A Vessel of Light

Cast of Characters
In order of appearance

Steward
The steward is very wise and gentle with the virgins. He shows a sincere concern and love for each of the women.

Eliana
Eliana is in her seventies, a faithful woman who has lived a life of hard work. She seems weary, but strong, although she uses a cane to walk.

Leora*
A woman in her thirties, she is very capable and loves to serve. Her face shines with goodness.

Ashira
Ashira is a slightly comical, well-intentioned woman of any age who is overwhelmed with the duties of life and forgets to seek peace.

Gabriella*
Gabriella is a humble lovely woman, perhaps in her thirties. She faithfully tends to her lamp.

Adi
Adi is very insecure, very concerned about appearances and making a good show. She also is a comic figure.

Malka
A very superficial young woman, not yet fully realizing the priceless gifts that she has. She is also somewhat of a comic figure.

Friends of Malka
Malka’s friend are very fashionably dressed and try to act “cool.”

Dina*
Dina is a woman who has learned through many trials the importance of the Spirit in her life.

Nava
Nava is a faithful woman who loves the Lord but has not yet learned the importance of taking time daily to seek Him.

Liraz*
Liraz is a woman who works very hard to support her family at the expense of her spirituality.

Jessa
Jessa represents a woman who has sinned and needs to work her way back and be healed. Her repentance is sincere, emotional and dramatic.

*singers
A Vessel of Light

Scene opens to cottage that is on a hill. The cottage has a bare-branched fig tree beside it, and under a porch at the front of the cottage sits a man, the STEWARD. He is sitting at a table, sanding a wooden implement. There is a vessel for oil on the table and an amphora in the corner that contains oil for the lamps. Darkness is nearing; music begins as an old woman, ELIANA, comes to the cottage. She has a lamp in one hand, a cane in the other and carries a vessel on a strap across her body. ELIANA hails the STEWARD and then enters. The STEWARD sees her, and rises to meet her.

ELIANA: Good Steward! (Music fades)

STEWARD: Dear Eliana, you’re back again so soon! Here, I’ll take that for you. (He takes her arm and leads her to a chair, then takes the vessel and lamp from her and proceeds to fill the lamp with oil.) Please sit; this will take awhile. As you know, I can only add one drop at a time.

ELIANA: I am so sorry to trouble you. I know I was just here yesterday...

STEWARD: No trouble at all. I am very happy to see you. Never apologize for using the oil—there is plenty for all and the Master would not have you in darkness—that is why he gave you the lamp.

ELIANA: Well, I suppose I am very wasteful, but I confess I have taken to lighting my lamp during the day, also. It is so comforting to see its light. I own that I have become very dependent on it. I could not read my books without it.

STEWARD: All the better. The Master is very pleased when you treasure his betrothal gift. (He hands her back the lamp and begins to fill the vessel.)

ELIANA: (Examining her lamp) It is truly a treasure. Just a simple lamp—molded from common yellow clay and tempered with fire. But it has given me courage through many days and nights of darkness. I have changed so much since the Master first gave it to me; but it burns as bright as when it was new….Sometimes I love to just sit and watch it flicker. (She rises to go.) Thank you for the oil, Steward. (As she is leaving, she turns back tentatively.) Do you know when the Master will return?

STEWARD: I do not know myself, except that it will be in the summer, (gesturing to the barren tree) when the fig tree has fully leaved. Then will be the great wedding feast, and you will be his beautiful bride, Eliana.

ELIANA: I do not mean to press, but the waiting is so hard. Day after day passes and it seems He will never come.

STEWARD: I know you have watched patiently for many years. But the Master will return, and from that day, He promises that pain and sorrow will no longer touch you; that fear and disappointment will be strangers to you. He himself will dry all of your tears. On that day, the wait will seem to
have been but a small moment, and your joy will be full. He has given you his word, and what’s more, he has given you this lamp to light your way until then.

ELIANA: Thank you, dear Steward. Those are wise and true words.

(She takes her lamp and vessel and prepares to leave when ASHIRA and LEORA appear at the door. The women greet one another, and then ELIANA exits as ASHIRA and LEORA come in. LEORA’s has a vessel on a strap over her shoulder and her lamp is burning, but ASHIRA’s has burned out. ASHIRA is slightly overwhelmed and in a hurry. LEORA serenely waits until she is done.)

