

WILL YOU WAIT WITH ME?

by Molly M. Garnet



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CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

Joseph of Arimathea: A wealthy man in his early forties, a member of the prestigious Sanhedrin, yet a secret follower of Jesus. He risks his reputation and his job to take Jesus' body down from the cross in order to bury it in his own tomb. He shows great sorrow, reverence and care as he removes the body and carries it away. Without a word, he conveys his true loyalties. He should wear a calf-length robe to avoid tripping as he climbs the ladder to remove the body, which is represented by a black drape. The robe could be of fine, heavy fabric with a darker trim. He wears sandals.

Watching Joseph is **Mary, the Mother of Jesus**, a strong yet soft woman in her late forties. She has just seen her son die, and her heart is breaking. Yet she clings to Jesus' promise that he will return, and she is almost desperate for others to believe with her. If a theme song is used, she will be the soloist. The other characters speak to her; therefore, she must be careful to remain in character throughout, reacting to each one as she speaks. She wears a soft, blue, long robe tied with a cord at the waist. Her headpiece is made from a darker blue, also soft, length of material that does not hide her face. She wears sandals.

Martha: A middle-class, sensible, warm woman in her forties. She eases the emotional tension thus far with her motherly compassion. She is practical and down-to-earth; she has little patience for theology and *talk*, preferring instead to stay busy *doing* things for others. She wears a light beige dress with a front white panel resembling a long apron. Her white headpiece drapes softly over her shoulders. She wears sandals.

Joseph of Arimathea's Wife: An aristocratic woman of about 35. Despite her position, she is not showy; she is generous and kind. She is proud of her husband and tries to explain why they were so secretive about being believers. Although Mary is not an upper-class woman, Joseph's wife treats her with respect. She wears a dress of bright, shiny fabric with a rich velvet trim.

Her headpiece sits high on her head with the same rich trim. She may wear gold dangling earrings, a gold belt, and sandals.

Sister of the Robber Crucified Beside Christ: A streetwise commoner in her early twenties. She is rough and tries to be callous about the crucifixions, but her very presence shows her fierce loyalty to and love for her brother, the “thug.” She is skeptical about religion, but has just witnessed an amazing exchange between Christ and her brother and is now open to learning more. She wears a simple, striped loose dress with a coarse rope belt. Her headpiece is also tied with a rope around her head. She could go barefoot.

Salome: A strong, controlling “mother hen” in her mid to late forties. She can be overbearing at times and admits she gets over-involved in her children’s lives, but today she is more subdued and reflective, remembering Jesus’ words about his death and resurrection. She may wear a plaid dress of warm, dark colors covered by a simple beige shawl. Her headpiece is a soft burgandy that drapes over both shoulders. She wears sandals.

Servant Girl to Whom Peter Denied Christ: A timid but curious young woman in her early twenties. In the courtyard where she works, she approaches Peter about Jesus and is intrigued by his denial. She is a winsome combination of timidity and earnestness as she tells of her encounter with Peter and her disappointment over not meeting Jesus. Respectfully she asks Mary for permission to wait with the others. She wears a simple servant’s dress with an off-white apron and a kerchief on her head.

Grief is timeless. From modern times, **Mother Teresa** appears to share the pain she has seen in the world, yet the strength she gains from her faith. She is an older woman who wears her age with grace and wisdom. She is gentle yet strong, passionate about her call to work with the poor of India. She wears a white robe trimmed with wide blue ribbon. It is wrapped somewhat sari-style over her head and around her shoulders. She wears a simple cross and “sensible” modern shoes. The person who

makes this costume should consult a picture of Mother Teresa for accuracy.

A Homeless Mother is in her thirties but looks older; she has suffered the hard life of the streets and is beaten but not broken. She questions God and wonders why bad things happen to good people, but she manages to hang on to her faith. She tells Mary how Jesus' suffering gives her courage to keep on. She wears dirty clothes, old shoes with holes, and a baseball cap. She could pull an old wagon or push a grocery cart filled with tattered bags.

Corrie ten Boom: An older woman with great wisdom earned through great suffering. From a Nazi concentration camp, she shares how true power comes from humility like Christ's, not from Romans or Nazis trying to control the world. She is weak and worn but strong in spirit. She may wear tattered but clean street clothes, such as a simple suit and sensible shoes. Her hair could be put up in a bun. She holds a worn Bible.

Anyone speaks from the middle of the back of the audience. If using a spotlight, it shines on her from behind, leaving her face in shadows. She should be middle aged or older with a strong, clear voice. She represents all who have ever known grief or disappointment; she shares how her faith helps her wait during the dark days between life's Good Fridays and life's Easters. She wears her own usual clothes.

