

TARAH: RADIO BROADCAST

Host: Evanston Alliance Church welcomes our listening audience to the theatrical drama of Tarah. **(Note: Voices of evil spirits speaking or laughing before host speaks.)** Who was Tarah? Why was she tormented by these evil spirits? I ask that you sit back and listen as this story unfolds in the town of Jerusalem, where we hear two men arguing over the role of the Messiah, their coming king. **(Music Playing)**

SCENE: 1

Sound effect #1 (record voices speak as if through a wall)

Michael: I'm telling you, Yohanon, the Romans have defiled this holy city! When Messiah comes, he must come to Jerusalem and he must drive the cursed Romans from our land!

Yohanon: Yes, Michael, but the Messiah will be a king for the whole country and not just Jerusalem! Do not forget that the Maccabees came from Galilee, my fore-father's country.

Sound effect #2 (voices continue, muffled)

Tarah: Hanna, what are Macereans?

Hanna: Maccabees, you dolt! Don't you know anything? And be quiet. Do you want to get us in trouble?

Tarah: I am not a dolt! The rabbi is teaching me to read, and he says I'm very bright!

Hanna: Shhhh! Besides that doesn't matter. Girls don't need to read. Now shut up, I want to hear.

Sound effect #3 (mouse squeaking and rustling)

Tarah: What was that?

Hanna: Shhhhhh!

Sound effect #4 (continued squeaking of a mouse)

Tarah: (screaming) It's a mouse! Get it off! Get it off of me!

Michael: (muffled) What was that?

Sound effect #5 (feet coming closer and a door opening)

Yohanon: Tarah, you wretch! What's the meaning of that noise? Do you dare act this way when we have my brother as a guest in the house? I'll teach you to respect your elders! Come here!

Michael: Yohanon, it was a mouse, she was frightened. Come now she is just a child of seven.

Yohanon: She needs to be disciplined!

Sound effect #6 (switch hitting Tarah's back)

Tarah: No uncle! Please! **(crying)**

Yohanon: Now go to bed! **(Tarah still crying)** Do you hear me?

Tarah: I'm sorry Uncle.

Yohanon GO!

Sound effect #7 (Tarah crying softly as she walks away)

Michael: She is a lovely child, very beautiful in the face. It is a pity that you should think that she gives you such trouble.

Yohanon: She has brought nothing but shame to my house, just like her mother. Under Roman rule, beauty is a curse to all Jewish women. No Michael, she has brought nothing but shame to us.

Michael: **(sighing)** Come, it is time for prayer.

End of scene – Music playing

Scene 2:

Tarah is having a nightmare - Sound effect #1 (Wind whistling through cracks in a wooden door)

Narrator/Rabbi Natan: Tarah suffered many nightmares as a child. She told me this often when I taught her the Torah. My name is Rabbi Natan. One that she had was so dreadful. She told me that she was in a beautiful field of lilies with her mother Abigail. Her mother had said to her.

Abigail: Little one, look at the lilies. See how they dance in the sun. Will you go pick me one? That one, over there.

Tarah: Oh Yes, Imma.

Sound effect #2 (strong wind)

Tarah: Imma, Imma? Where are you? Imma I am afraid!

Evil Spirit #1: Tarah.....Tarah..... We want you Tarah!

Evil Spirit #2: Come play with us, Tarah.

Tarah: No, leave me alone.

Evil Spirit #3: Little Burden, rejected, alone, unwanted. We want you Tarah.

Evil Spirit#1: We want to take you with us, to take you where you belong.

Tarah: Wh-wh-where?

Evil Spirit #2: Where all little girls go who have not a father and are left by their mothers.

Tarah: No! No! Imma, help me, don't let them take me.

Evil Spirit #2: Imma's gone. She doesn't want you. She doesn't love you. You are all alone.

Evil Spirit #3: Poor, poor pretty Tarah, such a pretty face.

Tarah: Imma, Imma please.

Evil Spirit #1: All alone, worthless. Bad girl! You have to come with us Tarah. You are a bad girl. You are a shame to your family. No one loves you. Come with us Tarah..... come.

Tarah: No! God, please help me. My God – Please!

Evil Spirit #2: He can't hear you either. He doesn't want you. Poor, poor Tarah.

Tarah screams, spirits laughing maniacally.