STEWARD: How are you doing Ashira? Did I see you run out of your house barefoot today, and then go back for your shoes? (He takes her lamp and begins to fill it with oil.)

ASHIRA: Oh, Steward, I’m afraid so! And I’ve run out of oil again. Leora came by and rescued me just in time, or I’m afraid I would have fallen in the well! I’ve been meaning to come by and fill up my vessel—everyday I see your shop on the hill and promise myself I will—but it always seems that something or other is always pressing.

STEWARD: Dear, dear, Leora, there is none who serves as you do. You are so many things to so many people—a teacher, healer, mender, …

ASHIRA: That is very kind of you—still I feel like I accomplish nothing! After I have swept the floor and drawn water to clean the linens it is time to hurry to the market and back to…everything! I think I will find time, but I never seem to.

STEWARD: Well, it is a long, difficult walk to reach my door, to be sure. Nonetheless, you must take time, Ashira. The Master is pleased that you love and serve his children so well—but he doesn’t want you to fall in the well. Especially without shoes. And he doesn’t want you to forget him and his love for you. I have filled your lamp for you—that will at least see you home. But you must come back and fill up your spare vessel. You never know when you will be needing the extra oil.

ASHIRA: Oh, thank you, Steward! I will come back—soon. But I need to hurry off, now. I promised I would ….. (Voice is lost as she hurries to exit.)

STEWARD: (He turns to LEORA) It is good you were there, Leora, to help see her to my door. You are well-named: Lenora, woman of light. Do you need more oil?

LEORA: (Shyly handing him her vessel while she holds the lamp.) Well, I do still have plenty—but, if you wouldn’t mind, I would like it to be full. I can’t imagine what would happen if I ran out. (As the STEWARD fills her vessel, she sings.)

LEORA:

SONG #1: A Vessel of Light, verse 1

WHEN MY LAMP BURNS LOW;
AND FAITH IS DIM;
WHEN THE ONCE STEADY GLOW
IS UNCERTAIN;
I KNOW I MUST ATTEND  
MY FAILING STORE;  
TO TRIM MY LAMP AND FILL ITS LACK  
I COME BEFORE THE LORD.

STEWARD: (Steward returns with filled vessel.) If you run out of oil, dear, I fear half of the village will walk in darkness. In fact, I have something for you.

(He finishes filling the vessel and returns it to LEORA. The he takes the wooden implement—a lamp holder—and as he speaks to her, he carefully polishes it with a cloth and then gives it to LEORA.)

From my vantage here on the hilltop, I see many things that occur in the village. I’ve watched you many times, helping others find their way in the dark with your lamp. I’ve seen how carefully you consider the path, not wanting anyone to be lead in error or go astray. The Master, knowing how you treasure His gift of light, bid me fashion this for you. May I? (He takes her lamp and secures it in the lampholder.) With this you may hold your light high, and clearly illuminate the path ahead. And your light will be a beacon for the lost, the weary, and the worn that need you to help them find their way home.

LEORA: I don’t know what to say—this is so beautiful. Tell the Master I will use it very well, I promise.

STEWARD: I will tell him—(aside) although, if He were not certain that she would, the gift would not have been given.

LEORA: (She begins to go and then pauses.) Steward…Have you heard when the Master is coming?

STEWARD: I only know as he has told us all—it will be in the fullness of summer when the fruit of the fig is ripened and ready to fall.

LEORA: I am sorry to trouble you, but, I just would like to be ready then, for the Marriage Feast.

STEWARD: Then you must expect him always, for that is the only certain course. Good night, good Leora.

(He watches LEORA exit then steps forward and searches the distance as though surveying the valley below.)

(Musing to himself) I expected to have seen Gabriella before now. She will be anxious to receive her gift from the Master. (He retrieves a lamp from the table and holds it in his hand to admire it.) How well the Master knows his chosen bride! Gabriella is naturally elegant and unassuming. This lamp is small and will fit in the palm of her hand—every imperfection has been lovingly smoothed away. It is lovely, yet will not draw attention away from the flame it is designed to bear. How well it will suit gracious Gabriella.

