

Out of the Darkness

By Gloria L. Emmerich

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Male:

JESUS

PETER (Disciple of Jesus)

DANIEL (Paralytic Man)

JEDIDIAH (Cana Couple-Husband)

Female:

MARY (Mother of Jesus)

JARA (Peter's Mother-in-law)

SUSANNA (Cana Couple - Wife)

TIRZAH (Jairus' Daughter)

SARAH (Tirzah's Mother)

Song Assignments:

Act One:

1. *Amen* **Company**
2. *He's My Son* **MARY**
3. *Jesus in the Middle* **JEDIDIAH & SUSANNA**
4. *Thread of Hope* (Paralytic Man) **DANIEL**
5. *Thread of Hope* (Reprise) **DANIEL, JARA, PETER**
6. *Listening to Jesus* **JARA & PETER**
7. *Out of the Darkness* **JESUS & Company**

Act Two:

8. *Do You Believe In Me?* **JESUS, PETER, MARY, JARA**
9. *Gethsemane's Prayer* **JESUS**
10. *You're One of Them!* **PETER & Chorus**
11. *Oh Father, Forgive Them* **JESUS**
12. *The Master Has Risen! (Chorus only)* **JESUS**
13. *The Master Has Risen!* **PETER, MARY, JARA & Company**
14. *He Knows My Heart* **PETER**
15. *Amen* (Reprise) **Finale** **Company**

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ACT ONE

ACT 1 SC. 1: *As cast begins singing AMEN, MARY rocks "Baby Jesus" [simulated by using swathe of material]. During the course of the song, JESUS grows up as actors mime the actions called for in the verses. MARY should dance (move freely) throughout the piece using the swathe of material as a prop which "becomes" various things. Most effective in soft light.*

SONG #1 - AMEN

ALL: Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen!
Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen!

MARY: See the baby,

CHORUS: Amen!

MARY: Wrapped in a manger,

CHORUS: Amen!

MARY: On Christmas mornin' _____

CHORUS: Amen, amen, amen!

PETER: See Him in the temple,

CHORUS: Amen!

PETER: Talking to the elders,

CHORUS: Amen!

PETER: Who marveled at His wisdom. _____

CHORUS: Amen, amen, amen!

ALL: Amen _____

(Key change)

WOMAN: See Him at the Jordan,

CHORUS: Amen!

WOMAN: Where John was baptizing,

CHORUS: Amen!

WOMAN: And saving all sinners! _____

CHORUS: Amen, amen, amen!

PETER: See Him at the seaside,

CHORUS: Amen!

PETER: Talking with the fishermen,

CHORUS: Amen!

PETER: And making them disciples! _____

CHORUS: Amen, amen, amen!

ALL: Amen_____

ACT 1 SC. 2: *JESUS and His mother, MARY.*

- MARY:** *(Jesus takes her to a bench where they can sit and talk. Once seated MARY looks up at Him and studies His face.)* Jesus, you look so tired. Are you sleeping well?
- JESUS:** *(Smiles.)* I sleep a little...enough to rejuvenate me so I can continue my ministry...
- MARY:** But not enough to be fully rested...
- JESUS:** *(Gives her a reproving smile.)* It's enough...
- MARY:** You can't go on without rest, Jesus. I know your ministry is important but sleep is important too.
- JESUS:** My Father in Heaven gives me strength when I am weak or weary.
- MARY:** Yes, I know He takes care of His son, Jesus. But you are also *my* son. You are a man as well...and your *earthly mother* thinks you need more rest. *(She smiles and takes His hand in hers and caresses it.)* If you don't take care of yourself, my son, then how will you go on ministering for years to come?
- JESUS:** *(He slowly removes His hand from hers and strokes her hair before rising to cross the stage.)* The time is short, Mother; I don't *have* years to come.
- MARY:** *(Not wanting to hear this she rises to join Him.)* Why do you say that? It's not as if you're *old*. You're just in your early 30s...the prime of your life with many years ahead of you to do God's will.
- JESUS:** No. We've talked about this many times. My time on earth is short, Mother. It grows shorter every day...and there is still so much to do before I...
- MARY:** *(Interrupts, not wanting to hear.)* Yes, I know. I've heard this before.
- JESUS:** *(Smiles.)* Yes, you've heard this before...but you're not listening with your heart.
- MARY:** *(Returns to the bench, clearly upset, tearful.)* How *can* I when my heart is so full of sadness. *(JESUS watches MARY, then slowly goes over and sits beside her, putting an arm around His mother to calm her. She continues.)* Before you were born the angel, Gabriel told me that with God nothing is impossible. After all I've been through since that day I know it's true. *(Begins to cry.)* So why isn't it possible for God to protect you; to spare your life so that...
- JESUS:** *(Gently stops her.)* Shh...Listen; listen to your heart, my beloved Mother. There's a *reason* for the sadness in your heart and soul. For a time, it must be. I know you love God...and you love Me also. And I know you trust God...trust *Me* also.
- MARY:** *(Looks up at Him.)* I do...but the sadness remains.

