

# **"He's Waiting For You: The Story of Mary Magdalene"**

**By Jim Pappas  
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Prologue  
"Jesus Theme"

Narrator: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And Joseph also went up . . .to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And it was so that while they were in Bethlehem, the day came that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon shepherds in the field who were keeping watch over their flock by night. And the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Now as these things were done on the plains of Bethlehem, behold, in the village of Bethany a young lad is awakened by the brightness of the sky.

*Begin with a dark stage. By dim stage lighting we see a little boy sleeping stage left. Music swells into a heavenly quality simultaneously with a bright light shining off stage right. The light awakens the little boy who is both awed and afraid at the sight of the supernatural light. He is irresistibly drawn to the window where he watches for a moment and then rushes to wake up his little sister.*

Lazarus: Wow! Gotta wake up Mary! (*SFX footsteps Urgently shaking her awake*) Mary, wake up!

Mary: Huh?

Lazarus: Wake up! (*Pulling her out of bed*) Come see!

Mary: See what? What is it Lazarus?

Lazarus: Just come look!

Mary: (*Sleepily*) All right. Yawn. Let me get my slippers on (*She stops to slip on her slippers*)

Lazarus: No! There's no time for slippers! Hurry before it goes away.

Mary: Coming. (*Sliding over the floor on slippers half put on*) Before what goes away?

Lazarus: Look!

Mary: (*Gasps at the wonder of it*) What is it?

Lazarus: I don't know. It was so bright that it woke me up

Mary: I've never seen anything so bright. I wonder what it is?

Lazarus: Listen! (*Pause*) Do you hear it?

Mary: Yes. It's singing.

Lazarus: Singing?

Mary: Yes People singing. Its the prettiest music I have ever heard.

Lazarus: Is it from Bethlehem?

Mary: I think so. It must be together with the light.

Lazarus: Lets waken Martha, and Mama & Papa!

Mary: All right. Wait. (*The light and the distant music fade*) Oh no. too late.

Lazarus: Oh no! The light is going away.

Mary: But not all the way. See!

Lazarus: It turned into a star! The brightest star in the sky!

Mary: Do you think Mama and Papa will believe us?

Lazarus: Maybe if we show them the star.

Mary: Yes. Lets show them the star!

Lazarus: Shall we tell them about the singing?

Mary: I don't know. They probably wouldn't believe us.

Lazarus: Then it will be our secret. Just you and me.

Mary: All right. Our secret. C'mon. I wanna tell Martha!

Lazarus: I'll go get Mama & Papa.

## **ACT I**

### **Scene I**

Simon's Home

Narrator: It is many years later and we find ourselves in the home of Simon the Pharisee. His wife, Rachael, having been diagnosed with a terminal illness has left Bethany to visit more mild climes for treatment and rest. A young woman named Mary has been employed to help with the duties of the home.

Mary: (V.O.) (*SFX sweeping*) Poor Rabbi Simon. He has been so sad with his wife gone. Perhaps these pretty flowers on his desk will bring him a bit of cheer. (*SFX vase on desk-then Simon's footsteps*) Oh, he's coming. Back to work.

*Mary places a vase of flowers on Simon's desk She hears him coming and quickly begins humming while she cleans or does some mending. Enter Simon who takes no notice of her. Mary continues working but watches out of the corner of her eye to see his reaction to the flowers. He comes in absent mindedly and sits at his desk. When he reaches for his book or quill he sees the flowers.*

Simon: Eh? Whats this? Flowers? (*He is visibly moved. He touches their petals tenderly, smells them with a slow inhalation as if trying to extend the pleasure. He leans away and looks at them for a few moments...*

(V.O.) I wonder how, or who...

*...and then turns to Mary).*

You?

Mary: Yes. I thought they might cheer you. My sister Martha always calls them "little wanderers from Eden."

Simon: Thank you. (*Tenderly*) My wife always put flowers on my desk.

Mary: Is there any word?

Simon: She is none the better. Perhaps even worse for the trip. I fear that... (*He buries his head in his hands*)

Mary: (*Empathetically*). I am sorry. If there is anything I can do . . .

Simon: (*Regaining control*) No. No.

Mary: Don't be sad, Rabbi Simon. She'll be all right.

Simon: (*Recovering a bit*) Thank you for saying that, Miss Mary. But deep in my heart I'm not sure I believe that.

Mary: Oh, but you must! To believe well is a battle half won.

Simon: Thank you. I shall try.

Mary: God will work things out. You'll see.

Simon: You truly love God, don't you.

Mary: Oh, yes. That is why I was so excited about coming to work for you.

Simon: Oh?

Mary: Yes. I thought that after work is done you might perhaps be able to teach me more about Him.

Simon: Bless you, child. I shall be happy to. (*Mood change*) It may help me to forget.

Mary: Forget? Forget what?

Simon: Forget . . . that . . . my wife is dying in a faraway land. Forget that I am lonely, - miserable, - depressed.

Mary: You?!

Simon: Are you surprised?.

Mary: But you are a Pharisee. A man of God.

Simon: Do you think that men of God have no pain?

Mary: No, I...never thought that. (*Thoughtfully*) I just assumed that a Pharisee was so close to God that...

Simon: I wish it were true. But sometimes I feel as if I am farther from God than anyone.