Mary Magdalene brings the group back to Bible times with a powerful testimony of faith. She has loved Jesus deeply and is forever grateful to him for turning her life around. Now it is her turn to be faithful to him, and she vows to be the first to greet him when he returns. She is in her thirties, an emotional dramatic figure, a leader among the others. Her story and her appeal unite the group in a final embrace of mutual support as they wait in confidence for "Easter." She wears a simple long-sleeved gray dress with a soft peach head covering and sandals.

Some of the parts may be doubled with costume adjustments as necessary.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Setting: The scene is Calvary, where Jesus has just been crucified. The focal point is a large wooden cross placed Center Stage back. It needs to be tall enough to be easily seen over the actresses' heads; it could be hung on the back wall of the stage.

A large, soft black cloth representing Jesus' body is draped around the cross like a shawl. A ladder is beside the cross. The stage area has several simple benches and boulders for the actresses to sit on and some low potted plants.

Staging: The biblical women may enter during a congregational hymn, such as "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" Mary stops Down Center. Joseph and the Homeless Mother are in the back doorway of the sanctuary, Servant Girl is Off-stage, Mother Teresa is in the far back of the sanctuary on the right, Corrie ten Boom is seated in the front row on the left, and Anyone is seated in the middle of a back row. The biblical characters (except Joseph and the Servant Girl) may sit or stand near Mary.

Lighting: Suggestions are given throughout the script. Stage area lights that can be dimmed and raised are useful; a spotlight creates a very strong dramatic effect, if available.

Music: The play was originally performed with a beautiful, powerful theme song, which the author strongly recommends. The music must be requested separately. The title is "Carry Him Gently" from *Celebrate Life*, published by Broadman Press, 127 9th Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37234 (1-800-458-2772).

The script often calls for musical interludes between characters. These are brief (30-second) interludes played in a minor key, possibly using a Good Friday hymn tune. The musical accompaniment to "Carry Him Gently" works well for these interludes. Other music may be substituted, especially if the play is part of a complete worship service. Appropriate hymns that may be

found in most hymnals include: "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "What Wondrous Love Is This?," "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" and "The Old Rugged Cross."

Suggestions for use in a worship service:

- Use a stormy, powerful prelude in a minor key.
- In complete darkness, have someone strike a railroad tie against a wooden block to suggest crucifixion. The hammering fades as the Scripture is read, still in darkness; suggested: Luke 23:33-49.
- If Communion is part of the service, serve it immediately after the play, offering it to the actresses first. After being served, they may join the others in the congregation.
- After Communion, sing a hymn or anthem. An effective choir anthem is "Mary Don't Weep, Don't Mourn," part of *Two S.A.B. Spirituals* published by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.; P.O. Box 10003; Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003.
- Conclude with a more upbeat postlude to reflect the movement from despair to hope.

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- 10. Corrie ten Boom**
- 11. Anyone**
- 12. Mary Magdalene**

Mary, Mother of Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea

(MARY is weeping at the foot of the cross. JOSEPH enters from the back of the audience and slowly approaches the cross.)

MARY: *(Looking up and seeing JOSEPH)* Here they come to take his body. *(In anguish)* My son! *(Angrily)* What insult must they add to my sorrow? What cruel taunting do they have in mind now? Will even they stoop so low as to torture a dead man?

(JOSEPH climbs the ladder, pauses a moment with head bowed as if to honor the body, then slowly takes the drape down, cradling it like a person. MARY, watching) No, wait. See what care the man takes. See how tenderly he holds Jesus, as if to soften his pain. *(Reaches toward JOSEPH as if to touch him.)* Bless you, stranger. He is as gentle and careful as I would be if only I could . . . *(Breaks down as JOSEPH climbs down the ladder and begins a slow walk down the aisle and out. If the song "Carry Him Gently" is used, MARY sings the first verse. The words beg JOSEPH to show tenderness to her child. If the song is not used, MARY waits until JOSEPH is out of sight and then continues speaking.)*

(Softly) And so his pain ends. *(Shudders, then with more intensity.)* Those thorns around his forehead, those whips across his back. How I longed to soothe his wounds and wipe the arrogant soldier's spit from his face. When he cried from the cross, "I thirst!" I jumped as if to find him a cup. *(Slowly, sadly)* But I could not. *(Emphatically)* They wouldn't even let his own mother near.

(Sighs.) Long ago, when Joseph and I presented him as an infant in the temple, a stranger stopped us — an old man, Simeon. He took Jesus in his arms and spoke of him as God's salvation for all people. *(Loud whisper)* The very Messiah! Then he looked at me with kindness and sadness in his eyes: *(Slowly)* "And a sword will pierce your own soul, too, Mary,"¹ he said.