End of scene 2 – Music playing

SCENE 3

Tarah: Imma! **(Waking up from her nightmare – breathing heavily and scared)**

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Tarah told me that she sat up holding her blanket to her throat. I could imagine her deep brown eyes searched the room in terror. Slowly, as the mists of the nightmare began to lift, Tarah realized it was morning.

Tarah: Oh no! My chores! I haven't fetched the water for Uncle's morning prayers. I didn't mean to scream last night. It was a very big mouse.

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Just as her toes touched the cold floor...

Sound effect #1 (door slamming open)

Yohanon: Tarah! You lazy, ungrateful little devil! Do you know what time it is? Eh? The sun is almost up! Do you plot to shame me with your entire existence?

Tarah: No Uncle, I'm going, I didn't mean, it's just that, well I was frightened and was afraid that a mouse would climb the bed. I could not sleep and.....

Yohanon: Frightened? I'll show you frightened! I'll apply the fear of God to your shameless hide.

Nar/Rabbi Natan: As her uncle moved into the room, light poured in from the doorway, revealing a cruel grinning face.

Sound effect #2 (Door creaking open and Hanna giggling)

Tarah: HANNA! You dog, you tattle-tale, I'm going to murder YOU!

Hanna: Father, keep her away from me!

Sound effect #3 (Tarah running towards Hanna)

Nar/Rabbi Natan: It was so unfair, even to a seven year old. But just as she reached Hanna cowering on the floor, and was about to sink her teeth into her miserable lying hide, a meaty hand pulled her back. The switch whistling like an evil desert wind, striking Tarah's tender back.

Sound effect #4 (switch hitting....)

Yohanon: YOU DARE!

Tarah: No please.. **(Tarah crying)**

Yohanon: WICKED!

Sound effect #5 (pop of a switch and Tarah crying out)

Yohanon: UNGRATEFUL!

Sound effect #6 (pop of a switch and Tarah crying out)

Yohanon: MISERABLE, LAWLESS!

Sound effect #7 (pop of switch and Tarah crying out)

Tarah: Imma, Imma , please! Aunt Rachael!

Sound Effect #8 (door opening)

Yohanon: Daughter of Satan!

Aunt Rachael: What is all this screaming? Yohanon! What has the child done this time?

Yohanon: Woman, you be quiet! Get Hanna out of here. **(Hanna laughing)**

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Though this was Tarah's life, she didn't know how much more she could take before something deep down inside broke. She could feel it stretching like a bow string, stretching to the breaking point.

Tarah: (whispering) God please.... Save me from my uncle Yohanon.

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Her Uncle eased his grip to get a better hold and Tarah shot like an arrow out the door into the courtyard.

Sound of Tarah sobbing and panting under narration

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Tarah ran until her lungs were on fire and her foot shod with lead. Dodging donkeys and camels she raced out the Eastern gate, across the valley of Gehenna and up the Western slopes of the mount of Olives, finally resting next to a newly cut olive press, overlooking the city.

Tarah **(dry, racking sobs)** I....I.....I.... jjjjjust wwwwant mmmmy mmmmother. Why did she leave me? Oh God, why did she leave me?

End of scene 3 – Music playing

Scene 4

Nar/Rabbi Natan: And once again Tarah remembers the day she was left with her Uncle and Aunt.

Sound effect #1 (soft music) (Abigail and Tarah walking.. merchants in the background)

Tarah: Imma where are we going and why do you have my clothes?

Abigail: We are going to your Aunt Rachael's home.

Tarah: Ohhhhhhhh, I don't like it there. They hate me and cousin Hanna picks on me.

Abigail: Nonsense, they are family.

Tarah: How long are we staying?

(they stop walking)

Abigail: **(in a gentle voice)** Listen child, I have to leave you with them.

Tarah: Leave me? For how long? When will you be back?

Abigail: It will be your new home (fighting back tears)

Tarah: New home? What do you mean?

Abigail: Always so many questions. You will live with your Aunt Rachael and Uncle Yohanon. I must go away.

Tarah: Go away? **(crying)** I don't understand. Why do you have to go away?

Abigail: My beautiful little child. You are too young to understand. Come, we are almost there.

Tarah: No Imma.... Why must I stay with them? I want to be with you.

Abigail: Please, come.

Tarah: Yes Imma. (there is slience)

Sound effect # 2 (walking 3 beats – stop)

Abigail: We have arrived.

Sound effect #3 (knock on door)

Abigail: Chin up, no more tears.

Tarah: Yes Imma.