(At this point, GABRIELLA appears at his door, very modestly, yet becomingly attired. GABRIELLA is very gracious and poised and eager with anticipation to receive her lamp. )
STEWARD: There you are! I was just examining your lamp—it is very beautiful as you see.

GABRIELLA: *(Taking the lamp from him in delight.)* This is so exquisite—I am beyond words! I cannot believe that the Master has chosen me for a bride. And such a gift. How will I ever express my gratitude?

STEWARD: The Master will be well thanked if you will keep your lamp well tended.

GABRIELLA: Has there ever been such a kind and generous master?

STEWARD: He is the perfect Master; he loves with perfect love, Gabriella. His love has proven to be stronger than death and be sure it will endure past the furthest reaches of time. He will return soon, but that day has not yet come; for now, he bids you take this lamp. This is yours. Fill it with his precious oil; let this light keep the darkness at bay. That is his wish. And that is how you may express your love for Him.

*(ADI abruptly appears; her clothes are very showy and her lamp is decorated with streaming ribbons.)*

ADI: Gabriella! I heard you were receiving your lamp today, and I just had to come and see it!

GABRIELLA: *(Showing her the lamp.)* I can’t believe how beautiful it is.

ADI: *(Taking the lamp)* Oh, it is beautiful. It has such a pretty shape—I remember how excited I was to get my lamp. *(She compares it to her lamp.)* But it has gotten kind of old. It seems so big and clumsy next to yours.

GABRIELLA: *(Taking ADI’s lamp)* But Adi, I love this design worked into the clay—it’s very complicated. It must have taken a lot of time and patience to work such an intricate pattern.

ADI: It is rather fancy—still, it seemed to be missing something, so I added these ribbons. *(uncertainly)* But maybe I should take them off.

STEWARD: There is no good to be had in comparing your lamp to others, Adi. The value of the lamp is in the quality of its light, not the appearance of the vessel. May I offer you some oil?

ADI: Oh, I never light the lamp. I’m afraid it would get dirty. I don’t think my little light will make much difference anyways. *(She exits.)*

STEWARD: *(Calling after her)* Please, come again soon, Adi.

GABRIELLA: What an unusual lamp she has. Very complex and finely crafted.

STEWARD: The Master loves her very much. As her name suggests, He considers her his “Adi,” his jewel. *(Background music begins as he gives aside.)* Sadly she does not see it. There is in fact, a yellow diamond pattern hidden in the design of the lamp: the Master knows her love of novelty. She will not find it, though, if she doesn’t use her lamp as intended. She will continue to search for
something to distinguish herself by, never discovering the hidden treasure that she already carries with her.

GABRIELLA: *(Calling him back from his reverie)* Tell me, good Steward; I will treasure this lamp, of course, but when *will* the Bridegroom come that we may have the wedding feast?

STEWARD: I cannot say—I only know it will be soon. Now is the springtime with much work to do, but when the fig tree is green and the full summer has arrived, then He will come. Take heed and watch and pray, He bids us.

GABRIELLA: I can see why the Master has given me a lamp—there is so much to do before then, and every hour will be precious.

*(She sings)*

**SONG #2: A Vessel of Light, part 1 of chorus.**

FILL MY LAMP, I PRAY,  
WITH HIS PRECIOUS OIL;  
WHEN SHADOWS DISMAY,  
OH, LIGHT UP MY SOUL;  
THROUGH THE NIGHT MAY I ABIDE  
A VESSEL OF HIS LIGHT.

(Music fades and GABRIELLA exits.)

STEWARD: *(Seeing her to the exit)* Come again, soon! Come back tomorrow! *(He watches her go with an arm lifted in farewell, then he muses to himself)* There is such joy in bestowing a lamp to the Master’s chosen. They always begin eagerly and earnestly intend to faithfully tend to their lamps. *(He sighs, then sees MALKA and two friends who enter through the audience.)* Now there is Malka with her friends. I remember when she received her lamp—so beautiful and she was so flattered by the gift. She is very queenly, as her name suggests, and her lamp is very unique—hewn from sandstone; it must have taken the Master days to complete. The large end of her lamp forms a perfect circle that angles into a small triangle for the wick. But I haven’t seen her for awhile—I wonder how she’s doing. Malka! *(He waves to draw her attention and leaving her friends to wait for her she approaches the Steward.)* Beautiful Malka! How are you? But where is your lamp?

