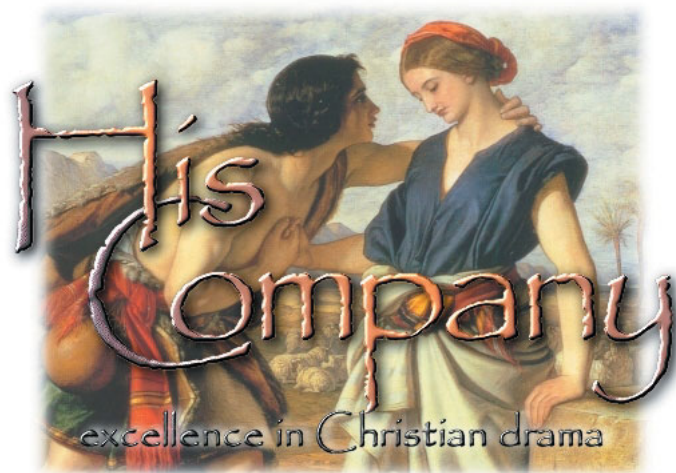


# ONLY FOR A TIME

## A SKETCH WITH JESUS & MARY

by  
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**AUTHOR'S NOTE**


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5 It is now time for Jesus to begin His ministry. He must be baptized by His cousin and leave home. But first He must bid good-bye to his mother, Mary. At the age of thirty, Jesus left his home in Nazareth, to be baptized and begin His ministry, leaving behind his mother and the rest of her sons and daughters. Jesus sees before Him a ministry, the very reason for which He came; His mother, Mary, sees only her eldest abandoning His family.

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**CHARACTERS**


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10 Jesus  
His mother, Mary

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**SCENE**


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15 *House lights down.  
Stage lights up.*

*ENTER Mary and Jesus, already in conversation.*

20 **Mary**  
*(frustrated)*  
But I don't understand this.

**Jesus**  
*(quietly, but firmly)*  
I must leave.

25 **Mary**  
You haven't given me a reason. Have I done something wrong?

**Jesus**  
I—I'm compelled.

30 **Mary**  
Jesus, when your father died, he left with his heart at peace, knowing that you—his first son—would continue his business and care for his family.

**Jesus**  
I am the first-born to another.

**Mary**

Again you speak of it!

35

**Jesus**

*(tenderly)*

Mother, when I was twelve years old you and father took me to the temple in Jerusalem. Do you remember? It was my first time and I was so excited. It was all so new and special to me. But I stayed too long. I was separated from you and stayed behind and made you angry. Do you remember what I said to you when you found me there in the temple? Mother, do you?

40

**Mary**

*(emphatically)*

Your father's business is here!

45

**Jesus**

Would you have me deny my Father's will?

**Mary**

*(missing his inference; nostalgically)*

He wanted only the best for you. You learned his trade so easily—you were born to it. And he was so proud of you. Why, Joseph always said—

50

**Jesus**

*(firmly)*

Mother!

55

*(pause; softening)*

I loved Joseph with all my heart. With all his uncertainty, all his questions, he accepted me. He loved me as his son. But it was a love that held much pain. He put up with so much vicious talk.

**Mary**

Oh, was I immune to the gossip of neighbors?

60

**Jesus**

I was at least of your body. He held no claim to me but marriage to you. A man and woman join to create life. That child is then a special miracle to

65 those two people. Joseph never had that with me. He could love, even  
 accept, but never fully understand. I was never a part of him. My  
 beginnings were not stirred from his loins—and my end will not be his  
 memorial.

**Mary**

*(turning away; sadly)*

70 At this moment, I think I miss my husband very much. I feel so—alone.

**Jesus**

*(going to her)*

I will always be a part of you. You brought me to this world. You gave me  
 the warmth of your arms, the nourishment of your breast— You gave me  
 75 life! You're my mother!

**Mary**

*(turning back quickly)*

Then how can you leave?

**Jesus**

*(stronger)*

80 It's my time.

**Mary**

*(angrily)*

85 Time for what? To break your mother's heart? Time to walk away from  
 your responsibilities, your family? Your life is here! You are the oldest.

**Jesus**

I go to be baptized.

**Mary**

*(stunned; incredulous)*

90 Baptized? Why? Only the Gentiles require baptism when they accept our  
 faith. Why would you have need of this?

**Jesus**

To fulfill all righteousness. In obedience to my father.

95 **Mary**  
(harshly)

Your father died nine years ago. He left you to take care of his family.

**Jesus**  
(sternly)

100 Woman! You can no longer keep buried in your heart the reality of my  
birth! Remember. Remember how it began. I have never been yours to  
keep. Only for a time.

(pause; softer)

I have no one closer to me on this earth than you. But, it is my Father's  
plan that I walk the rest of the way alone.

105 **Mary**  
(after a pause; in catharsis)

Oh, Jesus! I've denied the possibility of this day for thirty years. I prayed  
that, somehow, God would show me mercy—that He would change His  
mind.

110 **Jesus**

The Father will never forsake you. Through you He has accomplished His  
purpose. Don't be afraid, Mary.

**Mary**  
(smiling through her tears)

115 A long time ago, an angel from the Lord said that to me. I wasn't sure how  
to take it then;

(seriously)

I'm not sure how to take it now. I am very much afraid—for you.

(pause)

120 Will I ever see you again?

**Jesus**

I'll not be a stranger to you. We'll meet from time to time and others will  
keep you informed of my whereabouts. But,

(painfully)



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