

THE GRACE CONSPIRACY

A FaithQuest drama by Mark Eidemiller and Kevin Woods

As inspired by:

- The book of Hosea,
- *Don Quixote* by Cervantes

The Setting: Medieval Europe.

The Chief Characters:

- **David Emmett** – (Jesus / Hosea character.) Village stone cutter mason, builder, artisan, and man of God. He keeps referring to Desiree as “Grace.”
- **Desiree Mataios** – Prostitute. (Gomer character.) Hardened; loud; boisterous; fun-loving but cynical; She’s accepted her role as party doll; love without commitment. Every guy's best friend.
- **Paul LeMay** – Desiree’s “jail keeper.” (Satan character.)
- **Marc Emmett** – Brother to David. While he is religious, he is NOT spiritual. Though he knows *about* God, he has no relationship *with* God. Oh, yes, he’s also a former client of Desiree’s.
- **Mother** – Desiree’s mother. (Video appearance only).
- **Father** – Desiree’s father. (Video appearance only).
- **Diedra** – A former prostitute who depends upon Grace to re-order a messy life and make the simplest of decisions.
- **Narrator** – Costumed as a herald, the Narrator begins the second and third acts by reviewing the storyline.
- **Musicians** – Entering with the Narrator, the musicians get the audience’s attention with a trumpet blast.
- **Church members** – Act three requires an interior scene with David and Desi worshipping with the saints. A small group of Christians will worship quietly in prayer and song throughout the scene.
- **Guards**

(overture)

God Believes In You

Geoff Moore or Jill Phillips

When you start to doubt if you exist
God believes in you
Confounded by the evidence
God believes in you
When your light burns so dim
When your chances seem so slim
And you swear you don’t believe in Him
God believes in you

When you rise up just to fall again
God believes in you
Deserted by your closest friends
God believes in you

When you're betrayed with a kiss
And you turn your cheek to another fist
It doesn't have to end like this
God believes in you

Everything matters if anything matters at all
Everything matters no matter how big
No matter how small
God believes in you
Oh God believes in you

When you're so ashamed that you could die
God believes in you
And you can't do right even though you try
God believes in you
Blessed are the ones who grieve
The ones who mourn and the ones who bleed
In sorrow you sow but in joy you'll reap
God believes in you
Oh blessed are the ones who grieve
The ones who mourn and the ones who grieve
In sorrow you sow but in joy you'll reap
God believes in you
Oh God believes in you

(transition into scene)

ACT ONE, Scene One

Location: Desi's room, in a brothel.

A beautiful woman, fatigued and burdened enters, tumbles into a rumped bed and falls asleep.

DESI (voiceover, recorded): My name is Desi, short for Desiree. (pause) I don't sleep well. I haven't in years. Look into my dreams and you'll understand why ...

A PRE-RECORDED VIDEO BEGINS PLAYING OVER HER HEAD:

A young girl, age 9, watches wide-eyed as her mother and estranged father argue.

DESI (adult voiceover): That's me. That's my mother and my ... father. (sighs) They're fighting again.

On the screen, the girl waits anxiously.

DESI: (9-year-old voiceover; the tone of her voice is innocent, expectant) That's my mother and my father. I don't see him very often. Father usually visits after I've gone to bed. But not tonight. I made sure I was up when he came to visit. I'm all dressed up for him; Mother's even let me wear her brooch. (pause) I hope he'll notice me this time.

On the screen, she is largely ignored by her father, even though she's on her best behavior. As the argument heats up, the audience picks up gestures indicating that *she* is the focus of their fight.

FATHER (angry): What is SHE doing up? I told you, I never want to see her! Isn't it enough that you didn't get rid of her when you got pregnant!

MOTHER; But-but she's just a little girl! She can't hurt you!

FATHER: Oh, yes she can! I'm a wealthy landowner in this country! If, one day, she were to publicly declare herself to be my child, she would be entitled to inherit part of my fortune! My reputation would be ruined! (pauses) NO! This has gone on long enough! I will give you exactly two days to get rid of that brat, or I will terminate this relationship!

MOTHER (shocked): No, you can't!

FATHER (defiant): I can and I will! And when I go, so goes this house and your allowance! You will have to fend for yourself WITHOUT my money! (spitefully) I wonder, how long would an ex-prostitute with a child survive on the streets?

MOTHER: No! Please, don't!

FATHER (pointing at Desi): Then get rid of HER!

FATHER grabs his coat/jacket and storms out of the house. The slamming door echoes for a second or two, as if giving an ugly finality to the moment.