MALKA: Oh, I don’t need it. I know my way perfectly, even in the dark *(She trips over or hits or bumps into an unseen object.)* Ouch! What was that?

STEWARD: I hope you are tending your lamp as you promised you would.

MALKA: Oh, I treasure it! I have a special place at home where all the villagers can admire it! It is so beautiful!

STEWARD: But it’s not meant to be a display—you should be using your lamp every day.
MALKA: Oh, I don’t need it—I can see just fine— I’m sure I’ll use it more when I’m old. But none of my friends use lamps, and—well I don’t want to seem figgy or anything. I’ll talk to you later, Steward. *(She returns to her friends and they exit together.)*

STEWARD: *(Shaking his head, he calls after her.)* Please, come back soon!

*(He is distracted from following MALKA by the entrance of DINA and NAVA. DINA is carrying a lamp with a vessel. NAVA stays in the background at first; she has no lamp but is carrying a pouch with her lamp in it.)*

DINA: Steward! Have you any oil for our lamps?

STEWARD: Dina! Nava! Of course I have oil! *(He gestures to the large amphora in the corner.)* The Master has provided an endless supply of pure olive oil. Very precious, but free for the asking. I see you have your flask with you—you know, you were the first to ask for a spare vessel. *(He takes her flask and begins to fill it with oil.)*

DINA: Well, I find myself out in the darkness at unexpected times and never wanted to fall short to my peril.

NAVA: *(Stepping forward.)* I don’t know how you manage to always find time to help everyone, Dina—when someone is in need, you are always the first one there.

DINA: *(Modestly.)* Well, I have had my share of sorrow and grief. It pleases me to help someone else who is troubled. Helps me forget myself.

STEWARD: Dina, the gentle one. And yet despite the fact that you are always using it, you never lack for oil—what is your secret?

DINA: *(Again, modestly.)* I don’t know. My mother always said that you can’t eat figs unless you plant a fig tree. I just make sure to fill my lamp first: then I don’t have to worry about the rest.

*(She sings)*

**SONG #3: A Vessel of Light, verse 2**

WHEN MY LAMP IS FULL;
ITS FLAME IS PURE;
NOT A FLICKER OF DOUBT
CAN ENDURE;
YET AS I HURRY THROUGH
THE DARK’NING WORLD;
HOW QUICKLY BURNS MY RESERVOIR!
AND I RETURN TO THE LORD.

*(As the music ends, DINA retrieves her lamp and vessel from the STEWARD.)*

STEWARD: But where is your lamp, Nava?

NAVA: *(Removing it from her bag.)* It is right here. I love it so much that I carry it everywhere I go!
STEWARD: *He takes the lamp from her and admires it.* It has such a lovely flower on the side here—it suits you very well, Nava. But why don’t you light it?

NAVA: Well, I do. On special occasions I love to trim the wick and fill it with oil and light it. It gives such a warm, lovely glow.

STEWARD: But why wait for a special day? You can use it every day.

NAVA: You know I should, shouldn’t I? I always plan to, afterwards, but I guess I’m not used to it. So I don’t.

STEWARD: Do you need more oil.

NAVA: Oh, no, I still have plenty!

DINA: Steward, may I ask a favor? Liraz is running short of oil—she sews day and night to support her mother—might I have a little extra to take to her?

STEWARD: You have a kind heart, Dina. But you know the Master’s rule: “Light may be shared, but to each her own lamp, to each her own oil.” It may sound harsh, but the rule stands to good purpose. Were it not so, Dina you would be the sole giver of oil, and no one else would take the trouble to journey up my path and seek for herself.

DINA: You are right, Steward. It troubles me to know that she often works in darkness to conserve oil.

STEWARD: It sorrows the Master even more; for he has given the light and wills that his gift be used.