JESUS: Through the years while I was growing up, going to school, preparing for my ministry, you saw and heard many things and hid them away in your heart. Now it's time for you to find them, to listen from deep inside your heart and soul. You know the prophesies of old. You've seen many of them come to pass. There are still many more to come that must also be fulfilled.

MARY: *(Speaks softly.)* ...I know... But I don't understand everything that's *in* my heart.

JESUS: You will. In time you will understand and know why I must do my Father's will. Then you'll look back and your eyes will be opened; and you'll see everything clearly.

MARY: *(Pleading, yet afraid to ask.)* When? How long?

JESUS: *(Smiles again and wipes her tears away.)* Soon. The Holy Spirit will reveal it to you. *(He rises.)* Now, we must go and join the others. Many have traveled far to hear the Word of God. Come.

MARY: *(Tries to smile and joins Him.)* And after you preach to the crowds you will rest?

JESUS: *(Chuckles.)* Yes; then I will rest... *(Teasing, He holds up a scolding finger.)* But only a little.

MARY: *(Takes his hand and kisses it.)* Thank you for being with me, Jesus; my son.

JESUS: *(Lovingly smooths her hair.)* I will always be with you, my beloved Mother. Remember that... *(Hand over His heart.)* always...to the end of time. *(Kisses her head then exits. MARY watches Him leave; pondering His words.)*

#2 - HE'S MY SON - Mary's solo

Verse 1 **MARY:** I have called Him my son from the start;
 Even though I know deep in my heart,
 He is God's only Son from above; and conceived of the Spirit in love.
 Yet, I am the one who He took His first step to;
 My arms held Him close as I rocked Him to sleep.
 Day after day I would watch Him grow into,
 The Man of God I knew my love could not keep._____

Verse 2 **MARY:** I suppose that I've known all along,
 He must go; Father, help me be strong!
 As His Father You surely must see; whatever happens, His mother I'll be...
 Father in Heaven, I know He's Yours;
 But for this moment, let Him be mine!_____

He's my son._____ He's my son too._____

And I love_____our_____Son._____

PETER: *(Enters.)* Mary, have you seen Jesus? I thought He was with you.

MARY: *(Turns to face PETER when he speaks.)* He was, Peter. But He just left. He's going back to the crowds to speak to them.

PETER: *(Starts to head off in the direction JESUS went, then notices MARY staying behind so he goes back to her.)* Mary, are you all right? The Master's going to begin teaching soon and I...I thought you'd want to be there too...

MARY: *(Arms wrapped around herself; deep in thought.)* He never has a moment to just stop...and be alone, does He?

PETER: *(Unsure of her meaning.)* I...I guess not, Mary. But then, I don't think the Master *wants* to stop. People come from all over to hear His message; to see Him.

MARY: He won't turn them away, Peter. He never turns anyone away who comes looking for the Messiah. It's as if He knows He only has a little time left to tell people...to tell *everyone* about the Son of God, about anything and everything He knows. He's preparing us for something...

PETER: Well of course He's preparing us, Mary. *(Excited.)* He's teaching us; equipping us to be fishers of men and to tell the world that the Messiah has come. He wants us to share in His ministry, Mary. He wants us to begin going out on our own in groups of two and three and do what He is doing now: preaching and teaching, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

MARY: Do you know *why* He wants you to go out on your own? He's told us so many times. Because He won't always be with us, Peter. He's preparing us for that.