Mary: Master Simon!

Simon: T'is true. Oh, sure, I count my steps on Sabbath and tithed my mint and cumin, but somehow, for some reason, it is not enough. My soul cries out still - empty, - empty, - empty.

Mary: I wish I could help you, Rabbi.

Satan: She is a beautiful girl, Simon.

Simon: Well, you can begin by calling me Simon.

Mary: All right, Master Simon.

Simon: No. Not Master Simon. Just Simon.

God: (V.O.) No, Mary.

Mary: I...

Simon: Is something wrong?

Mary: I guess I feel kind of funny. I mean, you're old enough to be my father.

Simon: Is that too old to be your friend?

Mary: No.

Simon: Then I am not too old to be called by my first name. Am I right?

Mary: (*slight hesitation*) You're right. But only if you will call me Mary.

Simon: I would be pleased, Mary (*He reaches out his hand and touches hers*).

Mary: (*She is too shy to allow more than a moment and unobtrusively withdraws her hand. But the contact, however brief, had a touch of magic to it and she absent-mindedly strokes the touched place with her other hand.*). I uh...I really should get back to work.

Simon: (*As he speaks he is pulling his hand back. He too has felt the magic and absent-mindedly touches his fingertips with his other hand. He speaks thoughtfully, noticing that she has turned business-like*)

Yes. Of course. We can chat anytime.

(*He turns back to his books as she begins working. He steals a glance and upon seeing that her back is turned lets his eyes linger*)

Satan: She is a very beautiful girl, Simon.

Simon: Yes.

## **Scene II**

Heaven

Narrator: Now in those times there came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves unto the Lord. And Satan also was among them. And the Lord said unto Satan:

God: From where have you come?

Satan: From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

God: Have you seen my Son, Jesus? How, in spite of your strongest temptations, He has lived a life without sin?

Satan: And am I supposed to be impressed by that? Isn't He the Son of God?

God: But He lives as a man among men in the same bones and flesh as His father David. He has drawn only upon the same powers that all men have access to.

Satan: Bah! Easy enough to obey while cloistered up in the hills of Nazareth. But when He comes forth to active warfare, then we shall see what He is made of.

God: You have tempted him on every point and at every turn of His life. There has never

lived a young man that has been tried as you have tried Him. And still that means nothing to you?

Satan: Not really. Didn't His father and mother guard the avenues of His soul as a fortress? Didn't they pray for Him with every breath they took? With such parents as that perhaps others could live a life as if under the shadow of the Almighty.

God: What are you saying?

Satan: Simply this. Even if He does manage a miraculous life without even one sin He will be only one. You cast me and my angels out of heaven because of "sin" and yet you intend to fill our empty places with men and women, right?

God: That is correct.

Satan: But they have also sinned. They are sinners!

God: I will transform them into the image of My Son.

Satan: Indeed? When? When they get to heaven and the living is easy? Or here and now on planet earth where their trust is tested?

God: Here and now, of course. 2/3 of the angels have proven that obedience is possible in heaven.

Satan: Then I propose that you show me, and the peoples of the universe who are gathered here in these halls, (He executes a sweeping gesture that includes the audience) that you can do it. Show us at least one person fallen into great sin that can turn about and live an obedient life. Then we will be impressed. (To the audience) Will we not everyone? (Pause)

Audience: Yes. Indeed we shall, etc.

Satan: Yes, of course we will. (To God) Well?

God: All right. I will. You see those two engaged in trivial conversation? (*Enter Simon & Mary*)

Satan: Simon & Mary?

God: Yes. How about Simon & Mary?

Satan: Which one?

God: Both of them.

Satan: A bit sure of yourself, aren't you?

God: I am sure of Jesus.

Satan: Hmmph.

God: Well? Will these do?

Satan: Of course!. They would be the perfect specimens. He, on the one hand, is the perfect Pharisee, obeying every nit-picking rule the rabbis, and I, have ever invented. And yet without guilt he looks on this maid with desire. And look at her. Raised to love and fear God and yet allowing herself to listen to the seductive flatterings of this hypocrite while ignoring the constant pleadings of Your voice; she has enthroned him as an idol in her heart; she begins to lust after his affections, and she covets to be his new wife. There is not one commandment that either of them has not broken either in principle or in action.

God: It is true. They are coming under your control. But Jesus shall make them mine.

Satan: How? They have already ignored your still small voice. They read only the scriptures they are comfortable with. What reserves do you possess?

God: Jesus will show My love to mankind in a way they have never known.

Satan: Pah! I shall stumble Him personally. But as for these two there must be no special treatment! No forcing of the will.

God: I never force the will.

Satan: A policy you will live to regret.

God: No. A policy you will live to regret.

Satan: Bah! But back to Mary and Simon. No pillar of fire! No angels in vision. Only the turn of daily events, the words of scripture and the still small voice. Done?

God: Done.

Satan: Good. After all of these months of increasing familiarity let us join them at Simon's home and listen to their stupid prattle.

### **Scene III**

Simon's home

*(Lights come up more strongly on Simon & Mary as they sit sipping drinks and chatting merrily).*

Simon: So, you over slept, eh?

Mary: *(Rolling her eyes & laughing)* Oh, I was so embarrassed. I thought I was going to die.