*Music begins as he gives an aside. As he is speaking, LIRAZ comes to the lower stage. She sits sewing and at the appropriate time she begins to sing.* There was a time when Liraz would come every day to my cottage, wondering when her lamp would be ready, watching me fill others’ lamps with oil, so eager to receive her own lamp. She vowed she would tend it well…

LIRAZ: *(Sings)*

**SONG #4: A Vessel of Light, part 2 of Chorus**

**FILL MY LAMP EACH DAY,**

**AND WITH DELIGHT.**

**I WILL WALK IN HIS PATH**

**WITH HIS PERFECT LIGHT.**

**OH, FILL MY LAMP TODAY, I PRAY.**

*(Music fades, Liraz notices that her lamp has burned out. She looks at the lamp; looks toward the Steward’s cottage, then shakes her head and continues sewing in darkness. The STEWARD continues.)*

STEWARD: But then, afterwards, her visits became less and less frequent. I love to see her, but rarely does she come; she says she is so busy in the mornings, and at night, she is so tired… I only see her when she is desperate for oil . . .

*(Music fades.)*
DINA: (Breaking the reverie.) Steward, do you know when the Master will return?

STEWARD: As you do, I wish He were here now. But I’m afraid no one knows exactly when it will be. You know the signs; we can only watch for them.

(He sees the two off and returns to his porch to gaze over the village below.)

(Gently, with sadness as music begins.) It sorrows the Master when his oil is not used for it was obtained at a terrible price. Not far from here an ancient grove of olive trees adorn a stony hill. It is called Gethsemane, the place of the Oil Press. The name tells all, for in a nearby cave rests an old olive press. When it is time, the olives are harvested and brought to Gethsemane to be crushed and ground between two heavy stones. There, they are bruised and broken until their bounty flows in a scarlet stream. That is the only way that olive oil may be prepared. And so the Master went to Gethsemane; there, alone, he prepared the oil—he did it himself; he could employ no servant there. It sorrows the Master when his oil is not used.

(As the music fades, JESSA appears coming through the audience. She is weeping and crying bitterly, slowly approaching the cottage. She holds in her hands the pieces of a broken lamp.)

JESSA: Master! My Master! (She falls to her knees sobbing.)

STEWARD: Oh, Jessa, finally you come! I have grieved for you.

(The STEWARD goes out to meet her, puts his robe over her shoulder and leads her to his cottage with great tenderness.)

STEWARD: Dear Jessa—what troubles you?

JESSA: I am so sorry! I am so ashamed!

STEWARD: What is wrong, Jessa?

JESSA: I cannot forgive myself! For I have broken my lamp!

STEWARD: How did it happen, dear child?

JESSA: I am so sorry! I am entirely to blame. I was careless; I did not keep my lamp filled with oil. Then the storm arose—I needed to shutter the windows, but it was already dark and I couldn’t see! I was fumbling blindly, and suddenly my lamp fell. I am so sorry!

STEWARD: There now, you have done the right thing in coming to me.

JESSA: I am so grieved; my heart has ached for many days. At first I just wanted to pretend it had not happened. But I knew all along that I must bring it to you. Can the Master mend my lamp?

STEWARD: (Examining the pieces) It will take time, but yes, He can mend the lamp.

JESSA: I am so ashamed. What will the Master think of me?
STEWARD: *(gently)* He will know that you love Him very much. For only love would have given
you the courage to come and face what you have done. Yours is not the first broken lamp He has
mended. Once your lamp is whole—and it will be as new—He will forget it was ever broken. And
in time you will also find that the matter has ceased to give you pain.

JESSA: I may forget the pain, but I shall never let my lamp run dry again.

STEWARD: Then be at peace. That is all that is asked.

JESSA: *(Drying her tears)* Steward, when will the Master come?

STEWARD: I do not know for certain; some say He tarries. In the end His coming may prove to be
sooner than many expected and they will not be prepared. *(Shaking his head)* There is so very much
at stake that it is foolish to delay. Let me see you home. We will use my lamp today.

JESSA: Thank you, Steward.

They both exit. The lights dim and there is a musical interlude to indicate the passage of time. When
the lights do come up, the fig tree is fully leaved. As the music fades, there is a great fanfare. As it
ends, the STEWARD stands in front of his cottage and loudly reads the proclamation.