1 I've carried those words in my heart ever since. When
 2 they pierced Jesus' side with a spear to make sure he was
 3 *(Struggling to say the word)* dead . . . *(In anguish)* it was as if
 4 that spear tore my body instead of his and ripped apart
 5 my very soul! Strange piece of comfort, that — to take their
 6 final insult and bear the pain myself.

7 It has been so hard to be both his mother and his
 8 disciple. I wanted to encourage him, yet I wanted to protect
 9 him. I remember the time I tried to advise him at a wedding
 10 in Cana. He rebuked me, in his gentle way, and I had to
 11 remember to let go and let him follow God's plan. *(Pauses.)*
 12 Yes, he was the Messiah, the Savior of the world. But he
 13 was still my little boy. *(If the song "Carry Him Gently" is used,*
 14 *MARY sings the second verse while gazing Off-stage where*
 15 *JOSEPH exited. The words recall her feelings toward Jesus as*
 16 *a little boy and beg for rest for him now. If the song is not used,*
 17 *she pauses a moment as if to remember Jesus' childhood, then*
 18 *continues.)*

19 Even when his own brothers did not believe in him,
 20 I stood by him. *(Firmly)* And I will stand by him still. His
 21 friends were around earlier, when things were going well.
 22 Only a week ago, the crowds surged around him, *(Waving)*
 23 waving palm branches at their king. *(With mock pride)* His
 24 disciples marched proudly beside him.

25 *(Looking around angrily)* And where are they now?
 26 They've run! They're scared! They can't even stand with
 27 him as he breathes his last.

28 *(Looks around.)* And who is here? *(Tenderly)* Only a
 29 few women. *(Arms toward them in appreciation.)* Oh, but
 30 women who have believed in him, who understand how
 31 my heart can be broken — yet hopeful at the same time.

32 *(Emphatically to the WOMEN)* He said, "In a little while
 33 you will see me no more, and then *(Slowly)* you will see
 34 me."² Friends, sisters, please help me hang on to that
 35 promise. *(Desperately)* This can't be the end! Please, stand

1 with me. Sisters, will you wait with me? (*MARY freezes with*
 2 *arms outstretched toward the women. Spotlight fades as musical*
 3 *interlude begins. MARY holds her pose until spotlight comes up*
 4 *again.*)

7 Martha

8
 9 (*Dim stage lights come up and the spotlight focuses on MARTHA.*
 10 *The other women gesture for MARTHA to go comfort MARY.*
 11 *She hesitates, then takes a deep breath and approaches MARY,*
 12 *touching her on the arm.*)

13 **MARTHA:** There, there, Mary. We're here for you. (*MARY*
 14 *looks up, puzzled.*) It's Martha, honey, good ol' Martha,
 15 remember? (*MARTHA's arms are outstretched. MARY*
 16 *recognizes her and they hug.*) The one who got so busy in the
 17 kitchen that she forgot to listen to Jesus? (*MARY can't help*
 18 *but smile.*)

19 That's me . . . (*Shakes head.*) Busy, busy, busy. If only
 20 I'd known how quickly he'd be gone, I'd have left those
 21 dishes alone and sat at his feet. (*MARY turns to her with a*
 22 *knowing look.*) OK, OK, so I probably would've put them
 23 in to soak, but *then* I would've stopped working to listen!

24 (*Softer, touching MARY's arm*) I'm sorry, Mary. I know
 25 it's not a time to kid around. That's just how I handle
 26 things. If I stop moving and think about it, (*Quietly*) it hurts
 27 too much.

28 (*Stepping back and remembering*) When my brother
 29 Lazarus died, I couldn't sit still either. Everyone else was
 30 moping around the house, but I kept running back and
 31 forth (*Sweeps hand back and forth*) from the house to the
 32 road.

33 We had sent for Jesus when Lazarus was sick, and I
 34 just knew he would come. Even after Lazarus had been
 35 dead four days, I kept running back and forth, watching

1 for the master. (*Embarrassed*) Mary told me to sit still and
2 act more dignified, but she didn't push.

3 (*Excited*) Finally someone said Jesus was coming!
4 Once more I ran down the road, and there he was! I was
5 half relieved and half mad at him! (*Fussing*) "Lord, if you
6 had been here, Lazarus wouldn't have died!"³ I cried, and
7 the tears finally came. (*Bows head; MARY touches her*
8 *shoulder.*) But then I thought, "Wait a minute, who am I
9 dealing with here?" I grabbed his hand and started tugging
10 him toward the tomb, pleading. (*Loudly*) "Even now, Jesus,
11 I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."⁴

12 Jesus promised me that Lazarus would rise again. I
13 said (*Impatiently*) "Yeah, yeah, I *know* he'll rise again in
14 the resurrection at the last day."⁵ I was impatient; this
15 wasn't the time for a theology lesson.