MOTHER (anguished and sad): Whatever will I do? I'm just his mistress ... his kept woman. I hate that expression: "Kept woman!" That's just a polite way of saying, "whore." (pauses) But that's what I am ... I am a whore.

MOTHER drops into a chair and buries her head in her hands, crying. DESI approaches, trying to get her MOTHER's attention. Finally she does. She takes DESI into her arms and hugs her, but much too hard.

DESI (whimpering in pain): Mommy! Mommy! You're ... hurting me ...

MOTHER is totally oblivious to her daughter's pain, as we fade to black.

ACT ONE, Scene Two: The next night.

Location (on video): Desi's home.

MOTHER is seen cleaning up the house. Her actions are more compulsive than neatness, and she's fussing over every detail. As she cleans, she's talking to herself; the tone of her voice is angry, bitter, upset.

MOTHER (muttering): He'll see what a mistake he's made! Yes, he'll regret what he did! He'll regret it forever! I'll show him! I'll show him! He should have thought of ME first! When he finds us in the morning, he'll know he made the wrong choice. He should've chosen us! He'll want me but he won't be able to have me — never again! And he'll be sorry — oh, yes, he will! He'll be sorry! (smiles)

DESI tries getting close, to ask MOTHER if she's okay, but she's in a world of her own.

Fade out. Fade in to show them both preparing for bed.

DESI: Why are you wearing your favorite dress to bed, mommy?

MOTHER: I just thought I would, that's all.

MOTHER sits down on the bed. She beckons DESI over, and she sits on the bed next to her mother. MOTHER then reaches into a small bag and produces a small unlabeled brown bottle.

MOTHER (sweetly): Desiree, I want you to drink this.

DESI (confused): But I'm not sick, MOTHER. Why must I take medicine?

MOTHER: It's not medicine, dear, it's ... it's ... a gift, from your father. And it's a gift FOR your father. Now take it and drink it all, Desiree.

DESI takes the bottle. She smells it and recoils from the pungent odor.

MOTHER (insistent): Desi! Please don't fight me! You *must* drink this. It's important. This is ... what your father wants ... and ... it's what I want. Don't be afraid, baby. Trust me, I won't leave you. We've always been together, haven't we? We'll do this together, and we'll never be apart. Now take it, Desiree. Drink it ... drink all of it.

DESI is still confused, but she trusts her MOTHER. She sniffs at the lip of the bottle, then touches the liquid to her lips. It is bitter and hot.

MOTHER (impatient): Drink it fast and it won't taste so bad — quickly, child!

DESI tips the bottle to her lips. Although it looks like she is drinking the liquid, she hides the caustic fluid in her cheek. She shudders in reaction to the liquid, then smiles at her MOTHER, knowing that's what she wanted her to do.

MOTHER smiles back with a distant smile, then produces another brown bottle, and quickly downs it. She shudders in reaction to the liquid.

DESI and her MOTHER lay down on the bed facing one another, and cover themselves with the blanket. DESI rolls over to the edge of the bed, then spits the 'medicine' silently over the edge of the bed and onto the floor. Her MOTHER doesn't notice what she's done.

She rolls back over and faces her MOTHER.

DESI: 'Night, mommy. I love you.

MOTHER (voice cracking): I love you, too, baby.

DESI moves closer and cuddles her MOTHER, not seeing the tears in her MOTHER's eyes.

ACT ONE, Scene Three: The next morning.

Location (on video): Desi's home.

Light comes in through the window.

DESI (9-year-old voiceover): I didn't sleep good. I kept having such awful nightmares. I wish I could've slept as good as Mother did. She slept real good; she didn't even turn over.

DESI leans up on one elbow and watches her MOTHER.

After a few minutes, she reaches out and strokes MOTHER's hair, then her cheek. MOTHER doesn't react.

DESI (concerned): Mommy?

MOTHER doesn't move. Her face is pale, her expression is blank.

DESI (more concerned, slightly louder): Mommy? Mommy? It's morning — time to get up! Mommy? Wake up, Mommy!

MOTHER still doesn't move.

DESI (sobbing): OH, NO! MOMMY! MOMMY!

The screen suddenly goes blank.