PETER: *(Loses his zeal now and calms down.)* He told us again last night, Mary; all the disciples. He said He must suffer many things and be rejected; that He'd be killed and raised up again. I don't pretend to understand it all, and I took Him aside and told Him not to say such things; that it couldn't be of God. But He rebuked me. He said I should be more mindful of the things of God rather than men.

MARY: *(Smiles.)* He still loves you, Peter. He scolds me at times too, for the same thing.

PETER: *(He looks surprised.)* You? But, you're His own mother, Mary!

MARY: *(Smiles, remembering.)* It's a gentle reprimand, Peter. He's never harsh with me. And I know I deserve it. I just can't help it sometimes. I have doubts and fears, and questions just like all of you do.

PETER: *(Chuckles, remembering.)* I remember the first time I saw Him perform a miracle.

MARY: The wedding in Cana?

PETER: *(Looks surprised.)* ...in southern Galilee; *that* was the first for you too?

MARY: *(Laughs.)* Oh yes. And He wasn't quite ready to show His powers yet. But I asked Him anyway.

PETER: So you're the one who got Him started with the barrels! *(MARY laughs.)* Talk about not understanding; imagine how all of *us* felt! I can still hardly believe it. I watched the servants fill those barrels with *plain water*. When Jesus told the bride's father to dip his cup in the barrel and drink, I think I held my breath!

MARY: *(Laughs again.)* I must admit, I wasn't sure what to expect myself. I only knew Jesus had the power from God above to turn that water into wine. You know, I'm planning a trip to Cana to visit the couple that got married. Do you remember them? Jedidiah and Susanna.

PETER: Oh, yes...I remember. How could I forget?! What characters they were! Made me laugh so much my sides ached. But it was mostly their accent that got to me. They sure talk different down there, don't they?

MARY: That's part of the charm of Cana. I've never met a friendlier, warmer people than those in the regions of southern Galilee.

PETER: Well, be sure to send greetings from me...from *all* of us, when you see them. Now, we'd better join the others. I think the Master is about to talk to the crowds that have gathered on the hillside.

MARY: Thanks for listening to a mother fuss over the welfare of her son, Peter.

PETER: It was my pleasure. Actually, it was nice listening to someone *else's* mother fuss for a change. I get enough of that from my mother-in-law! *(They both chuckle and exit as the lights fade.)*

(BLACKOUT)

ACT 1 SC. 3: *At the home of the Cana couple: JEDIDIAH and SUSANNA. It's a few years after their marriage. MARY, the mother of JESUS is there to visit.*

SUSANNA: *(In a strong southern US accent.)* Mary! It is such a pleasure to have you visitin' us! I can hardly believe it's been, what, two years since the weddin'?!

MARY: *(Somewhat overwhelmed.)* I think so.

SUSANNA: *(Turns to call for JEDIDIAH.)* Jed! Honey bunch! We've got company, darlin'. It's Mary...Jesus' mother. *(Turns back to MARY.)* Well... *(Looks around for her husband before continuing.)* Time does fly when you're havin' fun, I reckon. *(She laughs heartily.)*

MARY: *(Chuckles too.)* Yes, it does. Of course, I've been busy traveling...with Jesus.

SUSANNA: That's wonderful! We hear He's still goin' from town to town preachin'. Bless His heart! Well, may God in Heaven give Him strength! I know it can't be easy never knowin' where you'll lay your head each night.

MARY: We always seem to manage, and there are several other women who travel with us. We all lend a hand in whatever way we can.

SUSANNA: And what a blessin' that must be! Servin' the Master every day!

MARY: God supplies all our needs. Most of the people we meet along the way are very kind and generous. They share whatever they have with us in return for Jesus preaching to them.

JEDIDIAH: *(Enters, excited to see MARY. He takes her hands and kisses her on each cheek. She is embarrassed and giggles. JEDIDIAH also speaks with a strong southern accent.)* Welcome, welcome! I can't believe it! We haven't seen you since the weddin', have we, sugar?