16 (*Pause*) Then Jesus stopped and looked at me. He
17 said, (*Slowly*) "*I am* the resurrection and the life. Those
18 who believe in me, even though they die, will live. Martha,
19 do you believe this?"⁶

20 (*Softly*) I did. I felt foolish for being so impatient when
21 I knew he was the Messiah, the Son of God. For a moment
22 I forgot Lazarus and caught a glimpse of eternity with this
23 dear friend as its king. (*Pause*) Then before I knew what
24 was happening, (*Arms raised*) Jesus had raised Lazarus
25 from the dead!

26 As I grieve again now for Jesus, part of me wants to
27 run around doing something, anything. (*Gestures around.*)
28 Plant a flower at his tomb, get some spices, bake a
29 casserole, something! I'm at a loss when I'm not busy.

30 But I'm learning to wait. (*Confidently*) Something's got
31 to happen, Mary; it's happened before. I will wait with
32 you. (*Lights fade and musical interlude begins as MARY and*
33 *MARTHA freeze in an embrace. MARTHA steps back into the*
34 *group of women.*)

Joseph of Arimathea's Wife

(Spotlight comes up on JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA'S WIFE, who approaches MARY from far Stage Right, the outside edge of the group of women. She hesitates a moment, then walks toward MARY with an outstretched hand in greeting.)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA'S WIFE: Mary. (Pauses until MARY turns toward her.) The man who took Jesus' body down was my husband, Joseph — Joseph of Arimathea. (She takes MARY's hand with both her hands and holds it as she speaks.) Joseph and I believed in your son. Mary, I will wait with you.

I suppose our secret will be out now. You see, Joseph listened to Jesus and became a disciple. (MARY nods.) But, he told no one. He had to be careful. (Drops MARY's hand and steps back.) There were times when we knew we should have spoken up, but . . . (Sighs and shrugs helplessly.)

Please understand — Joseph kept his faith quiet because he was afraid of what would happen if the other council members found out. (MARY shakes her head, puzzled.) Mary, Joseph is a member of Caiaphas' council, the Sanhedrin. (MARY recoils and turns away.) Yes, yes, the chief court, the one that condemned Jesus to die. (MARY is upset until JOSEPH'S WIFE quickly reassures her.) But my Joseph did not agree with them. He tried to convince the council not to do this, (Sadly) but he could not.

Joseph agonized over the verdict. He paced all night, wondering what he could do to help Jesus. This morning he told me of his decision. Just last week he bought a new tomb not far from here. (Points Off-stage where JOSEPH exited.) I think he meant it for himself or perhaps for me, but last night he changed his mind. Today, he went boldly — my Joseph, that once-timid disciple went *boldly* — to Pilate and asked for the body.

(Reaches out to hold MARY's hand.) Mary, your son will

1 be buried there as a nobleman. Joseph and Nicodemus
 2 have brought myrrh and aloes for his burial. They had
 3 me buy some of the finest linen cloth to wrap him in. He
 4 will be buried properly. *(With compassion)* I hope that
 5 brings you some comfort. *(MARY bows her head to their*
 6 *clasped hands in gratitude.)*

7 *(Brighter)* You should have known Joseph before
 8 Jesus came along. Talk about stingy! *(Smiles.)* But he
 9 listened to Jesus and saw the truth. You should see him
 10 now! You've never met a kinder, more generous man.
 11 *(Palms up)* I wouldn't be surprised if he gave away all our
 12 money, but do you know what? That's OK! He's a changed
 13 man, a happier man, a freer man because of Jesus. He has
 14 invested in eternity, Mary, the eternity Jesus promised to
 15 all of us.

16 *(Earnestly)* You don't think he'd forget that promise,
 17 do you? He said, "I am able to destroy the temple and
 18 rebuild it in three days."⁷ He was talking about himself,
 19 of course, but the council only heard threatening words.
 20 He said he would rise again. *(Loud whisper)* We must
 21 believe! *(Thoughtfully)* It's this waiting that is so hard, living
 22 with both grief and hope.