(transition into song)

Tourniquet

Evanescence

I tried to kill the pain
but only brought more
I lay dying
and I'm pouring crimson regret and betrayal
I'm dying praying bleeding and screaming
am I too lost to be saved
am I too lost?

my God my tourniquet
return to me salvation
my God my tourniquet
return to me salvation

do you remember me
lost for so long
will you be on the other side
or will you forget me
I'm dying praying bleeding and screaming
am I too lost to be saved
am I too lost?

my God my tourniquet
return to me salvation
my God my tourniquet
return to me salvation

my wounds cry for the grave
my soul cries for deliverance
will I be denied Christ
tourniquet
my suicide

(transition into scene)

ACT ONE, Scene Four: immediately following.

Location: Desi's room in the brothel where she works.

DESI sits bolt upright. Her face is filled with horror, her eyes wide.

DESI (screaming out as loud as possible): **MOMMY!**

There is a moment of silence. DESI is breathing heavily, almost hyperventilating. Then slowly she realizes where she is, and her breathing returns to normal. She looks around her room and groans. She's right back in her dark, dismal, hopeless world. She slumps back onto her bed.

She tugs on a chain around her neck, pulling out a brooch hanging from it. It is her mother's brooch. As she clutches the brooch to her breast, she unconsciously strokes it and stares off, as if looking into the distant past of her pain-filled life.

There's a knock at the door. It comes a second time before DESI realizes that there's someone at her door.

DESI (calls): Hang on a second, willya!

She gets up from her bed and starts pulling herself together.

As the audience watches, she pulls a Jekyll-and-Hyde transformation, from the crushed little girl whose mother had killed herself so many years ago, to the confident, professional, self-assured adult. The personal feelings are buried, the shields and defenses surrounding them, the walls protecting her from being hurt.

When she walks to the door, her stride is sensuous, virtually reeking of 'having it all together.' Think 'maneater'; think 'Catwoman'; think Brittany Spears.

She opens the door as if it didn't matter how long the other person was waiting.

DAVID EMMETT is standing there. His hands are together in front of him, and it's obvious that he's nervous about being in this kind of place. He smiles nervously at first seeing DESI.

DESI (overly-friendly): Well, come on in! What's your pleasure? (pauses, observing) You look awkward, mister. This your first time?

DAVID (innocently): Oh I've NEVER been in a place like this.

DESI: Well, don't you worry none, honey. (she takes his hand or arm and starts leading him into the room) Desiree will be gentle. Lotsa young men come to me for the first time. (she closes the door, turns to face him, and slides her hands down her sides, kinda like showing him what she's got to offer; the look in her eyes is 'maneater') You just relax and let ME do all the work!

DAVID (recoils): NO! I'm not here for ... *that!* I've been sent here! I've got a message for a woman named Grace!

DESI (turning off the charm): Oh! Sorry 'bout that! I didn't know you were a messenger boy! I thought you were a paying customer. Besides, you've got the wrong brothel, kid. There's nobody here named Grace. I'm Desiree — Desiree Mataios.

DAVID: Yes. I know. It's you I'm here to see — I'm not mistaken. (slightly embarrassed; pauses) Oh, my ... this IS awkward.

DESI (turning up the defenses): I'll say! Look, mister, let's just get on with it! There ain't no 'Grace' here! NOW IF you're here to deliver a message to ME, then let's have it! Otherwise, if you're here for 'business', then let's get on with it! The clock is ticking, pal; your half hour began the moment you came through that door!

DAVID is silent as his mind races to come up with the words to say. He glances skyward as if looking for divine guidance.

DESI (impatient): Okay, why don't we try a different tack. Who sent you here?

DAVID (blurting): GOD!

DESI (smirking): Are you swearing at me ... or are you some kind of an angel?

DAVID (calmer): Neither, Miss Mataios. I'm just a man ... I'm a builder ... and an artist, a stone carver ... and I've been sent here by God to ... to ask you to marry me. (Relieved that he finally got it out)

DESI looks at DAVID as if he was an escaped mental patient.

DESI (unfazed): Right. Okay, I get it now. Look, mister, I've been proposed to dozens of times. (mockingly) Marry me, Desiree! I love you, Desiree! You're not like any other woman I've ever met, Desiree! (returns to normal voice) Then I take their silver and they take my ... time ... and — *surprise!* — they don't want to marry me anymore. They just see me with disgust. (bitter laugh) One moment I'm the desire of their heart — the next moment I'm no more important to them than a rock! (sarcastically) Thanks for the kind offer, mister, but Desiree won't be marrying anybody today.

DAVID (slightly amused laugh): No, no! Not today! Certainly not. We have to take time. It takes time to fall in love!

