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**Mary of Magdala**  
**...through her tears – the risen Christ**  
**based on John 20**  
**by Ralph Milton**

Mary stumbled and fell in the dark. Her hand and elbow scraped against the ugly rocks and though she couldn't see it, she knew she was bleeding.

No matter. She had bled before.

On she stumbled through the clutching darkness, along a half-remembered path. She felt her way along the cold, sharp stones up to the garden tomb. Gradually, the pale gray light of early dawn outlined the naked rock that should have sealed the tomb, the place where they had buried her best friend.

The reality, the horror hit her instantly. Even in his death they could not give him peace. This kind and gentle friend had died the cruel death of criminals, and now to add to all the insult, someone had stolen Jesus' body!

Screaming, she crashed back down the lacerating path. Screaming, she yelled for Peter. For the others. "They've taken him away! Damn them anyway! They couldn't let him rest. Peter, come, they've stolen Jesus' body. Oh my God! How can people be so brutal?"

Then back again with Peter up the bruising path toward the tomb. Her rage carried her now. Her unfocused anger at this outrage carried her through the bitter morning darkness up the broken path, rocks and bushes scratched and tore her skin until she stood, chest heaving, beside Peter at the open tomb. Then she and Peter forced themselves to believe the unbelievable.

"He's gone, Mary." There was stunned, deadness in his voice. "All they left us was a corpse. Now they've got that too." And Peter stumbled off, going nowhere but away from this revolting desecration.

Mary stayed. She had nowhere to go. She had nothing left. The power of her rage was spent. She was exhausted. She slumped her deadened body on a rock.

Head in hands she sat. Her mind shut down. She felt nothing. Not even the will to die.

Then memories. Memories of terror. Memories of despair. The pain of life in hometown Magdala came back – back in all its horrors. The darkness of that other life in that small town where she was beaten, starved and raped. Where people called her "slut" and "whore" though she was neither. Where she was called "possessed of seven demons."

It wasn't till she remembered overhearing rumors of a healer just down the lakeside at Capernaum that a sense of feeling returned, and with the feeling, tears – tears that slowly washed her dry, red, angry eyes, tears that moved to moans, that moved to full, body heaving sobs – great gasping, screaming cries that found their way from the bottom of her wounded soul.

Through the prism of her tears she saw the light of dawn slanting through the rocks into the garden. And there, in that golden light, a figure, a man, it could be any man, it must be the gardener, who else would it be here in this place so early.

"Look, if you took his body, tell me where, please, just tell me where, so I can go and get him and give him a decent, human burial. Tell me, for God sake tell me."

"Mary." The voice was gentle. It seemed to come from another world. It took some moments to move its way through her sobs and into her consciousness. She heard it a second time. "Mary."

Through her tears – through her salted tears of pain and anger and rejection Mary saw him.

"Rabbi," she whispered, and then shouted, "Rabbi!" Springing to her feet to embrace him, the light of morning sparkling through her tears, Mary rushed toward her Jesus.

"Please don't touch me, Mary," Jesus said. "There are reasons. But go and tell our friends that death has been transformed to life and that despair has turned to hope."

This time the path unrolled beneath her dancing feet. This time the amber rocks and greening bushes sparkled in the morning light. This time she shouted hope to all her friends.

"I have seen him. He's alive. It's true. All that he said is true. God loves us. All of us. And death and pain are not the end of life."

**Ralph Milton has written a number of books,  
all of them available through Wood Lake Publishing.**

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