Simon: Well, we mustn't let that happen again. But I'll tell you, Mary. I haven't laughed so much in years.

Mary: Nor I. You make me feel like... like . . .well like the most charming woman in all of Bethany.

Simon: No, no, no. The most charming woman in all of Israel.

Mary: Nyah, nyah, nyah. Remember what the scriptures say about flattery.

Simon: 'Tis not flattery, dear Mary. *(Growing serious)* You are a very sensitive, intelligent and charming woman. The kind of woman...

Mary: *(He pauses. She leans forward, eager to hear the rest).* Yes? *(Freeze action)*

God: *(V.O.)* You do not belong here, Mary!

Simon: Nevermind. I have already said too much.

Mary: Its all right, Simon. We can trust each other.

Simon: *(Pauses - looks at her affectionately)* Very well then. I shall take my life in my hands and speak my heart. You, dear Mary, are the kind of woman that any man in Israel would give his eye teeth to marry.

Mary: Any is a big word.

Simon: And I stand by it. Any!

God: *(In warning)* Mary!

Mary: Including you? *(Pause)*

God: No, Simon.

Simon: Especially including me.

Mary: *(She is touched. Lowers her head at a loss for words. Looking up she grows serious and leans forward with an earnest expression)* Simon?

Simon: Yes?

God: Don't say it, Mary.

Mary: *(She hears it but ignores it)* I... I have never felt this way before. Everything around us says that there is no hope for us, / but in here *(Pointing to her heart)*, it feels like there is all the hope in the world. Simon, I . . . *(She lowers her head)*

*(He is deeply touched by her words and leans forward slightly. There is a long pause)*

Simon: Yes?

Mary: It is too big to say.

Simon: I took my life in my hands and spoke my heart. Tit for tat?

Mary: *(Still looking down)* I... uh...

God: "Thou shalt not commit adultery"

Satan: 'Tis not adultery. 'Tis love.

Mary: *(Reacts slightly to the voice and then ignores it. She Looks up)* I think I am in love with you, Simon.

Simon: *(Give a pause for his reactions)* And I, dear Mary,... I am in love with you. And yet, for now, our love can never be. I should send you away and never look upon your lovely form again. I should forget I ever knew you. I should forget the softness of your touch. I should - but I fear I cannot. *(Standing and moving about)*. I am like Adam; afraid to accept the fruit and yet more afraid to lose the love of my goddess.

Mary: You will never lose my love.

Simon: Never is a big word, Mary.

Mary: I stand by it. You will never lose my love.

Simon: Nor you mine. But, due to the unfortunate rules of society, what we do is attended with grave danger.

Mary: Ask me if I care.

*(He looks at her as if trying to read her mind)*

Simon: Do you care?

God: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me"

Mary: I...

Satan: He loves you, Mary.

*(Mary's face hardens just a bit in response to the voice. Then she proceeds in her rebellion even more boldly).*

Mary: I would die for you, Simon of Bethany.

Simon: Do you mean that?

Mary: I do.

Simon: It could come to that. For both of us.

Mary: There is no death in a simple friendship.

Simon: But what if...?

Mary: Shhh. No what ifs. 'Tis only a friendship. Nothing more. *(Getting up and putting on her shawl)* But, it is always wise to be discreet. I must not oversleep again.

Simon: Are you leaving so soon?

Mary: Simon, look at the hour. This is not soon.

Simon: When will I see you?

Mary: As soon as we are discreetly able. *(Goes to the door, sees the key sitting next to the door and picks it up. She looks at him with a questioning look)*

Mary: Simon, since I come so often, and at such odd times, may I have my own key?

Simon: Yes Mary, of course. But only if you will wear it next to your heart.

*(She hangs the key about her neck and exits with a wink and an impish smile.)*

Mary: All right. Next to my heart.

#### **Scene IV**

Heaven

Satan: Hah! Did you hear? "As soon as we are discreetly able." The little fool thinks Rachael will never return from her illness. She dares to believe that her sin will never be known and that she will one day marry this hypocrite and live happily ever after.

God: There is no such thing as a free sin.

Satan: No such thing as free from sin you mean.

God: No. I meant what I said. There is no free sin, as Mary and Simon will soon see. But there is freedom from sin, which they will learn when they meet Jesus.

Satan: Hah! By the time He leaves Nazareth I shall have these two wrapped up so tightly that they will never so much a look at Him.

God: Oh?

Satan: Sure. And now, as the weeks pass the real fun begins. Mary is on her way to Simon's house with some exciting news, but she is about to learn that lovers don't know very much about love.

#### **Scene V**

Simon's home

*(Lights come up on Simon. He is pacing in troubled concentration on a letter he holds in his hands. There is the sound of a key in the lock and Mary enters and sets her shawl down. She speaks with love in her voice).*

Mary: Hello, Simon.

*(He is not so warm. Somewhat business like)*

Simon: Oh, Mary, come in. I am glad you have come.

Mary: So am I.

Simon: Mary, I uh,... Well, things are going to be a bit different for us.

Mary: Um hmmm..

Simon: It will affect our future.

Mary: Oh, I know.

Simon: How do you know?

Mary: I might ask the same of you.

Simon: What are you talking about?

Mary: Lets just say that your second wife, unlike your first, will not be barren.