SUSANNA: (*Giggles.*) I know! That's what *I* said too. Now, next time you meet up with Jesus you let Him know that Jed and I tell *everyone* we meet about Him and what He did for us. And, we tell them who He *IS*, of course. I still get chills when I say it...the *Son of God!* And to think He was at our very own weddin'.

JEDIDIAH: He sure was, sugar pie. Quite an honor!

MARY: (*Gives them a strange look.*) Sugar pie...?

SUSANNA: (*Giggles.*) I know, I know! It's our silly accent, isn't it? Don't you remember?

MARY: (*Laughs.*) Oh, yes; I remember. But it still surprises me when I hear it.

JEDIDIAH: It's hard to get use to if you're not from our neck of the woods.

SUSANNA: (*Pats MARY'S hand gently.*) It's all right, hon...I'm afraid we're a *dyin'* breed!

JEDIDIAH: You know how it is. So many folks from the north shore have moved down here. Then the younguns pick up *their* way of talkin' and before you know it there won't be any true southern Galileans left!

SUSANNA: It's already happenin'. Even now people can't figure out why we talk like this. I just say, "You're not from around here, are you?" Well, we were born and raised here in *southern Galilee*...and we're *proud* of it!

JEDIDIAH: People think just cuz we talk different there must be somethin' wrong with us.

SUSANNA: (*Looks at MARY.*) Isn't that the silliest thing you ever heard? Why, Jesus didn't mind being at our weddin'! He never made one comment about our accent, did he, honey bunch?

JEDIDIAH: Treated us no different than anyone else. I was real impressed with Him the first time I met him. You raised him up right, Mary; He's a fine man!

MARY: (*Smiles shyly.*) Well, thank you; but I think our Father in Heaven had a lot more to do with Jesus' upbringing than Joseph or I did.

SUSANNA: Now, don't you go puttin' yourself down, hon. God could o' chose someone else to be Jesus' mother....but he chose *you!* Must be a reason for that!

JEDIDIAH: There sure was!

MARY: (*Laughs.*) All right, all right. Thank you.

SUSANNA: (*Leans down and takes MARY'S hands.*) Mary, tell us. Where's Jesus now?

JEDIDIAH: Yeah; what's He been up to the last few years? I mean, we hear bits and pieces from time to time of where He's been, but it's hard keepin' up with all the details.

MARY: (*All of a sudden she relaxes, opens up: JESUS is her favorite subject.*) Well, first of all, you wouldn't believe the miracles! He's healing the sick, casting out evil spirits; eyes that were blind since birth have been opened...

JEDIDIAH: And I thought the miracle at our weddin' here in Cana was a big deal!

SUSANNA: (*Lovingly pats JED'S hand.*) Hush now, Jed. Let her go on...what else, Mary?

MARY: The teachings...He's taught us so much about God, about His love, how to live our lives to serve Him. It's just wonderful. You'd love it, Susanna.

SUSANNA: (*Winks at MARY.*) Well, if I wasn't tied down to a certain man, I'd be off with you in the blink of an eye...!

JEDIDIAH: Well then, maybe I'd be off after *you* with a "blink" of *my* eye! I saw you a winkin' at Mary, my sassy little sweet potato pie! (*They laugh.*) **MARY:** You'd be welcome to join us too, Jed.

SUSANNA: (*Excited.*) You hear that, Jed?!

JEDIDIAH: Now listen, little darlin', there's nothin' I'd love to do more than follow Jesus around from town to town. But we've got responsibilities here... **SUSANNA:** *(A little sad and mokey.)* I know...I know...

JEDIDIAH: *(Tries to cheer her up by singing the following words to the traditional folk melody of "Oh, Susanna.")* Oh Susanna, now don't you cry for me. For I love my little sweetie pie, from southern Galilee!

SUSANNA: *(All laugh; SUSANNA gives him a playful nudge so he'll stop.)* Now Jed, stop...

MARY: Besides, you and Jed have your own ministry right *here*, Susanna. You've been spreading the news about Jesus all over this area. That's important, too.

