

Mary Magdalene

“As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds them scattered, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark... I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, shepherding them rightly.”

EZEKIEL 34:12,15

A limp body was dragged out of the ring of soldiers. A trail of deep red streaked the stones. The men marched out, and my Lord was out of sight. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't think. My mind was frozen in horror as the images of bear claws tearing at his flesh flashed before my eyes. In slow motion they returned; the gems of ruby soared through the air and christened the faces of those demonic guards who were flaying the man. Movement shattered the vision, and I saw Mary step into the middle of the arena. She lightly stepped around the puddles of red, looking at them sorrowfully, clutching white shrouds that Pilate's wife had hurriedly thrust into her hands. She got down on her hands and knees and carefully began to dab at his blood. There was something almost

holy in the way she cleaned it. Many years have I witnessed the slaughter of sacred lambs for the Passover; the way she was gathering his blood is only comparable to the care with which the priests collected the lamb's blood, no drop touching the ground.

Mary's sweeping motions moved back and forth, their graceful movements a striking contrast to the lumbering brutality of the guards. What their slashing whips had spilt, her blessed hands were drawing back.

I walked over and stooped down to do the same. A tear rolled off my cheek and sent ripples into the puddle I was mopping at. A scene of muscled arms streaking down like lightning on his back burst into my head. Hooks and nails slashing his skin and the grunts and yells from the soldiers assaulted my senses. There was so much blood. *My Lord, how could you do this? Why didn't you ever stand up?* My heart cried out in agony. All I could see was his thrashed body looking more like a worm than the man who had saved me only the year before.



Kicks and curses were all that registered. The rope around my waist jerked me forward, and I tripped. The gritty taste of dust and dirt was in my mouth and nose. It mingled with the blood from my cut lip. Voices argued with one another, though I didn't make the effort to distinguish what they were saying. The terror that clawed at my throat and tore at my stomach kept my mind from doing anything. I was going to die; I knew it. They wanted to stone me. Where then, were they taking me? I was pulled up and hauled into the middle of a group of men. I could see some of the Sanhedrin. Before I could get a good look at who was going to kill me, I was thrown to the ground and greeted by the same