

Summary to

The Red Rope

By Stephanie Becken

The Red Rope is a play about Rahab and Joshua's spies. Rahab was by all historical accounts after the fact, a prostitute and an innkeeper in Jericho. This may have meant a few things in the context of her culture. She might have entertained men, but also kept an inn for travelers. Her occupation could have had religious context, and probably would have been acceptable. The important point was she helped Joshua's spies, and kept her promise to them. When she joined God's people, she became one of them and was a treasured member, even having mention in Jesus' lineage (Matthew 1:5). Rahab was an intelligent, brave, and faithful woman who believed a person could find an "in" with a God so powerful as *Yaweh*. In rabbinic literature, Rahab was named as one of the four most beautiful women ever known. What is interesting is the fact that she is remembered in that had she not assisted Joshua in his conquest, the Israelites may not have been so successful. The theological implications are nothing less than shockingly scandalous: Rahab—the sneaky hooker who ran a hole-in-the-wall inn—is the veritable linchpin of *God's entire plan* of the conquest of the Promised Land!

Arches 'n
Bells

The Red Rope

by Stephanie Becken

Text: Joshua 2

Theme: Intelligence, Faithfulness, Loyalty, Trust

Time Needed to Perform: 10 minutes

What going on? Rahab of Jericho has to make big decisions that will change the course of her life and her line.

When is it all happening? Bible times, evening, night, and day.

Who are the characters? Rahab (best for older performer able to memorize longer lines), 2 spies, 2 guards, Joshua, Rahab family members (number can vary), soldiers (number can vary).

How should this play be performed? This play would be great for a Lenten drama. A multi-generational cast would fit well. It can include audience participation, so a less formal grouping would work as well as a more formal one.

What props will we need? A curtain that includes what could be a window (spies will crawl out of it). Red sash or large ribbon. Period costumes, swords, armor.

Arches 'n
Bells

ACT ONE: Spies

Setting: Rahab's house, dusk.

Characters: Rahab, 2 spies, 2 guards

SCRIPT:

Rahab is talking to the audience as if they are a person on the street. She's familiar, sassy, strong, and smart.

1 **Rahab:** *[She fusses with her clothes and then stands straight when*
2 *sees the audience—more like she is speaking to them as if they were*
3 *one person.]* Good evening. And just who would you be?

4 *[Waits for an answer. You can plant a person in the audience to speak,*
5 *or have actor/actress in the audience answer.]*

6 **Rahab:** Why are you out so late? If I were you, I'd be careful. A
7 person really can't be too careful these days. Haven't you heard
8 what's going on across the river?! *[Waves, beckoning the audience to*
9 *lean in to listen.]*

10 Wait. Where are you from? *[Audience member needs to answer.]*

11 Oh, that's all right then. It's the Hebrews everyone is talking about.
12 Have you heard what their god did to the Egyptians? Their god is
13 unlike anything I've ever heard of. The sea actually parted—
14 parted—and the Hebrews were safe but the Egyptians? *[Makes the*
15 *finger across the throat symbol.]*

16 **Spy 1:** *[Approaches, looking around. Spy 2 at his side.]* You there,
17 woman, are you the owner of this establishment?

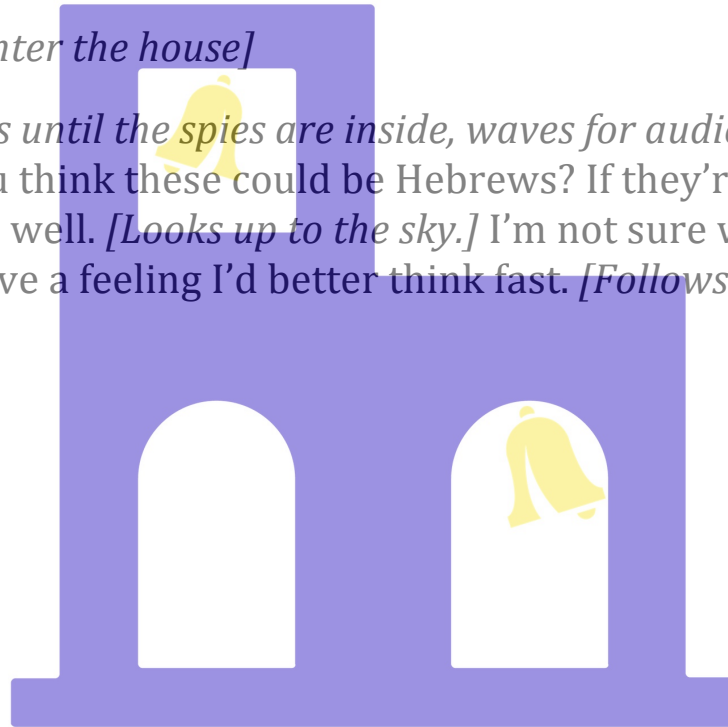
18 **Rahab:** *[Motions for just a moment to the audience.]* I am, sir. Are you
19 looking for a place to stay in Jericho tonight?

1 **Spy 2:** We are. Somewhere quiet and out of the way. We don't know
2 the area well, so are excited to learn a bit more.

3 **Rahab:** *[Looks to audience, rubs her chin—looks very suspicious.]*
4 Very well. If you have coins, come into my inn for the night. A
5 comfortable bed and a meal I can provide—information I'm not so
6 sure.