Simon: *(Suspicious)* And how can you know that?

Mary: By the fact that I am with child.

Satan: *(Speaks into Simon's ear)* You are a dead man, Simon of Bethany.

Simon: *(The world has just come crashing down on Simon's head. He is speechless - he puts the letter down on his desk)* (Groans)

*(She doesn't read him right and continues glibly on)*

Mary: Don't look so surprised, Simon. Oh, I know its not the best timing, but we'll just do as we planned and no one will ever know.

Simon: *(With quiet intensity)* Oh, no.

Mary: Oh, sure, its less convenient this way, but...

Simon: Mary!

Mary: Yes?

Simon: Are you absolutely certain?

Mary: Of course.

Simon: Have you told anyone?

Mary: Of course not!

Simon: Good. Good, good. Then there is still hope for us.

Mary: Of course there's hope. Certainly, I would have preferred better timing so we could get married here and live among our friends, but I don't care so much about that, Simon. All I really care about is being with you.

*(Thinking his own thoughts-hardly hearing what she is saying)*

Simon: What to do? Oh, what to do.

Satan: Take her to the woman in the hills, Simon.

Simon: Hmm. There is a woman in the hill country...

Mary: The Egyptian oracle who lives in the cave?

Simon: You've heard of her.

Mary: Everyone has. But I hear that she casts spells and uses drugs, and potions.

Simon: Gross rumors. It doesn't matter. You've got to go see her.

God: "Thou shalt not seek unto a witch or a wizard or communicate with them."

Mary: Why her?

Simon: Why her? She's the only one in these parts who can end your pregnancy.

Mary: End it? Who said anything about ending it?

Simon: It may be the only way out. Otherwise we are both dead!

Mary: Simon!

Simon: Look, you. If the village of Bethany has so much as a hint of suspicion that you're with child it'll be death for both of us. You've got to come with me.

Mary: Simon, please.

Simon: Look, I know this woman makes you nervous. But I'll be right beside you. Hear her counsel before you decide.

Mary: That's all?

Simon: Sure. If you don't agree with what she says we'll work out some other way.

Mary: Promise?

Simon: Promise.*(Picking up her shawl)* Here, put this shawl over your head.

Satan: He loves you, Mary. Trust him.

Mary: All right. I'll go *(They step out into the darkness)*

## Scene VI

Heaven

Satan: You see how the spider weaves his web ever more secure? But what he knows not is that the web he spins is for himself.

God: 'Tis a truth that you might take note of.

Satan: *(Wryly)* Ha ha. I had forgotten your sense of humor. But on to the cave of carnal wisdom where I shall pierce the inner veil of Mary's mind.

## Scene VII

The cave

*Still early - still dark. There is a rap of staff on rock and she quickly hides anything that looks suspicious.*

Counselor: Come! *(They pass through the covering of skins and a timid Simon with a fearful Mary enter, both with their faces covered)* Greetings, my friends.

Simon: And to you wise, counselor.

Satan: *(To the woman)* His name is Simon of Bethany.

Counselor: And how may I assist you, Simon of Bethany?

*(Simon, unnerved, hesitantly uncovers his face)*

Simon: How did you know?

Counselor: Are you not here because I know more than you?

*(Simon is unnerved a bit. He nervously continues)*

Simon: My daughter here has a small problem.

Counselor: Oh? And what is your problem, my dear?

God: "Flee this place, Mary"

*(Turning to go. Simon stops her. Her voice is intimate yet intense)*

Mary: Simon, I don't like it here.

Counselor: What is your problem, young lady?

Simon: *(Whispered)* Just hear her counsel.

Mary: *(Whispered)* No, Simon let me go.

Simon: *(Whispered)* It'll be all right. Trust me.

Counselor: Don't worry, my dear. I will not hurt you. Come, stand before me. *(Simon helps her obey)*

Satan: Her name is Mary and she is with child.

Counselor: How long have you been with child, my dear?

Mary: How...

Counselor: *(Completing the sentence)* ...did I know? Why else do older men bring young women for counsel, Mary?

God: Flee, Mary!

*(Mary looks up at Simon fearfully and attempts to turn. Simon restrains her)*

Mary: Got to go.

Simon: Stay!

Mary: Let me go.

Simon: *(Whispered)* Answer her, Mary.

Mary: *(Whispered)* I am afraid, Simon.

Simon: *(Whispered)* Then answer so we can get this over with.

Mary: *(Turning to counselor)* Just a few weeks, I think.

Counselor: By accident, I assume.

Mary: *(Nods her head)* Yes.

Counselor: And now you want to bring this pregnancy to a close.

Mary: No! I am only here for counsel.

Counselor: *(Looking at Simon)* Only for counsel?

Simon: Uh . . . she wants to see what her options are, counselor.

Counselor: I see. *(She studies Mary for a moment. Mary is fearfully clenching and unclenching her fists. She is breathing rapidly. The woman begins to do the same as she is, becoming a mirror)* I understand why you are afraid, Mary.

Mary: You do?

Counselor: Certainly. To be invaded by a foreign life is frightening under any circumstances. Out of wedlock, it is doubly fearful. Am I right?

Mary: *(Nods yes)* Yes.

Counselor: You probably believe that what is draining your life forces and making you ill is human. Am I correct?

