Simeon [*quiet but clear*]: I can't stay here any longer. This house, these clothes, this food—so much of it is built on the backs of those people at our doorstep. It feels so empty; and look what it does to us. [*He turns and begins walking out of the room.*]

Levi, Isaiah, Hannah [*together*]: Where are you going?

[*Simeon pauses at the doorway, and turns.*]

Simeon: To live with the children of Lazarus. [*He leaves.*]

Levi [*gruffly*]: What good does he think that's going to do? [*He and Hannah begin to eat.*]

Isaiah [*quietly and reflectively*]: He looked almost happy. . . . I wonder why.