JED/SUSA: *(Spoken together.)* That's right. *(Look at each other and laugh.)* **MARY:** *(Rises.)* Well, I'd really better be going. *(Hugs SUSANNA.)* Take care of yourselves. And of course, you know Jesus and all the others send their love to you both. Jesus has fond memories of Cana and His time at your wedding.

SUSANNA: *(Proud as can be.)* Really? Well, it *was* quite a weddin', wasn't it?

JEDIDIAH: You give Jesus our love too, Mary, and tell Him that no one comes to Cana without hearin' about Jesus! *(He takes MARY'S hands in his and kisses them before letting go.)* You take care, Mary. Please know you're always welcome in our home, you and Jesus.....and *all* His disciples, for that matter!

MARY: *(Smiles.)* Thank you, Jed. God bless you. *(JEDIDIAH nods goodbye.)*

SUSANNA: I'll walk you out, Mary. I'll be right back, honey bunch. *(Gives JED a smile and a pat on the arm then exits with MARY.)*

JEDIDIAH: All right, sweetie pie. *(Watches them leave then turns to the audience.)* Yep, I admit it. Oh Susanna came after *me!* I didn't even know she existed till one day there she was, standin' next to me at the harvest dance in the village square. Hooey! What a beauty! I thought I knew every girl there *was* in our town but I'd never seen her 'round here before. Course, I found out later she and her family were visitin' relatives and would be here the whole summer. *(Looks back and sees SUSANNA is coming, so he smiles at the audience and quickly adds a comment.)* Best summer I *ever* had! *(Laughs.)*

SUSANNA: *(Upon her return JED stops laughing, making her suspicious.)* Now, what are you laughin' about, honey bunch? You tellin' these nice folks stories again?

JEDIDIAH: Just tellin' 'em how we met. Remember the harvest dance at the village square?

SUSANNA: Are you kiddin' me? How could I forget *that?!* Why I followed you 'round like a sick puppy nearly the whole night before I finally got up the nerve to go stand next to you. Why, I thought for sure you could hear my knees knockin' together! *(To audience.)* The good Lord knows I could!

JEDIDIAH: Well now, maybe that's what made me turn 'round and look at you! *(Winks at audience.)* Yep, when I looked into them sparklin' violet eyes I knew I was a goner!

SUSANNA: *(Laughs.)* Now, there you go exaggeratin' again! If my eyes were a sparklin' it's because they were reflectin' off o' that *big beautiful* smile o' yours! *(To audience.)* The good Lord knows *every* girl's eyes in town sparkled lookin' at *that* smile!

JEDIDIAH: Yep, we were head over heels in love. Before the summer was over we were makin' plans for our big weddin' in the fall.

SUSANNA: *Autumn*, dear. That's my favorite season. Those gorgeous red and golden leaves... why the hills are *ablaze* with color! We were plannin' a good old-fashioned harvest weddin' and the whole town came out; didn't they, honey bunch?

JEDIDIAH: It was more like the entire district! By the time we got to the village courtyard for the reception we could barely find a place to stand for all the people. I don't think I knew but half of them!

SUSANNA: Oh now, there you go exaggeratin' again. T'weren't that many people, darlin'. Besides, it was a beautiful day and most folks were just sittin' around enjoyin' the unusually warm weather we were havin'. You remember, honey bunch? We were talkin' to Daddy when Jesus and his mama, Mary stopped by to say what a beautiful weddin' it was.

JEDIDIAH: Yep, I remember. Why, the whole lot of them were there: John, James, Peter...all twelve of them. And a good thing they did show up. We were plum out of weddin' punch with nothin' but water to serve the guests by the time *they* arrived.

SUSANNA: (*Giggles.*) Daddy was so embarrassed! I told him it didn't matter none. Everybody was havin' a good ol' time without his silly ol' weddin' punch. Course, Mama thought it was a disgrace to the family. Runnin' outa punch at a weddin'? Goodness sakes! You'd a thought Aunt Carol'd run off with the town drunk the way Mama and Daddy were carryin' on. (*Giggles.*)

JEDIDIAH: Now, sugar pie, you know how important it was to them. They'd been plannin' this weddin' for two months and wanted everything to be just right. It *was* worth fussin' about to *them*.