23 *(Reaching out to take MARY's hand again)* Wait for the
 24 Lord, Mary; be strong, and let your heart take courage;
 25 yea, wait for the Lord!⁸ *(They freeze with hands clasped.*
 26 *Musical interlude begins as all lights fade out. JOSEPH OF*
 27 *ARIMATHEA'S WIFE rejoins the group of women.)*

30 Sister of the Robber Crucified Beside Christ

31
 32 *(As musical interlude ends, stage lights come up and spotlight*
 33 *shines on the SISTER, who swaggers up to MARY from the*
 34 *group. She starts out maintaining her "tough" image and keeps*
 35 *her distance from MARY throughout.)*

1 **SISTER:** (*Shaking her head*) I can't believe I'm saying this, but
2 I'll hang around too.

3 (*Points up to the Left of the cross.*) You see that character
4 up there on the left cross? That's my brother, a common,
5 low-down, no-good thug. He ain't never been worth
6 nothin', always gettin' into trouble fightin', cheatin' and
7 stealin'.

8 So why am I here? (*Shakes head.*) I wondered that
9 myself until just a minute ago. Did you see it? I guess not —
10 you were probably busy watchin' your boy. (*Shudders.*)
11 Awful, ain't it? (*MARY also shudders and looks away.*)

12 (*Pointing to the right of the cross*) That other crook on
13 the right, he was bad-mouthin' Jesus. (*Mockingly*) "Hey,
14 you!," he says. "Ain't you the Christ? Save yourself and
15 us too while you're at it!" (*Apologetically*) Guess when
16 you're hurtin' so bad, you gotta take it out on somebody.

17 (*Gestures to Left of cross.*) I was just sure my brother
18 would bad-mouth him, too. He's good at that. (*Scowling*)
19 Never said much nice even to his own sister. Well, he
20 surprised me. He defended your boy. (*Hands on hips*) "Don't
21 you even care about God now that you're a goner?" he
22 asked that other crook. "We done wrong and we deserve
23 what's comin' to us. But he ain't done nothin' wrong!"¹⁰

24 (*Turns back to MARY, bewildered.*) Well, Ma'am, that
25 was the first time I heard him admit he'd ever done
26 anything wrong. He'd never listen to Mama and me; he
27 kept right on — even worked the crowds one time when
28 your boy was preaching. That's right, picked their pockets
29 right under Jesus' nose. (*Shakes head.*)

30 (*Softening, looking back up to cross*) Then, did you see?
31 He turned to Jesus and asked him to remember him when
32 Jesus got to his kingdom! The folks around me thought
33 he was just humorin' Jesus, you know, playin' along with
34 him and bein' nice. But that ain't my brother's style, you
35 know?

1 Jesus looked at him. I saw, Ma'am, and it looked like
 2 he was lookin' right into his soul. It was like he saw all
 3 the dirt and grime, all the lies and all the bad. (*Shaking*
 4 *head*) But he didn't look away. (*Reverently*) He said, "Today
 5 you will be with me in Paradise."¹¹

6 (*Pause, then slowly*) My brother, the big, bad bully who
 7 didn't take nothin' from nobody, he melted. Even from the
 8 cross, it looked like he was lighter — you know, mellow.
 9 How can anyone be mellow when he's hanging on a cross?

10 (*Tenderly*) All I know is somehow he's all right now.
 11 The bad stuff, all that is really done with. He's not takin'
 12 that garbage to the grave. He's goin' somewhere better.

13 (*After a long pause, returns to "tough" personality.*) I don't
 14 understand much about religion. But I'm willin' to wait
 15 and see what happens. Yeah, I'll wait with you. (*Turns*
 16 *away and freezes as the musical interlude begins and the lights*
 17 *fade out.*)

20 Salome

21
 22 (*As the musical interlude ends, the spotlight comes up on*
 23 *SALOME, pronounced Sah-lo-may. She bursts forward from the*
 24 *other women with loud energy, speaking as a take-charge mother*
 25 *hen.*)

26 SALOME: Mary, it's me, Salome, James and John's mother.
 27 (*Gives MARY a big hug.*) Sure, I'm here for you. I'll stay as
 28 long as you need me. What are friends for?

29 (*Holding MARY's hands and looking into her eyes*) But
 30 your son, even in his dying breaths, has already provided
 31 for you.

32 Oh, Mary, did you hear what Jesus said? Did you see
 33 the way he looked at you and then at John? (*Softer*) Maybe
 34 you couldn't see clearly through your tears. There was
 35 such love in his eyes for you — the adoration of a son for

1 his mother — and such sadness on his face as he watched
 2 your heart break. (*MARY puts her head down in her hands*
 3 *as though crying.*)

4 Did you hear what he said, Mary? He looked at you
 5 and said, “Dear woman, here is your son.” Then he looked
 6 over at John and said, “Here is your mother.”¹²

7 John will take care of you now. You won’t be alone.
 8 He will treat you well, Mary; I know because John is a
 9 good son, a good boy. (*Stepping back and shaking head*) Oh,
 10 he’s a bit messy at times, and his table manners could be
 11 improved. And you sometimes have to remind him not to
 12 leave his sandals under the table, and . . . oh, listen to me.
 13 Why am I telling you these things? You understand; you
 14 are like his mother now, too.