Sound effect#4 (door opens)

Rachael: (rudely) Hello Abigail, Tarah.

(Tarah begins to cry)

Rachael: Tarah, why are you crying?

Abigail: Rachael please, I have just told her that this is to be her new home.

Rachael: You just told her now? Huh! Why should I expect anything different from you? Not caring what other people think, always a shame to this family!

Tarah: STOP SAYING THAT TO MY MOTHER!

Abigail: It is ok child.

Tarah: No Imma, it is not. They are always mean to you.

Rachael: Listen to me Tarah, if you expect to live here you will show respect to everyone in this household! Is that understood?

(no answer from Tarah- wait 3 beats)

Abigail: Answer your Aunt Rachael.

Tarah : Yes Aunt Rachael.

(giggles heard from behind the door. It is cousin Hanna)

Rachael: Hanna! Show Tarah where she will be sleeping.

Hanna: Yes mother.

Abigail: Rachael, we have not said "Goodbye".

Rachael: Well hurry up!

Abigail: Come here my little flower. Make me a promise that you will be good for your aunt Rachael and Uncle Yohanon. Do as you are told and no fighting with Hanna. Now give me one of your hugs that I love so much, a kiss too. . .I love you. Rachael, please be good to her! Don't punish her for my mistake.

Tarah: What mistake momma?

Rachael: No need to worry. We will take good care of her.

Abigail: Goodbye, my child.

Tarah: Imma? Imma? **(screaming)** IMMA!

Nar/Rabbi Natan: With this memory also comes many tortured thoughts.

Tarah: Wwhy ddo they treat mmme this way? WWhat did I do ttto themmmm?

Evil Spirit: Do, do? **(laughing)** you did nothing. It's not what you did. It's who you are. That's why they call you Tarah. Tarah, the unwanted one. Tarah the burden.

Tarah: No, I won't listen to you, my name is not Tarah.

Evil Spirit: But you will listen. Remember what your Aunt Rachael said.

Rachael: Listen to me young lady, let's get something straight. You and your mother have brought shame to our family. Everyone is talking about you. We have shown you pity when no one else wanted you. Your Uncle Yohanon, out of respect for the teaching of the Torah, has allowed you to stay. At great expense to all of us. So be a good little girl and do as you are told and you'll never hunger or lack for a place to sleep. **(fading)** Do you understand Tarah?

Sound effect #5 (birds. From a distance we hear people voices as a new day begins. Tarah is walking and sees the temple. Wait 4 beats)

Tarah: **(sigh)** It's the temple! God is that really your dwelling place like Rabbi Natan says? He tells me that I am not Tarah, but Taramah. Which means,

(at the same time both Tarah and Rabbi Natan say)

Tarah and Rabbi: "My responsibility"

Rabbi Natan: Taramah, remember what the prophet Isaiah says. Hashem's little lambs are precious in His sight. You are God's little lamb and He is your shepherd. He will hold you close even when everyone else forsakes you.

Nar/Rabbi Natan: I taught the Bet Torah to the children in Tarah's house. I saw that Taramah was smart and eager to learn. On her 5th birthday, I asked her uncle if she could come study the Torah at the synagogue after her chores were done. Much to my surprise he said yes. Nearly every day for the next two years, while the other children rested in the afternoon heat, Taramah would race to my arms. She felt safe in my arms.

End of scene 4 – Music plays

Scene 5 (one of Tarah's memories of school)

Tarah: Rabbi!

Rabbi Natan: Haha! My little scholar! Come, come sit with me.

Sound effect #1 (Tarah running to his arms)

Rabbi: Ah, there, thanks for the hug little one. Now, a drop of honey **(pause)** to remind us that the law of God is sweet.

Tarah: (shuddering sigh – sad like)

Rabbi: Why so sad Taramah?

Tarah: Hanna and the other children were laughing at me today when I went to get water. They said I have no father or mother and no one in the whole world wants me. Rabbi Natan, if I am God's little lamb, why did he make me an orphan?

Rabbi: **(sighs)** Little one, let me explain it like this. Only God's extra lambs get to be orphans. You see, all the other children have parents because they are ordinary lambs. Oh, God loves them too. But you, ah, God smiled down on you with the radiance of His sun and kissed you with the warmth of it's rays so everyone can see that you are His special lamb.

Tarah: You mean my red hair?

Rabbi: Yes, just like King David himself, your red hair is a sign of God's favor toward you and that he loves you very much.

