

Cast of Characters

Jesus

Lavinia

Place

A bedroom.

Time

Any time.

Jesus Awakens the Little Girl

by Emmett Loverde

SCENE: It is a girl's bedroom with a bed, a lamp on a bedside table, a closed door leading to the rest of the house, and two chairs. A mirror hangs on the wall. Heavy fabric covers the window, blocking out almost all daylight. The period could be ancient or modern.

AT RISE: LAVINIA lies on the bed, on top of the covers. She is dead and dressed for burial (pretty dress, make-up, nice hair, etc.) She is supposed to be about thirteen years old but could be played by an adult. Sad funeral music drifts faintly in through the window.

(JESUS knocks on the door.)

JESUS. *(Through door:)* Hello? Lavinia? *(Opens door and pokes head in.)* Hello? Are you decent? *(Enters and closes door behind Himself.)* Are you Lavinia?

(The body of LAVINIA does not answer.)

I hear you're not doing too well. I'm sorry. But you're scaring your mother and your father's a nervous wreck. It's time to get up.

(Still no answer. JESUS goes to her side and gently takes her hand.)

Wake up, sweetie. Wake up.

(No response. He glances upward.)

I'll need a hand. *(Touching LAVINIA'S eyes:)* Open your eyes, my child...

(LAVINIA bolts upward, butting JESUS in the forehead.)

LAVINIA. What was *that*???

(She stares at JESUS, who is rubbing His now-painful forehead.)

Who are *you*???

JESUS. Give me a second here. (*Staggers over and sits down, still rubbing head.*) I'm a little dizzy.

LAVINIA. I don't care if you're dizzy! What are you doing in my house??

JESUS. Your father asked me to wake you up.

LAVINIA. Why couldn't he do it himself? This is very weird. (*Calling out:*) Dad?? Daddy??

JESUS. Could you hold your voice down? I don't think they're ready to hear you shouting.

LAVINIA. I always shout at them. Daddy! Mom?

JESUS. Lavinia, you were asleep for a really really long time.

LAVINIA. And I'm really really hungry. What's with the dreary music? (*Looks at herself.*) And this goofy nightgown?

JESUS. All of it is traditional.

LAVINIA. I've got a great nightgown—I picked it out myself. This thing's positively funereal. (*Licks her lips.*) Is this lipstick?? (*Jumps up and examines herself in mirror.*) I look like a lady of the evening! Did you doll me up like this?

JESUS. No—I'm just here to wake you up!

LAVINIA. I'm awake. Off you go. (*Looks in mirror.*) This isn't even my color...

JESUS. Lavinia, you were dead.

LAVINIA. (*Wiping off make-up:*) I sure feel like it. I could use some more sleep. How long was I out?

JESUS. Three days.

LAVINIA. (*Chuckles.*) Seriously, how long?

JESUS. I am always serious.

LAVINIA. That's a shame. Probably the result of bad parenting. That's what they say at school. I bet your father's a grump.

JESUS. He can be. You were dead for three days.

LAVINIA. You're not kidding, are you?

JESUS. I never—

LAVINIA. (*Cutting Him off:*) ...never kid, sure sure. Three days? Really?

JESUS. I could show you today's paper.

LAVINIA. Three days... (*Laughs.*) They must have thought I was dead or something!

JESUS. As a matter of fact...

LAVINIA. That would explain the music. So why call you? Why not a doctor?

JESUS. Well, word got around that I'm pretty good with the dead and the near-dead, so...

LAVINIA. You don't look like a doctor.

JESUS. I'm not a doctor. Your father already tried the doctors.

LAVINIA. So what's so special about you? What do you do?

JESUS. Speaking engagements, mostly.

LAVINIA. That sounds like a racket. What do you speak about?

JESUS. I tell people how God wants them to behave.

LAVINIA. Yeah, my father does that, too. He's a rabbi. Beat's working.

JESUS. Your father is a good man. A man of faith.

LAVINIA. I'll tell him you said that. Are you trying to get a job at his synagogue or what?

JESUS. No...

LAVINIA. Does God know you're running around blabbing His word to people?

JESUS. He's aware.

LAVINIA. He's okay with it?

JESUS. Most of the time.

LAVINIA. Why doesn't God just write a book?

JESUS. He started one. I'm hoping to make it into the next edition.

LAVINIA. If God has a book, what does He need You for?

JESUS. Nobody reads anymore.