15 Believe me, I understand how hard it would’ve been
 16 not to meddle in Jesus’ work. Remember the time I went
 17 to him and asked him about my boys, James and John? I
 18 knew Jesus would someday have a kingdom, and I wanted
 19 to put in a good word — you know, make sure my kids
 20 had good jobs in that kingdom. (*Embarrassed*) I actually
 21 had the nerve to ask Jesus to put one son on his right
 22 (*Extends right hand*) and one on his left (*Extends left hand*)
 23 when he sat on his throne! (*Shrugs.*) Seemed like a good
 24 idea at the time.

25 (*Shaking head*) I guess I just didn’t understand. Jesus
 26 said if anyone was going to have those places of honor
 27 with him, they would have to share in his suffering, too.
 28 For once, I’m glad Jesus didn’t take my advice. My boys
 29 would have been hanging on crosses now too. (*Shudders.*)

30 John used to tell me about Jesus’ teachings when
 31 they’d travel. (*Pauses, as if remembering.*) Did you know
 32 Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay
 33 down his life for his friends”?¹³ Ah, Mary, you can be proud
 34 of him. (*Turning and gesturing toward the cross*) Surely no
 35 one has ever had more love than this. (*MARY looks at cross*)

1 *and nods slowly.)*

2 **Jesus warned us we would grieve.** *(With a smile)* **He**
 3 **compared it to being in labor.** *(Leaning in toward MARY)*
 4 **Now I ask you, what would he know about labor, eh?**
 5 *(Slight chuckle)*

6 **But it's a good image.** *(With a pained expression)* **First,**
 7 **all you know is pain. But later, when the baby is born,**
 8 *(Arms open, smiling)* **you are so happy you forget the pain.**
 9 **Jesus said, "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you**
 10 **again, and you will rejoice, and** *(Slowly)* **no one will take**
 11 **away your joy."**¹⁴

12 **Somehow — I don't know how — Jesus is going to**
 13 **turn this thing around. He said he would see us again. He**
 14 **said our grief would turn to joy. Don't give up, Mary. This**
 15 **waiting is awful, but we have to do it. And I will wait with**
 16 **you.**

17 *(Turns to the other WOMEN, inviting them with her*
 18 *hands.)* **We will all wait with you.** *(SALOME returns to the*
 19 *group. The musical interlude this time is more upbeat. The*
 20 *spotlight expands or the lights come up slightly to show all the*
 21 *biblical women coming together to touch or hug one another in*
 22 *support. While this huddle is going on, the SERVANT GIRL*
 23 *approaches, walks around the cluster, and tries to become part*
 24 *of the group. The others are too busy to notice her.)*

25
26
27 **Servant Girl to Whom Peter Denied Christ**

28
29 *(The spotlight focuses on the SERVANT GIRL as the musical*
 30 *interlude ends. She has been trying unsuccessfully to break into*
 31 *the group; finally she speaks up.)*

32 **SERVANT GIRL:** **If you don't mind, Ma'am,** *(The women turn*
 33 *to look at her)* **I would like to wait with you.** *(The women*
 34 *move back to their places.)*

35 **MARY:** **Who are you, child?**

1 **SERVANT GIRL:** A lowly servant girl, but an honest one who
2 is searching for truth.

3 **MARY:** (*Beckons to her.*) Come closer, child. Come join us.

4 **SERVANT GIRL:** (*Earnestly*) I saw him, you know. I work in
5 the courtyard of the high priest. (*Points behind her.*) I saw
6 them bring Jesus in to see Caiaphas. (*Reassuringly*) He held
7 his head high, Ma'am, and he didn't look scared. Most
8 prisoners who come to the court are frightened. Jesus only
9 looked sad.

10 (*Pointing to self, shaking head*) I'm a curious person.
11 My mother always scolds me for asking so many questions,
12 but I want to know things. And I wanted to know more
13 about this prisoner. I had heard him speak to the crowds,
14 and (*Nodding*) I liked the things he said.

15 After they all went in to see Caiaphas, I noticed a
16 man, (*Arms wide open*) a big man, sitting by the fire. The
17 guards were laughing and carrying on, but this man was
18 quiet, thoughtful. (*Excited, shaking one finger*) Then it hit
19 me: He was with Jesus! I saw them together when they
20 brought Jesus in!