Mary: Yes, of course.

Counselor: 'Tis a common misconception among the unlearned.

Mary: What do you mean?

Counselor: The wise doctors of Alexandria have learned that what dwells within you will not be fully human for many months.

Mary: I don't understand.

Counselor: What you carry is only potentially human. At this stage it is no more one of us than a fish or a worm.

Mary: I don't believe that.

Counselor: But no less true. It has no thought or feeling and is not even capable of life without draining it from you.

Mary: I've never heard these things before.

Simon: Just listen, Mary. She is wise in these matters.

*(She picks up something bright and shiny and taps it on the table. Mary's eyes go to it and the counselor begins to tap it back and forth. Mary's eyes follow the pattern. The counselor's words keep time with the rhythm)*

Counselor: Let me see your eyes, Mary.

Mary: My eyes?

Counselor: Yes. I want to see that you understand.

Mary: Oh.

Counselor: When you learned that you were pregnant; was it a joyful discovery?

*(At the first Mary speaks independantly of the rhythm but gradually falls in with it)*

Mary: Yes, er uh at least at first.

Counselor: Is the invader making you feel good?

Mary: No.

Counselor: Do you have more energy?

Mary: No.

Counselor: If you are discovered, will your people rejoice?

Mary: No.

Counselor: What will they do?

Mary: They will...

Counselor: Stone you?

Mary: Perhaps.

Counselor: And your lover?

Mary: *(Nods)* Yes.

Counselor: Do you love this man?

Mary: *(Mary looks up to him with love)* Oh, yes. Yes.

*(Taps the table with the object to regain Mary's attention and continues hypnotizing her).*

Counselor: More than the invader?

Mary: Hmm?

Counselor: Do you love this man more than the invader?

Mary: Yes.

Counselor: You both want to live, don't you.

Mary: *(Growing confused - groggy)* Yyyessss.

Counselor: Did you invite the invader?

Mary: N...No. It was a mistake.

Counselor: A what?

Mary: A...a m. mistake.

Counselor: Louder, please. What was it?

Mary: A m...mistake. We made a mistake.

Counselor: You made a mistake.

Mary: I... I made a mistake.

Counselor: A mistake that endangers your very lives.

Mary: Yes.

Counselor: Fortunately mistakes can be corrected.

Mary: Corrected?

Counselor: The Alexandrians have discovered certain procedures and potions that return a woman's choice to her. You do believe in choice, don't you?

Mary: Yes. I think so.

Counselor: And you have chosen to regain control over your body, haven't you.

Mary: Yes.

Counselor: You will bear children when you choose to.

Mary: Yes. When I choose to.

Counselor: At this time you do not choose to.

Mary: No. I do not choose to.

Counselor: A child at this time would be dangerous.

Mary: Yes. Dangerous.

Counselor: You will drink this.

Mary: *(She accepts the vial - then hesitates)* I will...

Counselor: Drink it.

Mary: Will it hurt me?

Counselor: It will do you only good.

*(Mary turns to Simon)*

Mary: Will it hurt me, Simon?

Simon: No, Mary. It will not hurt you.

Mary: What will it do to my...

Counselor: *(Interrupting)* To the invader?

Mary: Yes.

Counselor: It will wash it away and leave you clean again.

Mary: That's all?

Counselor: Of course. Drink it.

God: "Thou shalt not kill, Mary."

Mary: *(To Simon)* Simon?

Simon: Drink it.

Mary: I...(With some fear she lifts it to her lips. She hesitates.)

Simon: Drink it, Mary. It won't hurt you. (The counselor nods to Simon who assists her hand. Mary drinks it. It makes her cough)

Counselor: Very good. Now your body is your own again.

Mary: (Cough) Thank you. Is that all?

Counselor: Yes, Mary, that is all. You may go now.

Mary: Thank you.

Simon: (Simon turns Mary to the exit and then turns back to leave a bag of money on the table) It is all there.

Counselor: I'm sure it is, Simon. Come again anytime your choice is threatened.

Simon: Counselor?

Counselor: Yes?

Simon: When will you lift the spell from her?

Counselor: Spell?

Simon: Yes. You put her under so she would drink the potion. When will she be free?

Counselor: (Coldly) I don't know what you are talking about.

Simon: Oh, uh . . .one more question. Will the potion hurt her?

Counselor: Freedom is not free

Simon: Meaning?

Counselor: She will suffer some pain.

Simon: But you said...

Counselor: (Arrogantly) It is not your body. What does it matter to you?

Simon: If there will be pain then it might not be wise to take her to her home just now.

Counselor: Not if you want to keep your secret.

Simon: I will take her to an inn.

Counselor: Yes. A good plan. And don't leave her alone.

Simon: Why?

Counselor: These believers in God, even more than my people, suffer much remorse.

Simon: Suicide?

Counselor: (Nods) Just keep a close watch.

Simon: For how long?

Counselor: Several days, at least.

Simon: I can't stay with her! If we are both gone for several days...

Counselor: You playboys don't plan very far ahead, do you.

Simon: Just help me! (Slamming the table top with his fist) All right!?

Counselor: I have an assistant whom you may hire to see her through.

Simon: Thank you.

Counselor: Think nothing of it. We are a full service institution.