DESI (unbelieving): Fall in love? Yeah, right. Time and Love. Well there's the problem, isn't it? If it's love you want ... then your time is about up ... oh, but then you haven't paid have you? Did you pay a gentleman named LeMay downstairs and then he sent you up here? (pauses; looks at him with disbelief; speaks slowly) Just who ARE you?

DAVID: Oh, forgive me! We haven't been introduced! (shakes her hand vigorously) I'm David ... David Emmett! And no, I didn't pay anybody named LeMay. (his tone turns serious) Grace, I'm here to take you away from all of this! I'm not like all those other men. I'm offering you freedom!

DESI (bitter laugh): Freedom? Are you nuts? There ain't no such thing! Nothing's free in this world — and that includes ME! (she walks to the door and opens it) And my name is DESIREE — NOT GRACE!

DAVID: But I'm not here for ... *that*.

DESI (impatient): Look, *Mister*, I don't care what you're here for ... I don't work for free! Got it?

DAVID reacts by reaching into his pockets and pulling out money. He shoves it at DESI and puts it into her hands.

DAVID: There!

DESI (shocked and looking at money): Okay, now we're ... uh ... talking!

DAVID walks over to the bed and sits down on it. He gestures for her to sit next to him. She puts the money away (somewhere) and joins him. She's a little uncomfortable just sitting on a bed, but she doesn't say anything about it. Then DAVID starts talking, but the audience can't make out any details.

Suddenly DAVID freezes in mid-sentence. DESI turns towards the audience, then stands up and walks toward the edge of the stage and (possibly) off the edge. If the stage is raised, she might sit on it as she ponders her situation aloud.

DESI (confiding): This is very confusing. I have absolutely no idea why this guy would waste his time on me. I mean, he talks of a loving and forgiving God, but that doesn't mean anything to me. Yeah, I'll pretend to listen to him, but it's just hot air to me.

He talks about freedom, but his freedom is nothing more than another set of chains. It's just a one-way trip into despair.

And he talks about hope. HAH! I can't afford to hope anymore! Hope's a dead-end street lined with torment. Hope's the enemy! Hope has betrayed me every time! (she has unconsciously drawn out the brooch on the chain; she touches it tenderly, almost to emphasize the point)

And then he talks about love. (sighs) I'll never love again. I mean, face it, everyone who has ever loved me has either left ... or died. (scoffs)

I don't want to feel anymore. Feeling just brings greater pain. I don't want the pain. I just want ... I just want to be numb. It's safe there. It's comfortable there.

I know WHO I am and WHAT I am! And that is enough! (defiantly shouts) I am Desiree Mataios! (voice lowers, tone is sly, with smile) And right now, I'm earning silver.

She walks back onto the stage and takes her place as if nothing had changed. Her expression seems to be attentive, but her eyes are glazed over.

Fade to black.

End of ACT ONE

(open with song)

My Heart Goes Out

Warren Barfield

She sat a table away
Staring into space
In her own little world
And I saw a tear in her eye
Like a window to the mind
Of a frightened little girl
She never said a word
But I know I clearly heard
A cry for help
And I wanted to answer her
I wanted to tell her

Chorus:

My Heart
Goes out to you
You don't even know me
You don't even know
Oh my heart goes out to you
And I don't know what else to do
To reach you now
My heart goes out
But I'm still glued to my chair
She's unaware
There's little time
And though my intentions are good
If I'm mis-understood
The price could be high
I can't fix whatever's wrong
But if I fail to pass along
Someone cares
The price could be greater
This can't wait til' later

Bridge:

For God has loved the world so much
He sent His only son
From Heaven to earth
Well there's a distance love covered
She's just a table over
All she needs is a shoulder

Chorus:

My heart goes out to you
You don't even know me
You don't even know
Oh, my heart goes out
Lord, help me do what I can do
To reach her, to reach her
Oh my heart goes out to you
You don't even know me
You don't even know
Oh, my heart goes out to you
Let me do what I can do to reach you now
My heart goes out
Yeah

(transition into scene)

ACT TWO, Scene One

Location: Desi's room and in front of the stage.

The NARRATOR walks out past the stage, until he's close to the front of the audience. The stage is set up as DESI's room. The NARRATOR is accompanied by a minstrel and possibly a trumpeter or two (the kind of trumpets with banners).