21 I was curious, so I went up to him. "You were with
22 Jesus, the Galilean,"¹⁵ I said. (*Child-like*) I wasn't trying to
23 accuse him or get him in trouble or anything. I just wanted
24 to know more about Jesus, and I thought maybe he could
25 tell me.

26 (*Really into her story now*) His eyes got wide and he
27 shook his head. (*Deep voice*) "I don't know what you are
28 talking about,"¹⁶ he said, then he moved across the
29 courtyard.

30 So I followed him. For such a big, strong man, he
31 seemed ill at ease. Several others thought maybe he knew
32 Jesus, too, and they asked him about it, (*Slowly*) but he
33 denied everything.

34 (*Even more dramatic*) Suddenly, I heard a rooster
35 crowing. The man froze. He looked horrified! He jumped

up and ran out of the courtyard, and then, when he thought no one was looking, *(Leaning forward as though telling a secret)* he broke down and cried like a baby.

(Softer, almost to herself) I think he did know Jesus and he was afraid to admit it. And I think somehow the rooster's crowing reminded him of that. *(Tenderly, to MARY)* Your Jesus must have been someone special. I feel empty inside now, like I had a chance to know someone holy . . . and missed it. I wish I had known your son, Ma'am. *(Looks down and shuffles feet.)*

(Eager) There are rumors that he said he would come back. If it's all right with you, I want to wait with you for his return. If he comes back, maybe I can talk to him. Maybe he can take this . . . this emptiness inside away. *(Looks at MARY humbly.)*

MARY: *(Touching her shoulder)* Wait for the Lord, child; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the Lord!¹⁷ *(Holds pose briefly, then SERVANT GIRL steps back into the group. The musical interlude is stronger, more powerful. The spotlight follows MARY as she moves away from the group and gazes toward the direction JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA exited.)*

(If the song "Carry Him Gently" is used, MARY sings the third verse. The words suggest that Jesus' work on Earth — and hence his pain — are over. If the song is not used, Mary speaks tenderly) Jesus. Son. You must be so weary. Rest, my son. *(Pleading)* But tell me, please, what did you mean when you said, "It is finished"? I want to have courage. I want to wait for you. But what if your life really is finished and I never see you again? What if your work here really is . . . over? *(The spotlight goes out, and the impression is given that the play is over. But suddenly, the stage lights go up, a door slams and the spotlight follows MOTHER TERESA entering from the back of the right side of the audience. The biblical women, including MARY, are obviously startled.)*

Mother Teresa¹⁸

(Approaches MARY from the right side of the audience, but keeps her distance. MARY is obviously startled and bewildered.)

MOTHER TERESA: No, Mary. I stand with you and grieve with you, but I must challenge you. His work is not done.

(Pointing to self) My name is Mother Teresa. Many years ago, God called me to India to care for the poorest of the poor in Calcutta. My order of nuns, the Missionaries of Charity, have chosen to live in poverty so that we can understand the poor and care for them around the world. (Pointing to MARY with a tender smile) It is because of your son that we go.

Yes, I understand what he meant by those words, "It is finished." Jesus came to call all people to God, to offer salvation from the darkness of sin. (Nodding) This he accomplished.

(Both hands cover heart.) Now it is our turn. Don't you see the irony, Mary? God chose the cross, (Pointing) a symbol of Roman arrogance, to teach us how to be humble. Remember his words, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was sick and you looked after me . . . Whenever you do something for the least of my children, you are doing it for me."¹⁹

Those are the very words that give my life meaning. When we go into a needy corner of the world, we look first for the least of the least, the most rejected, the most forgotten. When we find them, we care for them as though they were Jesus himself, (Deliberately) for they are.

That is why I pick up dying people in the streets and take them home — because (Pointing to cross) Jesus asked me to and showed me how. I believe that when he said "I thirst," he wasn't just thirsty for water. He was thirsty for you and me to show love for one another.

You can find Calcutta all over the world, you know, if you have eyes to see. There are those who feel unwanted, lonely and forgotten all around us, (*Turning toward audience*) perhaps even right beside us. (*Looks around at audience, then back at MARY.*)

You see, Mary, God's love must be put into action. (Pointing) This — this cross — was Jesus' love in action for us. When we take Communion and remember his body and blood given for us here today, we receive the strength, the courage and the love to serve. Without him, we can't do it. With him, (Nodding) we can do all things.

You are clinging to a shred of hope, Mary — the hope that God will bring something good out of this tragedy. Nothing is too small for God. (*Lifting hands up*) Offer whatever hope you have to God, and he will turn it into something infinite.

