

“Redemption In The Wings” Page Samples #4
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Narrator: *(Back to Nate's narration.)* And so, in the face of all the difficulties, the play had been presented, and the lives of both the actors and the audience had been affected by the story of the coming of the Lamb of God into the world. As the only ones in on what kind of turmoil Charlotte had been going through, Owen and I exchanged wondering looks as she stepped forward, holding Old Johnny by the hand. Thanking the audience at the shelter for their kind applause, she said that she felt strongly that there was something that needed to be said. "This person beside me," she began, "deserves to have his story told... if he doesn't mind."

Actions during the next part of the narration: *Old Johnny shakes his head, to indicate that he doesn't mind. She puts her hand on his shoulder as she speaks. Then when she prepares to introduce someone, he looks around as if he is expecting to see his daughter brought in. When she reveals who she is, he turns to her in shock.*

Narrator: "We've all seen some hard times lately," she began. "And many of you here, who have come for a helping hand and caring heart, know what it's like to have hit the bottom, when the only place to look is up... to the Lord. Old Johnny here, as we have come to know him, is a man who has been there... and to the deepest depths of misery, self-condemnation and despair that many of us will hopefully never know. Yet, through it all, he held a dream in his heart... to know his long-lost daughter... and to know her for the person she has become in the years during his absence. He has asked my help in reaching her with the message. I know first hand how such a desertion of a parent can cause feelings of resentment, abandonment and even guilt. I myself have struggled with these emotions for years, so I am in a unique position to say, with confidence, that Johnny's daughter does forgive him. And that his dream of being reunited with her is also going to come true. Because, ladies and gentlemen, I am proud, and happy, to introduce to you... Jonathan Ayers... my father!!"

To say that Old Johnny was shocked was an understatement. For a moment he could only stare at her, as the truth and recognition settled in. He seemed frozen to the spot, but as Charlotte embraced him, all the years of blame, doubt and pain were washed away in a torrent of happy tears. The crowd, on stage and in the audience, erupted in cheers and applause!

Actions during the next part of the narration: *The cast on stage all gather around the two, rejoicing with them and each other. They clap to show their happiness at the scene. Here and there among them, they were hugs as the emotion made them appreciate those whose kinship and friendship they valued. This continues as the narrator tells the story. When Johnny says his line about dying happy, Nate moves up behind him and places a hand on his shoulder in a bit of what will be retrospectively seen as foreshadowing.*

Narrator: As I watched the reconciled father and daughter holding onto one another and sobbing, I was reminded of the scene that Joseph and his brothers made when he revealed himself to them. The revelation of kinship and reconciliation was the very heart and core of the gospel. As he wiped the tears from his eyes, Old Johnny announced to anyone listening that he could now die happy.

(A scene is included here where the Diva is shown to have been affected by the events and has given her heart to the Lord, and makes a large donation for the Christmas party. It is omitted in this preview but is in the script.)

Begin Epilogue:

Actions during the next part of the narration: *The stage remains empty for a few moments as we hear the narrator speaking. Then Nate comes out onto the stage, along with Johnny, as he finishes the paragraph.*

Narrator: I stated earlier that the real drama was behind the scenes. Just like there is much activity behind the curtain of a natural drama, there is much happening behind the scenes spiritually. I've pulled back the curtain, as it were, to let you in on the wonderful scenes played out here at the shelter's Christmas program. The play went wonderfully, lives and relationships were healed and restored, and the Christmas Eve dinner was enjoyed by all at the shelter. Presents were handed out Christmas morning to all the children, thanks to the generous gift that was bestowed. And now, several days later, the stage is quiet... except for myself and Old Johnny, who seemed a bit puzzled to be here.

"There's something I wanted to show you." I explained. I took him by the elbow and led him over to the side of the stage as another figure made it's way from the wings. Together we watched as Charlotte slowly walked around, gazing upon the scene affectionately. Then, kneeling and looking up to Heaven, she began to pray. She thanked her Heavenly Father for His revelation of kinship to her, and for what He helped them to accomplish there. She thanked him for the wonderful dinner, the presents that brightened the lives of the guests, and for the publicity they got, which promised to bring in enough for them to move to a new, larger facility. But mostly, she

wanted to thank Him for the chance to get to know her real father, however briefly... before his death. She thanked the Lord for his quiet passing in his sleep, with a smile on his face. Her last prayer was to give him a great welcome into Heaven, until she was re-united with him again.

As she got up to leave, passing right by us, realization dawned in his eyes as I nodded in confirmation. "So I was right," he exclaimed with a snap of his fingers. "I really did feel an angel at my shoulder... and it was you!" I nodded again as I told him more. "Now, I have one task left... to take you to your new home."