The blowing of the trumpets brings everyone's attention to the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR: Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye! (pauses) Last night, in the first act of our story, we were introduced to Desiree Mataios, a young woman with a tragic past, a hopeless future, and a dark present. (dramatic pause) A "lady of the evening" by trade, she is visited by David Emmett, a local stone cutter. He addresses her as Grace, and explains that God has sent him to her, to marry her. Her heart is hard, and she dismisses his advances. But he persists, and the two develop a relationship, a tentative friendship.

The NARRATOR turns to face the platform, stage right, and the spotlight on him goes out. Simultaneously, a light on the platform illuminates MARC. He is standing reading a letter.

MARC: My dear brother Marc. I know it has been some time since I have written, but I have some wonderful news to share with you! God has directed me to a wife! Grace is charming, delightful, and beautiful, and I am happy when I'm around her. I intend to marry her, although there are some minor issues standing in our way. But when that time comes, I cannot think of anyone I would want more as my best man than my older brother. I know we have had our differences, but we are family, and I'm sure you will love her as I love her. I ask your continued prayers for us, and I will keep you informed. God be with you. David.

MARC looks up from the letter. After a moment, the light illuminating him goes out, and the one illuminating the NARRATOR comes back on, as he faces the audience.

NARRATOR: As I said, it was a TENTATIVE friendship. (pause) However, there is another who stands in the way of David and Desi's relationship — Paul LeMay (pause; his tone is disgusted, like talking about a maggot) her ... "manager", her ... pimp.

LeMAY (yells from offstage): NOW WAIT A MINNIT!

PAUL LeMAY walks from offside over to the NARRATOR. He's dressed very well, almost like a nobleman, but his accent is like someone from the streets of modern New York (more like Brooklyn or the Bronx). He thinks he's such hot stuff, but anybody with half a brain can see that he's pond scum.

LeMAY (addressing NARRATOR): Now you wait a minnit! I resent being called a pimp! Get out of the way; let ME explain who I am!

LeMAY gives the NARRATOR a shove. The NARRATOR gets the idea and walks away deeply insulted, possibly with his nose in the air; the musicians dutifully follow.

LeMAY turns to the audience, smiling like a sleazy used car salesman.

LeMAY (friendly): Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Paul LeMay. I am the proprietor of dis business here. (He gestures in the direction of DESI's room.) Miss Mataios is my business associate ... my most valued business associate, if youse gets my drift. Anyhow, I'm not the one making trouble around here. The one who's making trouble is that Emmett-guy. He's been seeing Desi for awhile now, and I don't like the way he's talking about God and marriage all the time around her. Ain't good for business, ya know what I mean?

On the stage, DESI walks onto the stage (into her room). She might be walking in circles, uneasily.

LEMAY sees her over his shoulder.

LeMAY (to audience): In fact, I think I'm gonna have a little talk with her. 'Scuse me.

He walks onto the stage.

LeMAY: This Emmett character is starting to bother me. If it wasn't for the fact that he pays double for time with you, I'd eighty-six th' bum. What is he to you anyway?

DESI: Nothing, Paul! I keep trying to get rid of him, but he's got this crazy notion that he's going to marry me ... like a hundred other men have! He, however, won't give up!

LeMAY: Do youse want me to have a couple o'my boys ... 'persuade' him to leave you alone?

DESI shakes her head.

DESI: No! I don't want to see him hurt. I just wish he'd leave me alone. (she pauses; she's thinking things over) I gotta admit, Paul, some of the things he's said have me thinking. Maybe there IS something better for me.

LeMAY interrupts sharply.

LeMAY: Hey, hey, hey! Let's not have any of that! Don't let that religious fanatic plant those ideas in your head. You got a place here. You're my best girl, Desi. Anything that joker can give you, I can give you better!

DESI (wavering): I don't know, Paul. Maybe I need to think about it —

LeMAY flares up angrily. He slaps her across the face to shut her up; DESI is sent sprawling to the ground.

LeMAY (angrily): You don't need to think about nuthin'! You do your job and I let you live! You cross me and you'll regret it!

DESI is curled up on the floor, still psychologically reeling from the physical attack. She might be whimpering, almost like a child. LeMAY looks down at her; he doesn't care about her; she's just another piece of meat to him. Finally, after a couple of moments, he helps her to her feet, taking on the role as the comforter.

LeMAY (defiant): You just remember who took you in and gave you a reason to live. You ain't nothin' without me! Don't you forget it, you hear me! You ain't NOTHIN' without me!

DESI (scared and cautious): Okay, okay, Paul ... I'm yours. I'm yours. I'll try ditching him later when he comes over.

LeMAY (indifferent): Yeah, you do that.