7 **Spy 1 & 2:** *[Enter the house]*

8 **Rahab:** *[Waits until the spies are inside, waves for audience to lean in*
9 *again.]* Do you think these could be Hebrews? If they're here, then
10 their god is as well. *[Looks up to the sky.]* I'm not sure what I'm going
11 to do, but I have a feeling I'd better think fast. *[Follows spies into her*
12 *house.]*



Arches 'n Bells

ACT TWO: Window in the Night

Setting: Rahab's house. Night time, keep lights low.

Characters: Rahab, spies, guards

SCRIPT:

- 1 **Guard 1 & 2:** *[Knocks on Rahab's door (or pretends to.)]* Open this
2 door. We're looking for Hebrew spies from across the river. All men
3 out of this house.
- 4 **Spy 1 & 2:** *[Climbing out of Rahab's window]*
- 5 **Rahab:** *[Catches them by their collars]* You really are spies from
6 across the river.
- 7 **Spy 1:** Let us free so we can escape.
- 8 **Rahab:** One yell from me, and they'll know you're here and you're
9 both dead. I will make a deal, though.
- 10 **Spy 2:** What deal?
- 11 **Rahab:** I will let you go, even help you escape, but then when your
12 leader comes, you will spare me and my family.
- 13 **Spy 1:** I can't speak for Joshua—
- 14 **Rahab:** It's not him I'm worried about. It's your god. I've heard the
15 stories. If your god is as powerful as they say, then I want no part in
16 being against it. Promise to spare my family, and I'll free you.
- 17 **Spy 1 & 2** *[Look at each other and shrug]*

1 **Spy 1:** Fine, we promise. But, you'll have to stay in this house and
2 bring all of those you want spared here. Leave this red rope here, so
3 we know it's you, and we can tell the others to spare you. Do you
4 understand?

5 **Rahab:** Of course I do. I'm not an idiot. Promise me, by the name of
6 your god, that you will keep your word.

7 **Spy 2:** You're really afraid, aren't you?

8 **Rahab:** *[Snorts]* Not of you two, but of your god? Yes.

9 **Spy 1:** Then in the name of our god, we promise to spare your family
10 if you do as we said.

11 **Guard 1&2:** *[Knocking and Yelling.]*

12 **Rahab:** *[Pushes two spies out the window.]* Then go now. Run fast
13 and hide in the hills. Hide for three days before you make your way
14 across the river. By then, the guards will stop searching. Don't forget
15 your promise. Your lives for mine.

16 **Spy 1 & 2:** *[Run off stage].*

17 **Rahab:** *[Hurries to the door].* I'm coming, I'm coming. You come
18 shouting at the dead of night. How is a person supposed to sleep like
19 this? I'm going to charge you double if you're looking for a room.

20 **Guard 1:** Spies have infiltrated the walls. Every person in this inn
21 needs to come out now.

22 **Rahab:** *[Steps out and holds out her arms].* Are you happy now? My
23 home is officially empty. What we need is more travelers to Jericho,
24 not fewer.

25 **Guard 2:** We'll check the house.

26 **Rahab:** *[Waves them in.]* Be my guests.

Act 3: A Promise Kept

Setting: Tall walls—paper blocks would be great. Rahab's home inside (can't see it).

Characters: Spies, Joshua, Rahab, Soldiers, Rahab family

SCRIPT:

- 1 **Joshua:** *[Leading the group marching around 'Jericho' Stops and*
2 *raises his arms.] Shout! For the Lord has given you this city! [Walls*
3 *fall down, but Rahab's house, with the red rope, stays up. Soldiers,*
4 *Joshua, everyone cheers].*
- 5 **Joshua:** You two *[points to spies]* go to the home of the woman who
6 helped you escape. She kept her word, and so will we.
- 7 **Spy 1 & 2:** *[Hurry to Rahab's house. Knock.]*
- 8 **Rahab:** *[Leads family out of the house and into the destruction.]* You
9 remembered.
- 10 **Spy 1:** So did you. Our God keeps promises, and demands we do the
11 same. You'll talk to Joshua now, and we move forward this day.
- 12 **Rahab:** Who is Joshua?
- 13 **Spy 2:** He's the one our God is working through. Our God leads us,
14 but talks to Joshua.
- 15 **Rahab:** Then it's Joshua I want to talk as well.
- 16 **Joshua:** *[Speaks to gathered group, including Rahab and her family.]*
17 Cursed is the one who tries to rebuild this place. He'll fail, and so will
18 his family. However, those who helped us will forever have a place
19 in our tribes. Rahab, you and your family are with us now. Will you
20 pledge your loyalty?

1 **Rahab:** *[Steps forward.]* Your God is truly mighty and keeps the
2 promises of the people. Yes, your God has my loyalty. *[Rahab family*
3 *nods.]*

4 **Joshua:** Then it shall be that my God is also your God. You will join
5 under the grace of the Lord from this day forth.

6 **Rahab and family:** *[Cheer and gather things, follow Joshua and*
7 *soldiers out of the city.]*

8 **Rahab:** *[Stops, turn to audience.]* You're here again? I wouldn't stay,
9 if I were you. Didn't you hear Joshua? This place is cursed. *[Pauses,*
10 *like she's listening.]*

11 I don't care where you go, but I know where I'm going. I follow the
12 Lord now. The Lord is mighty, but kind, and keeps the promises of
13 the people. With a god like that, I'll never need another.

14 **Spy 1:** Rahab, time to go.

15 **Rahab:** *[Waves to the audience]* You heard the man. It's time for me
16 to join my people. Goodbye. God bless.

END

Arches 'n Bells