LAVINIA. So my father caught your act and said Hey would you come take a look at my daughter I think she's dead?

JESUS. He was pretty sure you were dead. But yes, that's basically how it happened.

LAVINIA. What's he paying you?

JESUS. He's not.

LAVINIA. What kind of a scummy deal is that where you don't get paid?

JESUS. God wouldn't want me to accept money.

LAVINIA. Are you working the guilt angle? My dad does that, too. So what about for your speeches? Do you get a fee? A cut of the bar?

JESUS. (*Shakes head.*) God wouldn't go for it.

LAVINIA. Are you in training? Getting a license?

JESUS. Usually *I'm* the one doing all the talking. (*Sits.*) I'm really enjoying this.

LAVINIA. Sorry. I know I'm a pain.

JESUS. It's quite all right. I need the rest.

LAVINIA. You tell people how to lead their lives? That's it?

JESUS. And wake the dead.

LAVINIA. Do you heal people?

JESUS. Sometimes.

LAVINIA. Heal me. Go ahead.

JESUS. You're fine.

LAVINIA. No I'm not. (*Coughs.*) See? I'm coming down with something.

JESUS. You're fine.

LAVINIA. I was dead for three days! Who knows what nasty infections took root?

JESUS. We got rid of everything.

LAVINIA. “We”?

JESUS. God and I.

LAVINIA. You heal, talk, resurrect...that’s it?

JESUS. How much can one man do?

LAVINIA. You just said it was you and God.

JESUS. You know what I mean.

LAVINIA. Can you predict the future?

JESUS. Sometimes. I don’t like to.

LAVINIA. Am I going to look good when I grow up?

JESUS. You look good now.

LAVINIA. No I don’t. When I grow up, am I going to be waiting around for a husband?

JESUS. Don’t worry about it.

LAVINIA. I’m thirteen! That’s all I worry about.

JESUS. You’ll be fine.

LAVINIA. *That’s* predicting the future? “You’ll be fine”?

JESUS. Prophecy can be a burden.

LAVINIA. No way!

JESUS. What if you predicted something awful, like that one of your best friends was going to turn on you?

LAVINIA. Don’t be his friend.

JESUS. But he’s basically a good guy.

LAVINIA. You know one of your friends is going to turn on you?? Tell me! Come on—who is it?

JESUS. You wouldn’t know him.

LAVINIA. What’s he look like?

JESUS. It's not important.

LAVINIA. If I knew one of my friends was going to screw me over I'd scratch her eyes out.

JESUS. I really think he means well.

LAVINIA. Boy, you are a sap. Are you married?

JESUS. No.

LAVINIA. Girlfriend?

JESUS. A number of women travel with us.

LAVINIA. Groupies, huh? Are you dating any of them?

JESUS. No...

LAVINIA. Oh, you're gay!

JESUS. It's irrelevant.

LAVINIA. Gay. I knew it.

JESUS. You don't know anything.

LAVINIA. See—you just admitted it!

JESUS. It's not important what I am.

(LAVINIA starts jumping around playfully.)

What are you doing?

LAVINIA. I'm dodging the question. Like you. *(Stops jumping.)* Hey can you find water with a stick?

JESUS. No. At least I never tried.

LAVINIA. Last year my dad found some clown who could supposedly find water underground by holding a twig. My dad gave him a bunch of money and the bum spent all afternoon walking around our backyard with this thing in his hand. Me and my brothers couldn't stop laughing.

JESUS. Divining is very difficult.

LAVINIA. "Divining"? Is that what you call it? Anyway, by the end of the day he had dug three or four wells and there was nothing in them. On the last one the guy got so desperate my dad even caught him working up some spit.

JESUS. Did it fool anybody?

LAVINIA. It's the desert. The spit was dry before it even hit the ground.

JESUS. Can I work that into one of my parables? It sounds kind of profound and metaphoric.

LAVINIA. Sure, if you give me a percentage.

JESUS. A percentage of nothing?

LAVINIA. I still think you got a racket.

JESUS. Did the guy keep the money?

LAVINIA. He tried, but my dad hunted him down and got it back. Then he threw him out of the city to where there's a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth.

JESUS. A dentist's office?

LAVINIA. Beats me.

JESUS. Can I at least use the line about the wailing and the teeth?

LAVINIA. Since I owe you my life, I guess so. Hey, do one of your routines for me.

JESUS. I just did.

LAVINIA. Waking me up? That's nothing. Do a speech.

