

Mary's Choice

CHARACTERS: 10 (3F, 2M, 4 either)

COSTUMES: Biblical

PROPS: None specified

SETTING: Anywhere in Nazareth

RUN TIME: 6 minutes

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Luke 1 & 2, Esther 4, Isaiah 49:6, Hebrews 11 & 12, Psalms 23, 2 Corinthians 6:2

AT RISE: GABRIEL is center stage. MARY slightly to one side, busy, unaware of GABRIEL's presence until he speaks to her.

GABRIEL: *(to the audience)* In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent me, the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin. *(GABRIEL takes a step toward and addresses MARY)*

GABRIEL: Greetings, Mary, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. *(MARY starts in surprise, draws back a step and appears troubled at the rest of his words but not frightened)* Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

MARY: How will this be since I am a virgin?

GABRIEL: The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. *(with delight)* So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. *(DEMONS move stealthily toward MARY before they speak, seeming afraid to draw GABRIEL's notice. They speak at first, in hushed tones close to her ear, and then back off as if being near MARY or GABRIEL is painful)*

DEMON 1: Mary. You're pledged to be married to a man named Joseph. Don't do anything to mess this up. *(MARY can hear the voices of the demons but she can't actually see the demons. She should peer about as if in a dark room, able to tell where the voices are coming from but not make eye contact with any of them. Her face should be visible to the audience so they can see her reactions)*

GABRIEL: Your son Jesus will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end

DEMON 1: *(backing off a bit, sounding like a kindly Jewish grandmother)* This is nonsense talk. You're family's not royalty; you're not even Jewish nobility. How could a son of yours become king?

MARY: Joseph is a descendant of David.

DEMON 1: He's a nice man, maybe a bit poor, but a good catch. But royalty? No. He's a carpenter. He builds furniture, not kingdoms. This is too far-fetched.

DEMON 2: *(more insidious but not threatening)* If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Tell this apparition to get lost. He's talking nonsense. Utter nonsense.

GABRIEL: Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. *(pause)* For no word from God will ever fail. *(DEMONS draw back*

and huddle together for support at those words. But they continue to try to influence MARY. A touch of desperation creeps into their voices)

DEMON 2: What about your reputation? Do you think Joseph is going to believe you're carrying the king of the universe or that you have strayed?

DEMON 1: The law says to stone women for impurity.

DEMON 2: You could lose your life.

GABRIEL: Lord, open her eyes that she may see that she is surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. *(DEMONS 1 & 2 withdraw. As good characters appear, Mary is able to see them. Her face should be a canvas, showing her reactions to their encouragement)*

ESTHER: Mary, I once feared losing my life. Thank the Lord Mordecai helped me realize that I might have come to my royal position as queen to save my people.

MARY: Queen Esther?

ESTHER: Yes, Mary. God brought me where he needed me to be to serve him and his people, not myself. If I had remained silent, refused to take the risk, God would have delivered my people through another. However, I would have perished.

MARY: *(remembering what she has been taught and finishing the story)* So you risked your life to save the Jews from Haman.

ESTHER: *(nodding in agreement and speaking with evident joy)* And through Jesus, the one of whom Gabriel speaks, not just the Jews will be saved, but the Gentiles as well.

GABRIEL: *(prophetically and expansive in his joy)* It is too small a thing for Jesus the servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel. He will also be a light for the Gentiles that Jehovah's salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

DEMON 3: *(forceful, has a hard edge)* Gentiles. Gentiles like these filthy Romans who slaughter our people and blaspheme the name of the Lord. Who wants to save Gentiles? Mary, this is crazy talk. You don't want to do this. Risking one's life is fine for a queen, but you're a – how do I say this nicely? – a nobody.

DAVID: *(has entered quietly, behind GABRIEL and dramatically steps out to be seen)* They thought the same of me. The youngest son, a shepherd tending a few sheep. Then when I said I would take on Goliath, they called me crazy too.

MARY: David? King David?

DAVID: Yes, Mary. *(taking her hands and speaking with love and conviction)* You are of my line, my blood, royal blood. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young ...

RAHAB: *(Stepping dramatically from behind GABRIEL and coming around to the other side of MARY, forcing DEMON 3 to step back)* Or female.

DAVID: *(introducing them)* This is my great-great grandmother, Rahab.

RAHAB: I too risked my life to save my family.

DEMON 3: She's a prostitute, a filthy Gentile prostitute.

RAHAB: Yet even I was found righteous by placing my faith in God and acting on it by protecting the spies.

DEMON 4: (*cringing entry from the opposite side of the other demons; pleading*) Mary, you don't want to do this. You'd be all alone.

DAVID: The Lord is my shepherd (*RAHAB joins in*) I shall not want. Yea, though I (*MARY joins in*) walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

DEMON 4: (*last-ditch effort*) Now isn't a good time to make such a monumental decision. Ask for a couple of days to think it over. There's plenty of time.

GABRIEL: (*proclaiming forcefully, letting his words push the demons back to the farthest corners*) Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation

MARY: (*bows in humility, lifts her face and answers confidently*) I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled. (*Demons and GABRIEL exit; other characters pull MARY to her feet and hug her.*)