

Yochanah (Joanna)

adapted from *All Heaven Broke Loose* by JMD Myers

In this monologue, Joanna — a female disciple whose husband works for the Roman government — releases her pent-up doubts and frustrations to the audience on the day after Jesus' crucifixion.

His mother can't stop sleeping, I can't *get* to sleep, and Magdalena can't stop crying. I'm ready to kill somebody. Probably Magdalena. Sometimes the people He chooses ...

(She stops. That should have been past tense.)

You know I thought – well ... it sounds stupid now. I mean it sounded stupid all along, which is what made it so – exciting, I guess. Women just don't sit at a rabbi's feet like real disciples. And yet there we were, receiving the same words of God, and being treated like – well, like people worth teaching. To the point where Martha once asked him to tell her sister to mind her place in the kitchen, and he out and out refused.

It was shocking, and exhilarating. He didn't think we were a corrupting influence, he didn't think we needed to stay home where we belonged – it was kind of overwhelming, actually, how much he believed in us. And – a little embarrassing, because you feel you're being overbold, you're not really sure how much you dare to hope or – what it's even appropriate to hope for. I mean, some of the other women were already talking about “the one who is commanded to learn is commanded to teach,” but I'm not as brave as some of them. Sure, I talk big, but that's because I've always had money. I can command respect, I can put a servant in his place, but this is different. Being a respectable *woman* is different than being *respected*. But he did, and it – well maybe this is terrible, but it was the first time I really felt *joy* when I thought of God. And it *did* make you start wondering things, like, “does he really believe in us *that* much? What does He mean for us to do? What else is going to change?”

And yesterday I found out the answer: *nothing*.

**Joanna's quote is from the Talmud, the authoritative collected rabbinic teachings. Her comment about being real disciples is based in Jewish culture: to sit at a rabbi's feet, as Jesus defended Mary's decision to do in Luke 10:42, was a sign of being one of his formal students.*