### **Scene VIII**

Heaven

Satan: (He laughs) Ha ha ha! More full service than she knows. For now I have two people with blood on their hands. And that gives me certain rights over them, doesn't it.

God: (*Sadly*) Yes.

Satan: And, against the urgings of your Spirit, Mary has yielded her mind to the power of another. That gives me even more rights, doesn't it.

God: Yes.

Satan: She has surrendered herself to Rebellion, to Lust, to Mind Control, to Deception, and opened the door to Hate, Murder and Revenge.

God: Yes.

Satan: And Simon has deceived, has committed adultery, has used mind control, has stolen a woman's trust, has encouraged death. He too is mine.

God: Yes. They are on your ground.

Satan: Forever!

God: No. Jesus has come to set the captives free.

Satan: He will fail and be captured in the attempt.

God: Jesus has never failed.

Satan: Jesus has not met me head on yet.

God: Have you forgotten the war in heaven?

Satan: He won that as Captain of the Lord's host with 2/3 of the angels to help Him. This time he meets me as mere man clothed in the flesh of Abraham. He will fail.

God: Time will tell.

Satan: Yes, won't it. But look! Simon is reading a letter from Rachael and Mary is fighting her way through the storm to vent her rage upon him.

### **Scene IX**

Simon's house - Night

*We hear the sounds of rain outside. He is reading the same letter. There is the sound of the key in the lock and then the door bursts open Enter Mary. She is dripping wet, dirty, disheveled. She feels betrayed, used and hopeless. She shuts the door and leans on it. Simon is shocked to see her but struggles to maintain his composure.*

Mary: (*Panting - out of breath*)

Simon: Mary!

Mary: (*Out of breath*) Why, Simon?

Simon: I'm uh... I'm afraid I don't understand, Mary.

Mary: (*Less out of breath*) Why did you lie to me?

Simon: Lie?

Mary: "It won't hurt you, Mary". Remember those words?

Simon: I'm sorry. I didn't know.

Mary: You didn't know!

Simon: No.

Mary: Then how could you assure me that way?

Simon: I...

Mary: And why did you leave me with that wretched woman?

Simon: One of us had to be here - to avoid suspicion.

Mary: Why did you force me to drink that poison?

Simon: I did not force you.

Mary: You did not force me!? Are we speaking the same language?

Simon: It was the only way.

Mary: That's not what you said in our summer dreams. "If anything goes wrong you'll go down to Jericho and I will follow." Isn't that what you said?

Simon: Yes.

Mary: Why didn't we do it? Why did you have me poisoned? Why did I wrench my guts out. Why do I have my baby's blood on my hands? Why?

Simon: We made these plans before I knew.

Mary: Knew? Knew what?

Simon: Knew this! (*Handing her the letter*)

Mary: What letter is this?

Simon: Read it.

Rachael: (V.O.) My dearest Simon,

Mary: (She looks up) Your wife?

Simon: Yes, my wife.

Rachael: (Continuing V.O.) You cannot know the joy that fills my heart over my recovery. I am walking farther each day and I long for the day when I feel your loving arms around me once more. (*She cannot continue and crumples the letter*).

Mary: You told me Rachael was dying.

Simon: She was!

Mary: (*Holding up the letter*) This is not dying!

Simon: I am sorry. The doctors said . . . thought...

Mary: You thought! I'm the one who has live in a scarred body. I'm the one hearing spirit voices compelling evil deeds I'd never dreamed of. I'm the one who has to carry more guilt than God could bear and all this because you thought?!

Simon: Mary! Please be quiet. Someone might hear!

Mary: Do you think I care? I am this close to spilling my own blood and you expect me to keep calm! Come back to earth, Rabbi!

(*She collapses into a chair and stares at the ceiling for a few seconds. Then she sits up, uncrumples the letter, reads it for a moment and then looks up at a distraught and silent Simon*).

Mary: Now what do we do?

Simon: We?

Mary: (*Sarcastically*) Simon, women do not conceive babies alone.

Simon: What I meant is that what has to be done must be done by you.

Mary: And what might that be?

Simon: You must leave Bethany, Mary. Forget you ever knew me.

Mary: Forget!? Just like that? Forget!?

Simon: You're still young. Start over.

Mary: Start over! With what?

Simon: Mary. You are a lovely girl with a lot to offer. You could...

Mary: Simon! I have nothing to offer! I have given you all I am.

Simon: You're talking nonsense. You are the same as when we first met. Nothing has changed.

Mary: Nothing has changed! Can't you hear what I'm saying. All that I am I have placed in your trust.

Simon: I did not ask for your trust.

Mary: You did not ask! That's the unspoken part of the relationship. I would never have let you touch me without trust.

Simon: Mary...

Mary: You said you loved me. You said your wife was terminal. You said it was safe to build dreams.

Simon: Mary.

Mary: And now are you telling me that you never asked me to trust you?!

Simon: Mary!

Mary: You asked me to prove my love. Well now its time for you to prove yours!

Simon: (*Getting firm*) Look, Mary. I'm not entirely certain that I understand all the labyrinthine intricacies of the female mind. But what I do know is that for now our relationship is over. (*He picks up a bag from the table*) Here.

Mary: What's that?