STEWARD: “The summer has come, the harvest has ended; behold the fig tree has put forth leaves.
Let it be known that the Master will come this very day. The wedding party will assemble! The
Master desires that each bride bring her lamp to honour this great day.”

Music begins and nine virgins come with haste in twos or threes, bringing their lamps and vessels.
They take their places at the lower stage. STEWARD exits. As the dialogue continues, the virgins
gradually settle and eventually fall asleep.

ELIANA: *(She turns to LIRAZ)* Oh, Liraz! Can you believe the Master has come at last!

LIRAZ: It seems too good to be true.

NAVA: I have looked forward to this night for as long as I can remember.

MALKA: I really never thought it would come. I mean, I did, but not really…

ADI: Well, I have been planning for a long time. See I have made this gown just for this occasion. Do
you think it looks right? Maybe I should have made more tassels

ELIANA: You look beautiful, Adi. And your lamp is so lovely, too.

ASHIRA comes rushing in, lamp in one hand, shoes in the other, wailing and carrying a brass vessel.

ASHIRA: I didn’t think I would make it on time. *(She puts on her shoes.)* I had to finish polishing the
brass. I want my house to look its very best …

As they settle, lights gradually dim, music begins and each falls asleep except for ELIANA who
remains alert reading a scroll and time passes. Then music fades.
LIRAZ: (Yawning. To ELIANA) I hope the Master comes soon. I didn’t think He would arrive so late. I’m not very well prepared to wait. I meant to get more oil.

ELIANA: (Looking up from her reading) Oh dear, Liraz, you can’t run out of oil! I hope He arrives soon.

MALKA: I am low, too. I would have more oil, but I hardly used the lamp, and I didn’t want it to go to waste.

GABRIELLA: I hope mine will last. My lamp is small—but I did bring some extra oil.

NAVA: I didn’t realize that lamps use so much oil—I should have brought more. I mean, I only used mine for special occasions…

ASHIRA: If I had known the Master would take this long, I would have finished cleaning my house.

Lights dim and music begins again and all gradually fall asleep, including Eliana. As the music fades, trumpets sound.

LEORA: (Stepping forward with her upraised lamp.) The Master! He is here!

At this the Virgins give a shout of joy and then there is some confusion: Adi is straightening her dress; Ashira is polishing her brass; and Malka is looking clueless. The others are busy filling their lamps.

JESSA: My lamp is burning so low! This is the last of my oil! I hope it will serve!

GABRIELLA: This is the last of my oil, too.

NAVA: (Noticing her lamp, she cries out in despair) Noo! My flame has gone out and I have no more oil! What do I do? (As she cries out, ADI, MALKA, and ASHIRA stop and look at their lamps and also cry out in panic.)

ADI: Mine is out, too!

MALKA: My oil is gone!

ASHIRA: I have no light!

LIRAZ: What can we do?

NAVA: This can’t happen! I just assumed I’d have enough—how could I let this happen? Gabriella, please, may I have some of your oil?

GABRIELLA: (Heartbroken) I have none to spare, Nava, I am so sorry but I am nearly out as well.

LIRAZ: (Desperately pleading.) Dina, Leora, you always have oil to spare—please give some to us.

DINA: (Near tears herself, with great sorrow.) I’m so sorry, but I can’t! Remember the rule? “Light may be shared, but to each her own lamp, to each her own oil.”
ADI: *Wailing* I shouldn’t have spent so much time on my dress! Why didn’t I fill my lamp instead?

ASHIRA: *Wailing also* I’ve worked so hard, but on all the wrong things. My house is ready, but I am not!

MALKA: *In horrified realization* Does this mean I can’t be a bride?

ELIANA: You cannot let the Master see with empty lamps. Go out and find oil. Get what you need and then return. Hurry, he is coming!"

They run off into the night, weeping. The other women form a tableau with lamps lifted, except for JESSA, who is humbly on her knees. They sing.