JESUS. Now?

LAVINIA. Sure. The party outside doesn't sound like it's ending any time soon.

JESUS. Okay... (*Gears up to make a speech:*) Let he who is without sin—

LAVINIA. See, right there you alienated half your audience.

JESUS. By saying "he"?

LAVINIA. There aren't any *women* without sin?

JESUS. There's only one that I know of.

LAVINIA. Your mother, right?

JESUS. Actually...

LAVINIA. All guys think their mothers are saints. Give me a break. I bet she had some kind of wild life before you came along.

JESUS. She really didn't.

LAVINIA. Anyway, go back to your speech. "Let he or she who is without sin..." what?

JESUS. (*Gears up to make a big speech, takes a deep breath, then drops His arms.*) See, I can't do it now.

LAVINIA. What's wrong?

JESUS. Not with you watching.

LAVINIA. Aren't you used to that?

JESUS. It's like meeting a comic at a party and asking him to be funny on the spot. You just can't.

LAVINIA. Your beginning was great once we fixed the gender thing.

JESUS. I feel silly. Anyway, we should head out there and tell everyone you're not dead.

LAVINIA. No—let's play a joke!

JESUS. Do you really think this is the time for a joke?

LAVINIA. It'll cheer everybody up. Get the party going.

JESUS. What's the joke?

LAVINIA. Pretend I'm still dead.

JESUS. What's funny about that?

LAVINIA. You bring everybody back in, they see me lying there, you say Look I gave it my best shot blah blah blah, and while they're all standing around crying I'll jump up and scare them to pieces! What do you say?

JESUS. I don't think they'll get it.

LAVINIA. I could burst into song.

JESUS. I still don't think it'll go over.

LAVINIA. Then you come up with something.

JESUS. How about we just open the door and let everyone hug you?

LAVINIA. That's *boring!*

JESUS. Your father was already a basket case when he brought me over here.

LAVINIA. Okay, then let's trade places. *You* pretend to be dead.

JESUS. But I'd have to lie here for three days to be convincing.

LAVINIA. So? I did it.

JESUS. Tell you what: maybe I can work it into my routine later.

LAVINIA. Don't forget to give me credit.

JESUS. We'll see.

LAVINIA. All you show business people. So afraid to share credit.

JESUS. I share credit all the time!

LAVINIA. With who? That guy who's going to turn on you?

JESUS. With God.

LAVINIA. Anybody can do that.

JESUS. You never do.

LAVINIA. I do it all the time!

JESUS. When's the last time you gave God credit for anything?

LAVINIA. Last week I was yelling at my mother and I finally said Leave me alone for God's sake!

JESUS. That doesn't count.

LAVINIA. Sure it does.

JESUS. Did she leave you alone?

LAVINIA. No, she kept at me.

JESUS. So it was in vain. Therefore it doesn't count.

LAVINIA. Oh, so now you bring the Commandments into it!

JESUS. On occasion.

LAVINIA. You tricked me. How come you don't have a girlfriend?

JESUS. We should get out there...

LAVINIA. Or a boyfriend? Something. My dad married my mom when they were half your age.

JESUS. A life on the road isn't always conducive to marriage.

LAVINIA. Cop-out. Marry somebody in the business.

JESUS. Another prophet?

LAVINIA. Sure. They're everywhere. I heard about one guy who just ran around giving people baths.

JESUS. Marriage would make me lose focus. Suddenly I'd be worrying about buying her cute little gifts instead of saving souls.

LAVINIA. Aha! You're straight!

JESUS. I was just posing a hypothetical.

LAVINIA. You wouldn't have said that if you didn't like women. You would have kept it gender-neutral.

JESUS. Maybe I was trying to throw you off.

LAVINIA. You said you're always serious.

JESUS. Maybe I was throwing you off when I said I was always serious.

LAVINIA. You need a manager or something.

JESUS. You don't like my outfit?

LAVINIA. Not really. It's too simple.

JESUS. That's my image.

LAVINIA. That's no image. Have one of your groupies sew on some rhinestones. Just to make you stand out from the crowd.

JESUS. But there will always be somebody with *more* rhinestones. I can't outdo them all, nor do I want to.

LAVINIA. I just think you need a gimmick.

JESUS. I raised you from the dead!

LAVINIA. And now you're going to have to top that.

JESUS. I'm planning to.

LAVINIA. How? (*Shocked:*) Are you going to raise somebody *pret-*

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