Simon: Money. For a new start. (*He offers her the bag which she slaps to the floor*).

Mary: I'm not a harlot to be paid for services rendered.

Simon: I didn't call you a harlot!

Mary: Your money did!

Simon: It's not what I meant. I just wanted to help you.

Mary: I don't want your money! I want you!

Simon: How!?! Two wives?

Mary: I...

Simon: Don't you see? It is the only way for now. (*Pause*) Listen, Mary. At its best Rachael's health is a very precarious thing. Leave town for a while and see what time will bring.

Mary: You're serious!

Simon: It is the only safe way. I'm sure that in God's providence I'll be able to send for you soon. (*Picking up the money*) Please. Take the money and go.

Mary: (*She suspiciously takes the bag*) I wonder, Simon.

Simon: Wonder what?

Mary: If perhaps I wasn't just another chapter in one of your books. Something to help you pass the time.

Simon: (*Guiding her to the door*) No, Mary. It was much more than that. You must believe that.

Mary: Trust you?

Simon: (*Ignoring the jab*) I'll be sending money on a regular basis to take care of you until I can send for you.

Mary: Promise?

Simon: Of course, my love.

Mary: (*There is a long pause as she considers. Her speech is tinged with bitterness and sarcasm*) Very well. I will leave you for a time, Simon my beloved.

Simon: It is our only choice. I am so sorry. Goodbye.

Mary: Thats all? Just goodbye?

Simon: I uh... Yes. Anything else uh...would be too painful.

Mary: Yes, of course. We certainly don't want to cause any pain. Goodbye, Simon.

Simon: Good bye, Mary. God go with you. (She exits into the driving rain, leaving the door open. He watches her go and then bows his head in despair) Oh, God, what have I done?

## **ACT II**

### **Scene I**

Mary's Apartment

*(Mary and Reuban come out of her door. He gives her a small bag of money and they stand talking in mime while Satan looks on)*

Satan: *(Looking at Mary and Reuban)* Look at her. Mary, the harlot of Magdala. Simon has sent no money in years and so she sells her soul to feed her body. *(Looking toward God)* Stop looking so sad? What happens to people doesn't affect you.

God: What happens to them affects the entire universe. Heaven has emptied itself to bring them back, and yet they do not understand. They are caught in the web of sin cannot get out.

Satan: There is no out!

God: Jesus is the out!

Satan: Not from this. Listen to the words of your little harlot.

*(Reuben is leaving Mary's house. Her speaking is coy and familiar)*

Reuben: You know, Mary, I was just thinking that maybe after a few more trips I'll have enough saved so that we could talk about something serious. Between you and me, I mean.

Mary: Do you really think so?

Reuben: Sure I do. You know how I feel about you.

Mary: Thank you, Reuban. I think the same of you. Maybe more. But you'd better be on your way or you'll miss your caravan.

Reuben: You're right. Good bye.

Mary: *(Waving coyly)* Bye, Reuban. Hurry back.

Reuben: I will. Bye.

Optional Song (No music available)

Footsteps on stone/Paths through the sea

Roads in the sky/your words to me

Names on a page /once clean and white

Faces in time/that haunt in the night

Footsteps on stone/Paths through the sea

Roads in the sky/your love for me

You enter my room/hands full of gold

Give from your purse/to drink from my soul

Faces through years/forged in a chain

Faces at night/mocking my pain

Footsteps on stone/Paths through the sea

Roads in the sky/your care for me

One is so painful/but two's no relief

You touch my body/but never my grief?

Grieve for the young girl/who gave love away  
Weep for the dead girl/for whom lovers pay  
Footsteps on stone/paths through the sea  
Roads in the sky/your promise to me

*(She steps inside her door and after shutting it leans against it as her frustration and anger builds until she throws the money bag on the floor)*

Mary: Where's my money, Simon? I shouldn't have to live this way!

Satan: Simon will never send you money. But you do have his key. Why not visit Bethany and surprise him. *(She pulls out the key from around her neck, looks at it and then gets a determined look on her face)*

## Scene II

*Simon's place. Empty stage. There is the sound of a key in the lock. Enter Mary who looks around to get her bearings. Things are much neater than before and she is in unfamiliar territory. She sniffs the air and is puzzled. She goes to a chair and picks up a mirror or something else definitely feminine. As she puzzles over all the changes she notices flowers in a vase.*

Mary: Simon? *(Pause)* Simon? *(A woman enters behind her)*

Tara: Who are you?

Mary: *(Startled she whirls about)* Oh!

Tara: How did you get in here?

Mary: I let myself in. *(Showing her the key around her neck)*

Tara: Where did you get a key?

Mary: I uh, ... I used to keep house for the rabbi. Is he in?

Tara: What!?

Mary: I said is he in? I was visiting up from Magdala and I was hoping to say hi.

Tara: Simon doesn't live here any more.

Mary: Oh? Where has he gone.

Tara: He spends most of his time in the valley of Gehenna.

Mary: *(Shocked)* What? Why?

Tara: Where else do lepers go?.

Mary: Lepers! Simon is a leper?

Tara: One of the worst.

Mary: Oh. *(She is suddenly feeling very sick at heart over Simon's tragedy)*

Tara: You must have lost contact for quite some time.

Mary: Uh, yes, it has been some time.