Tarah: But Aunt Rachael says I am the black sheep, the unwanted one, and no one wants black lambs.

Rabbi: Tamarah, your Aunt Rachael is a meshugah, a crazy woman! Who ever heard of a black lamb with red wool?

(Both are heard laughing... it begins to fade) Tarah is brought back to the present.

Rabbi: We laughed till our sides ached. Oh such a wonderful memory she had. **(wait 3 beats)** Now the smell of freshly baked bread brought her back to the present once again.

End of scene 5 – Music playing

Scene 6

Sound effects #1(Camels, sheep bleating, people, vendors)

Roman Solider: You there, little girl, where is your mother?

Tarah: She is there, up ahead. Sir.

Roman Solider: Then go catch up to her. You shouldn't be running the streets alone.

Sound effect #2 (Tarah running, voices of vendors – “get your fresh bread here”)

Tarah: If only I could find my mother. She would see me in this old dress and say, “Oh my, where did you ever get those horrible rags! What will the neighbors think? We'll just have to do something about that right now.” Then she would buy me the most beautiful dress. We would go home and braid each others hair and put purple ribbons in it. I love purple, it is my favorite color. Imma, where are you? What did I do that you left me? (she sighs) I'm soooo hungry.

Sound effect #3 (Tarah walking, voices of vendors – They get louder)

Tarah: Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! It smells so good!

Vendor #1: You there! Do you have any money? Get away from my table.

Tarah: But I haven't eaten at all today. Can I just have one small loaf?

Vendor #1: No! What do you think this is? Do you think I would give away a loaf of bread to a little thief like you?

Tarah: I am not a thief. Why do you think I am?

Vendor #1: Because you look like one. Now go away before I call a Roman Guard to come and get you.

Sound effect #4 (Tarah running away)

Tarah: I am not a thief. Rabbi Natan taught me that stealing is a sin. You shall not steal. It is the 8th commandment. All I asked was for one small loaf. He wouldn't even miss it. Who would miss one loaf? One.....small.....loaf.

Vendor #1: YOU there! Put that back!

Sound effect #5: (Tarah running away)

Vendor #1: Someone grab her!

Sound effect #6 (People laughing, some screaming, sounds of running, tables being knocked over. Tarah – heavy breathing. Sounds fade as she runs away.)

Tarah: **(heaving breathing)** I am not precious, I am a thief, I am a commandment breaker. They will cut off my hands as they do with thieves. No one will ever want me. Rabbi Natan will throw me out of Torah school. How can I go home? Uncle will beat me for sure. **(crying)** I am Tarah, I am a burden.

Sound effect #7 (Tarah still walking. She hears children laughing and a switch of a stick beating something.... A dog whimpering.)

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Now as it was told to me, Tarah walked into a long alley and at the end of this alley there were children. One had a stick and he was beating something. As she moved closer she was horrified to see that one of the boys was about to hit a puppy. She could feel the rage welling up inside of her.

Tarah: Leave him alone!

Boy: Who are you? Go away! Go home to your gentile father, if you have one. **(Kids laughing)**

Tarah: I said leave him alone or I'll....h

Boy: You'll what? Hit me? Punch me? You skinny little thing! I don't think you could even push me down. **(Kids laughing)**

Tarah: You asked for it!

Sound effect #8 (sound of punches, kids screaming , boy yelling, crying)

Boy: Get her off of me! Help me, hey let go. **(boy is crying, sound of kids and boy running away saying as his voice fades)** I'll get you for this!

Tarah: Awwww, are you alright? Oh you poor little puppy.

Sound effect #9 (puppy whimpering)

Tarah: There now, you can sit on my lap. I know just how you feel. I know what it is like to be beaten. My uncle hates me and I don't know why? He tells me that I have brought shame to his household. They all call me Tarah.. it means burden. But you? You are so small, what could you of done? Maybe little things like us just get picked on. Well you are safe now. No one will ever hurt you again. I will take you home with me and hide you. I will feed you and take care of you. **(sound of puppy sniffing whats in tarahs pocket)** Oh, are you hungry? Here I have some bread.... (3 beats) We need to stick together you and me. I will love you forever. You'll have to be very quiet so uncle Yohanon doesn't hear you or we'll be in awful trouble for sure. **(1 Beat)** That's what I'll call you, "Trouble". Here have some more bread. **(Tarah humming a song)**

Rabbi Natan: Now Tarah had not realized that she was not in a alley, but leaning up against the Eastern Wall of the Temple near Solomon's porch. She put the puppy down , **(both rabbi and tarah say,)**

Tarah and Rabbi: Don't worry, I'll be right back.

