Reader’s Theatre Reading of Acts: 16: 16-23
By Amber Harris and Frank Ramirez

(This scripture is presented "Reader's Theater" style. Readers stand in a line behind a music stand or lectern and read their portion dramatically. The characters include LUKE, the narrator and author of Acts, the SNAKE GIRL, who can look wild and have a large snake over her shoulders, the SLAVE OWNERS, possibly three who will say their line together, PAUL, the apostle, and the BAND, who can make angry crowd noises together. I have removed three words: "they are Jews" from the end over verse 20, because they are confusing and don't advance the story.)

LUKE

Good evening. My name is Luke. I am a travelling companion of Paul. Because Paul had a vision we went to Macedonia, to the city of Philippi, where we met some women praying at the riverside. Lydia was the chief of these. She had the royal monopoly on making expensive purple dye for clothing. She invited us to stay at her home, which was more like a small town than a house! Here is my story, from Acts 16:16-23.

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out--

SNAKE GIRL

“These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

LUKE

She kept doing this --

SNAKE GIRL

“These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

LUKE

She kept --

SNAKE GIRL

“These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

LUKE

(rushing to get the line out)
She kept doing this for many days. But Paul --

SNAKE GIRL

“These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

LUKE

--very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit

PAUL

I order you

SNAKE GIRL

“These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

PAUL

--in the name of Jesus Christ --

SNAKE GIRL

“These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

PAUL

--to come out of her.

(With a loud cry the SNAKE GIRL writhes, falls, kicks, and collapses, and lies still)

LUKE

(sigh of relief)

And it came out that very hour.

(pause. The Slave Owners look at the girl on the ground, who slowly rises and stands peacefully, a smile on her face.)

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas

(The BAND begins to make angry crowd noises, which continue PAUL collapses)

and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said --

SLAVE OWNERS

(angry crowd noise continues)

These men are disturbing our city; and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.
LUKE

(angry crowd noise continues -- LUKE gets louder to compensate)
The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods.

(Paul collapses. Crowd noise quiets.)
After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.

(LUKE leaves with his podium. SLAVE OWNERS leave with their podium. Paul rises painfully and leaves with his podium. SLAVE GIRL stands for several seconds, smiling. Then she takes her podium and leaves.)