His face broke into a smile as he wondered if I was going to fly him to Heaven now. "No need," I replied. "Heaven is closer to us than most think... just beyond what people see with their natural eyes, for there is no distance in the world of the spirit. It's like simply drawing a curtain aside that you couldn't see behind before.

Actions during the next part of the narration: *The angel turns Johnny toward the front of the stage and lifts his hand to present him the view opening up to him, with a motion of pushing aside an invisible curtain. Johnny's eye grow wide as he sees the glories of the gates of heaven before him. He is practically bouncing with joy as he spots his relatives. With a look back, at the angel's urging he starts forward, then his eyes light up as he looks up higher... and sees the Lord. His expression shows the inexpressible happiness and awe that such a sight would inspire.*

Narrator: I never tire of seeing the reaction of God's children when they first glimpse the Gates of Heaven. Old Johnny, no longer looking so old, was rapt with amazement as he saw the gates swing open to reveal the hills beyond, with a crowd gathering to welcome him in. "Look!" he exclaimed with excitement and joy. "I can see Mama and Papa coming! There's my grandma and grandpa, too! And looka there, it's even old Shep! Bless his heart!" He looked back at me, and I motioned for him to go on. "You don't need me any more," I told him. "You're home now, and I have other work awaiting down here. I'll see you there later." But right then I don't think he was listening any more, because he suddenly caught sight of the most wonderful person in Heaven.

(NOTE: If you wish to have an actor play the role of the Lord Jesus, then you can have him enter slowly from the back and walk partway down the aisle toward the front to greet Owen with open arms. Owen then sees him and walks into his arms, receives an embrace, and then walks with him out the back door. If you have a good actor to play this part, it can be even more effective and powerful than leaving it to the imagination, as it was written. I have seen it done this way, using an actor, and it is amazingly powerful.)

Actions during the next part of the narration: *The angel kneels with bowed head, to honor the Lord's presence. The man goes, amazed at what he is seeing and with arms lifted, all the way down the center aisle and through the gates, and out the back of the church. If a live actor is used for the Lord, have him come in partway from the back and meet Johnny halfway, embracing him in a warm welcome, then leading him back out the rear entrance and out the door.*

Narrator: Words failed him as he realized that the Lord Jesus Christ himself had come to welcome him in, and Johnny was getting caught up forever in that gaze of love.

Actions during the next part of the narration: *Raising his head to watch him go, the angel then stands as he sees them walking together into the gates. His face is beaming as he basks in the happiness of the moment.*

Narrator: As I watched Johnny join His Lord, and walk through the gates to be reunited with all those waiting, I shared in the joy of being a part of the Lord's plan and work. Nobody was happier about how things turned out than me.

Actions during the next part of the narration: *Just then the Janitor comes in, with a final cleanup. He is happy and humming, dancing with the broom. He is so infectiously joyful that the unseen angel joins him, matching his steps and each move in time to the tune, looking like partners in an old-fashioned square dance. Owen doesn't seem to see him during this...*

Narrator: But Owen, the shelter's handyman, would run a close second in the happy race. Seeing him do his broom dance made me want to join in, even though he couldn't see me any more.

Actions during the next part of the narration: *As the angel concludes his dance steps and starts to walk off, we see that Owen is indeed now looking at him with a sly smile, Owen calls back to Nate, who freezes in surprise and pivots around to look at him. The janitor, leaning on his broom, lifts a finger close to his face and aims it at the angel in an "I see you!" gesture. He winks at him, and with a touch of his finger to his forehead, tells him thanks. He grins at the angel's surprise, then both he and Nate laugh heartily as they leave; Owen going offstage to the side, and the angel heading down the center of the aisle through the audience.*

Narrator: As I bowed out of the jig, and started to leave, Owen did something that caught me totally unprepared. Leaning on his broom, he called out "Hope to see you again!" With a wink he said, "Thanks for the help, Mr. Angel." It seems that Owen lived so close to the Lord that he was more sensitive to the unseen world around him than most. Sometimes even we servants of the Lord are surprised by what He does. The Lord is always up to something, whether we know it or not.

Actions during the next part of the narration: *The last lines of the narration are heard as the angel is walking down the aisle, and out of sight. The final words are heard as the stage goes dark.*

Narrator: That's how it all happened... in front of the curtain and behind. And as you enjoy this Christmas season, and beyond, keep in mind that for the best of us, and the worst of us, there are unseen eyes watching and waiting to give all the chance at making something good out of our lives... and that on the stage of your life, there is always found waiting... redemption in the wings.