I know what you are feeling. Every day I live in that tension between grief and hope. All around me I see suffering. Children dying. The sick abandoned. Despair. Were it not for Jesus' love, I, too, might be sucked into despair. (*Walks up to MARY.*) I could not survive the agony of Good Friday if it weren't for the hope of Easter yet to come. (*Earnestly*) Yet to come, Mary! (*Places both hands on MARY's head as a blessing.*) Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the Lord!²⁰

(No music, and no change in lighting. MARY watches in wonder as MOTHER TERESA steps back to the edge of the group. Immediately she can hear the noises of the HOMELESS MOTHER from the back of the audience.)

Homeless Mother

(Spotlight follows HOMELESS MOTHER as she shuffles slowly from the back down the left or center aisle. She begins speaking

1 *when she is almost to the front. She is used to being alone and*
 2 *is almost talking to herself as much as to MARY.)*

3 **HOMELESS MOTHER:** There's something about that cross
 4 that hits home with me. It's not just the cross itself, but
 5 what the Romans meant it to stand for: *(Pause)* humiliation.

6 I am a street person, one of the nameless ones lumped
 7 into a category called "homeless." When people meet me
 8 on the street, they don't look me in the eye. Mostly they
 9 pass by on the other side. *(To MARY)* Yes, Mary, I know
 10 humiliation.

11 Do you know what my favorite part of this whole
 12 story is? It's when Jesus cried out to God in the garden
 13 of Gethsemane:

14 *(Loudly, pleadingly)* "Why, God? Why me? Why does it
 15 have to be this way? Isn't there another way? Take this
 16 cup away from me. *(Firmly)* I don't want this agony."²¹

17 *(Softer)* I wish I could have been there with him in
 18 the garden: I wouldn't have fallen asleep like the other
 19 disciples. I would've sat with him, held his hand. I wouldn't
 20 have needed to say a word, because I would've
 21 understood. I've asked questions like that myself:
 22 *(Pleading, hands lifted)* Oh God, where are you? Can't you
 23 do something? Why have you forgotten me? *(Gestures*
 24 *toward cart or wagon.)* Why is my child so sick when I can't
 25 afford medicine? Why did I lose my job? *(Angrily)* Why
 26 doesn't anything seem to work out right for me?

27 *(Pauses, then gentler)* Jesus really struggled there in
 28 the garden. It was like a storm going on in his soul. *(Louder,*
 29 *shaking fists at God)* Why? Why? Why?

30 *(Quieter)* But the storm ended when he let go. "Not
 31 my will but thine be done, O God,"²² he said.

32 Now I'm not saying I think it's God's will for me to
 33 be homeless. But something about the way Jesus accepted
 34 his pain and gave it back to God gives me courage.
 35 *(Clutching hands to chest)* I know if I can just make it through

1 the evil of this day, I can face whatever comes tomorrow.

2 And do you know what else gives me courage?
3 Knowing he did this *(Pointing to cross)* for me. *(Pointing to*
4 *self, looking at audience)* Society tells me I'm no good; I'm a
5 burden. I'm someone to be pitied, maybe, but mostly
6 stepped over and ignored.

7 *(Turning back to the cross)* But this, Mary, this tells me
8 *(Slowly)* I am loved. I can't look at the cross and feel
9 worthless or humiliated. I look at the cross and feel loved.
10 He did this for me.

11 *(Long pause as she ponders this amazing idea.)* The least
12 I can do is believe his promises and watch with faith. *(Takes*
13 *a step toward MARY.)* Yes, Mary, I will wait with you.

14 *(Spotlight follows her as she takes MARY's hand briefly,*
15 *then steps aside, Downstage Right, still on the outer edge of the*
16 *group. Spotlight then moves directly to CORRIE TEN BOOM.)*

17

18

19 **Corrie ten Boom**

20

21 *(Spotlight focuses on CORRIE TEN BOOM, who stands from*
22 *the front row on the left side of the congregation.)*

23 **CORRIE TEN BOOM:** Mary, nothing is too hopeless for God's
24 love.

25 The year is 1944. There is a world war going on. My
26 name is Corrie ten Boom, and I speak from a Nazi
27 concentration camp.

28 I live with the same prejudice, hatred, and fear that
29 took Jesus to the cross. *(Gestures toward the cross.)* The
30 Romans didn't trust the Jews, especially the one hailed
31 King of the Jews. So they tried to control God by nailing
32 him to a tree. *(Points again to the cross. Pauses as MARY looks*
33 *at the cross and shudders.)*

34 Now Hitler is trying to kill all the Jews, trying to
35 control the world. But there are Christians all around who



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