Tara: I'm sorry. Were you very close?

Mary: Uh . . . no. No. Just good friends.

Tara: Can I offer you something?

Mary: No. No thank you. I'll have something with Lazarus & Martha.

Tara: Lazarus & Martha? You must be Mary.

Mary: Yes.

Tara: I've heard so much about you, Mary. I'm Tara, Simon's wife.

Mary: Wife? (*Mary suddenly realizes the truth of Simon's lies. She wants out*) Pleased to meet you, I'm sure. Well, I must be going.

Tara: So soon?

Mary: Yes. I'm already late.

Tara: Mary?

Mary: Yes?

Tara: Will you be needing the key anymore?

Mary: (*Taking it off her neck she hands it to her and exits hurriedly*)

### **Scene III**

Martha's house

Lazarus: Stay with us, Mary. Please.

Mary: I'd like to, Lazarus. Really I would. But I have business to tend to.

Martha: Isn't there a way you can move home again?

Mary: Uh, no. Not really. You know how it is in business.

Lazarus: Well, I suppose a short visit is better than none.

Mary: I'll try to get home more often.

Martha: We could come see you, if you'd only tell us where you live.

Mary: No! I mean, thank you. I'd prefer to meet you here.

Martha: Whatever you like, Mary.

Lazarus: Have you been keeping up with John the Baptist?

Mary: Just rumors. I guess he's really upset the rabbis uptown, eh?

Lazarus: That's nothing compared to what Jesus is going to do.

Mary: Jesus?

Lazarus: A new prophet. Just got baptized by John a couple of months ago. Last I heard He was at a wedding feast. When they ran out of wine He created some out of water.

Mary: What?

Lazarus: Serious.

Mary: You should hire that one for your catering business, Martha.

Martha: Wouldn't that be nice.

Lazarus: I've met a couple of His disciples who swear that He's the Messiah.

Mary: Pretty serious claims.

Lazarus: It could be. He heals people of diseases, even casts out devils.

Mary: He does!?! (*Her interest has a tinge of hope in it*)

Lazarus: Sure does. If you meet anyone sick or harassed by devils take them to Jesus. Why, there are entire villages without one person sick in them.

Mary: Hmmm. How about leprosy?

Lazarus: Oh, I don't know about leprosy. That's the finger of God.

Martha: You're probably thinking about Rabbi Simon.

Mary: Uh, yes.

Martha: It's a terrible thing. Tsk Tsk. And he seemed to be such a righteous man.

Lazarus: Yes. Its a mystery to all of us.

Mary: How long since...?

Lazarus: Oh, let me see. I'd guess, three or four years. Wouldn't you say Martha?

Martha: I think so. It was just after he remarried that he found out. He's been going down rapidly from then on.

Mary: How long ago did Rachael die?

Martha: Oh, I think, uh . . . yes. It was right after you left town.

Mary: Are you sure?

Martha: I think so. Yes. (*Mary is pained again*) Something wrong?

Mary: No. I guess I'd better be on my way.

Martha: We can't keep you here? I could sure use you in the catering business.

Mary: No. Not this time. Bye, Martha.

Martha: Good-bye, Mary. Come again soon. (*They exchange hugs. Mary is compliant but not warm*)

Mary: Bye, Brother.

Lazarus: Good-bye, Mary. Don't wait so long to come see us again, all right?

Mary: All right. Bye.

Lazarus: Oh, Mary.

Mary: Yes?

Lazarus: Keep track of Jesus. He's going to change our lives.

Mary: Sure. Bye.

#### **Scene IV**

Heaven

Satan: Change our lives! Hah! (*God is silent*) Well? No comment?

God: Lazarus speaks as a prophet.

Satan: Ha ha. Forget it. I have Simon where even you can't help him. And Mary's not far behind. So tell your Son for me that He has no power.

God: Did He not have more power than you when you tried to tempt Him in the desert?

Satan: Only because He kept quoting scripture. If He'd had the courage to debate me mind to mind I'd have had Him in a minute.

God: But He did quote scripture, didn't He.

Satan: Yes. And because You poured all Your power through those words I didn't have a chance!

God: And the same power will flow through my words when other of my children use them.

Satan: That, dear enemy, is my best kept secret.

God: But not to Jesus. And when He uses scriptures with Simon & Mary He will unleash the same power.

Satan: Not a chance.

God: Time will tell.

Satan: You always say that.

God: Time is my best friend.

Satan: I doubt it. Look at your little harlot. She winds her way down into the valley of the lepers to have some revenge. Little does she know the pain that awaits her there.

#### **Scene V**

Valley of The Lepers

Mary: Is anyone there? *(Mary has her shawl wrapped around her head and face).*

Leper 1: What do ye here in the valley of the dead?

Mary: I search for Simon of Bethany?

Leper 1: Have you leprosy?

Mary: No.

Leper 1: Then you be mad. Get out!

Mary: Where is he? Simon?

Leper 1: Out I said! *(He advances to frighten her away She stands her ground)*

Mary: I will see Simon!

Leper 1: You are mad. *(He stops - defeated)* Over there. *(He motions by jerking his thumb over his shoulder and shouts)* Simon!

Simon: *(Offstage voice)* What!

Leper 1: A mad woman to see you.

**End of preview reading.**