Rabbi Natan: As she walked down the narrow street and turned the corner she saw a young mother with a baby in her arms. Even though she was only seven she could tell that this baby was only a few days old. She eased very slowly up to see this new born child. Friends, I was there! I saw and heard everything. You see I was saying my morning prayers and my dear friend Simeon was just coming out from the temple. The young mother looked up and said to Tarah....or Tamarah as I would call her.

Mary: Oh, would you like to see my baby boy?

Tarah: Oh yes! Can I?

Mary: Yes, come and see. **(3 beats)** My name is Mary. What is yours?

Tarah: Mary? That means beloved! What a wonderful name.

Mary: Why yes it does, how did you know that?

Tarah: My mother told me. Where are you from Mary?

Mary: My husband Joseph and I have just arrived from Bethlehem where he was born. **(a little laugh comes from Mary-as she can see that Tarah wants to hold him)** Would you like to hold him?

Tarah: Oh yes! Can I?

Mary: Yes you can, with my help.

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Now as she looked into the babes eyes it was as if she was looking into the eyes of God. They were searching, knowing eyes. For the first time in her life she felt secure and no matter how much time went by she would remember those eyes. All her fears melted away. She was no longer afraid of her Uncle Yohanon or of the nightmares.

Tarah: What is his name?

Mary: His name is Jesus.

Tarah: Jesus!

Sound effect #10 (Rachael walking toward Tarah)

Rachael: There you are! Tarah, where have you been? I have looked all over Jerusalem for you! My feet hurt, so does my back. Have you no shame knowing what you have put us through? Now come with me and leave this young mother alone! **(to Mary)** I am sorry that she bothered you.

Mary: She was no bother. Ummm surely no mother would name their daughter Tarah. Burden? Unwanted?

Rachael: She is not my daughter. She is the sister of my husband Yohanon Ben'Shmu'el. Her given name is Mary. Her harlot mother Abigail left her with us, deserted her. They are from Magdelah. **(she sighs)** Tarah fits her. She has been a burden for 2 years.

Mary: So Mary of Magdelah, we share a wonderful name. **(1 beat)** I hope to see you once again Little Mary.

Tarah: Thank you Mary. **(1 beat)** Can I see your baby one more time?

Mary: Yes, come and look.

Tarah: He is beautiful. **(2 beats)**

Rachael: Lets go! Your uncle will have your hide now Tarah!

Tarah: My name is Mary!

Sound effect #11 (Rachael and Tarah walking away)

Rachael: Mary, your uncle is very angry with you.

Sound effect #12 (a puppy running toward Tarah)

Rachael: What is this? Get away!

Tarah: Oh Aunt Rachael please can I keep him? There were these kids and they were hitting him with a stick. He could of died if I didn't come as soon as I did.

Rachael: You may not keep him. All he will be is a lot of "trouble".

Tarah: **(giggling)** Yes Aunt I know.. but I will take good care of him. I promise.

Rachael: **(3 beats)** Alright then. But if he causes any trouble at all your uncle will put him out.

Tarah: Thank you Aunt Rachael.

Nar/Rabbi Natan: Little Mary picked up her new friend and said.

Tarah: Trouble I held the most wonderful baby in my arms today. He was different from any other baby. I felt safe as I held him. It was if he was holding me. Trouble, when you and I grow up, we will go find this Jesus again.

Nar/ Rabbi Natan: As Little Mary of Magdelah passed me our eyes met and we both smiled. We heard my friend Simeon in a voice of praise that I have never heard before. I will never forget those words. He said, "Lord let now your servant depart in peace for I have seen my salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." **(2 beats)** I believe that even then little Mary of Magdelah knew what Simeon was saying. I then walked into the temple to see this new born baby named Jesus.

Host: Now Mary stayed with her Aunt and Uncle till she no longer could take the blows. But the story does not end here my friends. She would once again meet this Jesus. . .in another time and another place. It is there where her life will be forever changed.

(Music)

Host: You have been listening to the theatrical drama of "Tarah," written by Megan Lotz and Cathy Stone. Adapted from the story, "Tarah" written by Ron Lotz, pastor of Evanston Alliance Church.

THE END