**SONG #5: A VESSEL OF LIGHT**

**LEORA:** WHEN MY LAMP BURNS LOW;  
AND FAITH IS DIM;  
WHEN THE ONCE STEADY GLOW  
IS UNCERTAIN;  
I KNOW I MUST ATTEND  
MY FAILING STORE;  
TO TRIM MY LAMP AND FILL ITS LACK  
I COME BEFORE THE LORD:

**ALL:** FILL MY LAMP I PRAY  
WITH THY PRECIOUS OIL;  
WHEN SHADOWS DISMAY, LORD  
LIGHT UP MY SOUL;  
THROUGH THE NIGHT MAY I ABIDE  
A VESSEL OF THY LIGHT.

FILL MY LAMP EACH DAY  
AND WITH DELIGHT  
I WILL WALK THY PATH  
WITH THY PERFECT LIGHT;  
LORD, FILL MY LAMP TODAY

**DINA:** NOW MY LAMP IS FULL;  
ITS FLAME IS PURE;  
NOT A FLICKER OF DOUBT  
DO I ENDURE;  
YET AS I HURRY THROUGH  
THIS DARK’NING WORLD;  
HOW QUICKLY BURNS MY RESERVOIR!  
AND I RETURN TO THE LORD:

**ALL:** FILL MY LAMP I PRAY  
WITH THY PRECIOUS OIL;
WHEN SHADOWS DISMAY
LIGHT UP MY SOUL;
THROUGH THE NIGHT MAY I ABIDE
A VESSEL OF THY LIGHT.
OH, FILL MY LAMP TODAY.

(The others gather around Jessa during this verse and sing to her, then lift her to her feet.)

GABRIELLA: IN GETHSEMANE WHERE THE OLIVES GROW;
WITH THE WEIGHT OF OUR SINS A HEAVY STONE;
CRUSHED AND BROKEN,
JESUS TREAD THAT AWFUL PRESS ALONE;
THAT OUR VESSELS MIGHT BE FULL AND WHOLE.
EVER BRIMMING WITH OIL,
BRIMMING WITH OIL

ALL: FILL MY LAMP I PRAY
WITH THY PRECIOUS OIL;
WHEN SHADOWS DISMAY, LORD
LIGHT UP MY SOUL;
THROUGH THE NIGHT MAY I ABIDE
A VESSEL OF THY LIGHT.
OH LORD, FILL MY LAMP TODAY
FILL MY LAMP, LORD, EVERY DAY.

(As the music ends, the Steward appears at the door to the Feast Chamber. Trumpet fanfare.)

STEWARD: The Master is here, enter all ye who have prepared! Then shall the gates be closed and the Marriage Feast will begin.

(The five Virgins file off to the feast with LEORA leading the way, followed by GABRIELLA with her arm in JESSA’s, then ELIANA and DINA with raised lamps. The STEWARD greets them one by one, then they enter the feast. Guests follow after them.)
A VESSEL OF LIGHT
Solo for Mezzo Soprano with Piano

Words by
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lamp I pray with Thy precious oil; when shadows dismay, Lord,
a little faster

light up my soul. Through the night may I abide

ves sel of Thy light. Fill my lamp each day and

with delight, I will walk in Thy path with Thy perfect light; oh,
Lord, fill my lamp today, I pray.

Now my lamp is full; its flame is pure. Not a

flicker of doubt can endure. Yet as I hurry through this dark- ning world, how

quickly burns my reservoir! And I return to the Lord. Fill my
lamp I pray with Thy precious oil; when shadows dismay, Lord,

light up my soul. Oh, fill, fill my lamp today. In Geth

Slower, with expression

se-ma-ne where the o-lives grow, with the weight of our sins a heavy stone, crushed and bro-ken, Je-sus tread that

Broaden

aw-ful press a-lone that my ves-sel might be full and whole, ev-er
49  f 

  brimming with oil.  brimming with

52  mf  a little faster

  oil.  Fill my lamp I pray with  Thy precious oil; when

55  a little faster

  shad - ows dis - may, Lord, light up my soul;  Through the night may

58  no breath  dim.  mp

  I a - bide a ves - sel of Thy light.  Oh,
Lord, fill my lamp today.

Fill my lamp, Lord, every day.

gradual rit. dim.

pp

ppp