SUSANNA: Course, Mama just *had* to run tell Mary all about it...then Mary up n' tells her *son!*

JEDIDIAH: Yep. I'm not sure Jesus was too keen on showin' off his powers just yet. But He was right smart to obey His mama when she told him to help out. That's one of the things I admired about Him. Jesus respected His mama and He was a humble man too. (*Somewhat perturbed.*) Not a big show-off like some of these young folk today.

SUSANNA: Yes dear. Well, when Jesus told the servants to fill those big barrels with water, I thought mama was gonna faint dead away. (*Giggles.*) Even Daddy turned a little pale.

JEDIDIAH: Turned green, actually... Your ol' man'd be the laughing stock of the town servin' his guests water at a weddin'. (*Laughs heartily.*)

SUSANNA: Well, thankfully Jesus had somethin' better in mind. (*Gets excited.*) Why they must o' filled 15 containers with water! I remember the look on Daddy's face when Jesus handed him a cup to dip into one of the barrels. (*Laughs.*) I thought he was gonna keel over for sure!

JEDIDIAH: (*Laughing with her.*) Yep. But my favorite part was when your Pa took his first drink, 'member? He took a sip, an his eyes got big; he took another sip, then he grinned *real* big, then he gulped down the rest and burst out

laughing an a-hollerin' for everyone to come have a drink of the finest weddin' punch ever made!

SUSANNA: What a miracle that was! I think everybody should invite Jesus to their weddin', don't you honey bunch? What a special blessin' it was havin' Him there.

JEDIDIAH: Yep. Can't think of a better way to start a marriage.

SUSANNA: Me neither. Course, after my Uncle Josh announced to everyone what a stinker Daddy was; savin' the best punch for last...they all thought my Pa was quite "the man" from then on!

JEDIDIAH: Yep, but I'd say Jesus was the "big man" after *that* day. Just think, sugar pie; Jesus' first miracle...and it happened at *our* weddin'! Hooey! Not many folks can boast about that, now can they?

SUSANNA: Well, you ain't exaggeratin' *there*, honey bunch! *(Both laugh)*

SONG #3 - JESUS IN THE MIDDLE - Jed & Susanna duet

VERSE 1 **JEDIDIAH:** We were determined to marry; neither wanted to tarry,
So we set the date as soon as we could.

SUSANNA: Autumn was the season; our love was the reason,
That our marriage was a gonna be good.

BOTH: With our vows said and done, the party'd only begun,

JEDIDIAH: When we noticed that the punch had run dry.

SUSANNA: Mama told Mary who said, "Quite contrary;
My son Jesus all the punch will supply."

CHORUS **BOTH:** So that's why everybody ought to be invitin' Jesus to their unitin',
For a marriage should start with Jesus bein' a part; it's more excitin'.
Don't give Him only second fiddle,
For the Lord should be smack dab in the middle.
Put Him first in your life, before your husband or wife,
You'll stop the marital strife, hey diddle, diddle!

VERSE 2 **SUSANNA:** Then the barrels were filled and all the people were thrilled,
To find that Daddy saved the best punch for last.

JEDIDIAH: He said, "Jesus turned the water to punch for my daughter,
I've a hunch that it's a gonna go fast!"

BOTH: When Uncle Josh and Aunt Carol took a drink from the barrel,

SUSANNA: They thought Daddy was a big man that day.

JEDIDIAH: But he said, "It was Jesus; He's the only one can please us,

BOTH: Aren't you glad He was invited today?!

CHORUS **BOTH:** So that's why everybody ought to be invitin' Jesus to their unitin',
For a marriage should start with Jesus bein' a part; it's more excitin'.
Don't give Him only second fiddle,
For the Lord should be smack dab in the middle.
Put Him first in your life, before your husband or wife,

You'll stop the marital strife, hey diddle, diddle!
Jesus ought to be there; be sure to save Him a chair.....
Smack dab in the middle!

JEDIDIAH: (*Gives SUSANNA a big smile.*) I sure do love to hear you sing, sugar pie!
SUSANNA: (*Giggles.*) Well, you keep a smilin' at me like *that* and I'll sing all day long,
honey bunch! (*JED gives her another cheesy smile so she swats him.*)

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