(transition into song)

I Am A Rock

Paul Simon

I've built walls - a fortress deep and mighty
That none may penetrate.
I have no need for friendship; friendship causes pain
It's laughter and it's loving I disdain.
I am a rock - I am an island.

Don't talk of love - well, I've heard the word before
It's sleeping in my memory.
I won't disturb the slumber of feelings that have died.
If I'd never loved, I never would have cried.
I am a rock - I am an island.

I have my books and my poetry to protect me.
I am shielded in my armor.
Hiding in my room; safe within my womb.
I touch no-one and no-one touches me.
I am a rock - I am an island.

And the rock feels no pain ...
And an island never cries ...

(transition into scene)

ACT TWO, Scene Two: Later that same day.

Location: The front door of the brothel.

DAVID arrives at the brothel house where DESI lives. We can see that he's not the shy boy we remember

from Act One. He's more confident, with a peace inside because he knows he's doing God's will. He realizes things are rocky, but also knows that God will work things out in the end.

He arrives at the door to the brothel only to be stopped by LeMAY. It's obvious the two men don't like one another. It's also obvious that DAVID is trying to show the love of God, but it's very difficult around LeMAY.

LeMAY (trying to be intimidating): You're not wanted here.

DAVID (without hesitation): I disagree. I'm here to see Grace. She wants me here.

LeMAY: There ain't no "Grace" here. "Desiree" doesn't want to see you. Now get lost!

DAVID (defiantly): No. We'll let "Desiree" be the judge of that.

Neither DAVID nor LeMAY are willing to give an inch. They try to stare one another down.

LeMAY (finally; yells without turning): DESI! Get down here!

DESI comes to the door. She's reluctant, and somewhat afraid of what LeMAY is capable of doing.

LeMAY: The kid says that you want to see him. Tell him, Desi.

DESI (not convincingly): He's right, David. I ... I don't want to see you again.

DAVID can see that she's just saying that because of LeMAY's pressuring. He's not backing down, though. Finally, he makes a desperate move.

DAVID: Let me take you away from here — now, today! I'll ... I'll ... I'll take you to my own house! I have an extra bedroom ... you can stay there. I'll take care of you!

LeMAY (anger starting to build): I take care of her.

DESI (abruptly): Hold on a minute! I won't be a 'kept woman' like my mother was, in a room that you can 'visit' whenever your little heart desires!

DAVID (apologetically): No, no, you misunderstand! The room has a lock on the door! It'll just be YOUR room, and only YOU will have the key to the lock! (David fumbles in a pocket and produces a key that he folds into Desi's hand.)

DESI lights up at this.

DESI: The ONLY key?

LeMAY is starting to get agitated, seeing the direction this conversation is taking, and seeing that he might lose Desi.

DAVID: Yes. The only key. It's yours. No one will enter unless you want them to. And I won't enter at all; not until we marry. Not until you are my wife.

DESI starts stroking the brooch subconsciously as she sees a glimmer of hope in her future.

LeMAY: Desiree's going nowhere but back inside. (he turns and starts in) Desi, COME!

DESI doesn't move.

DAVID (pleading): Grace, please. Come with me now. This life can offer you nothing.

LeMAY (on the other side of DESI, insisting): Desi — c'mon!

DAVID (lovingly pleading): Please.

LeMAY (starting to push the issue): Desi, let's go — now!

DAVID: There is nothing for you here. This life can only lead to death and destruction.

LeMAY is getting angrier moment by moment. Finally he rushes DAVID and punches him (probably on the jaw, something to cause him to fall backwards). DAVID falls backwards, not unconscious. LeMAY is standing over him, hands balled into fists, daring him to get up and make another move.

DESI is shocked. But the shock brings her out of her middle-of-the-road position. She rushes to DAVID, kneeling at his side and holding him.

DESI (concerned): David! Are you all right?

DAVID (rubbing his jaw): Yes, I'm fine. Do you see what I mean?

DESI (nodding): Yes, I do. (turns to LeMAY) Paul, you've made up my mind for me. (finding new strength) I'm going with David! (turns to DAVID, helping him up) Let's go! I don't have anything here!

LeMAY is shocked. He doesn't stop them as they stand and start walking away.

LeMAY (angrily yelling after them): YOU'LL BE BACK! YOU WON'T MAKE IT ON THE OUTSIDE!
YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT!

ACT TWO, Scene Three: some time later.

Location: Desi's room in David's house.

DESI is in her new room. The back part is darkened. There's a cleanliness to it that wasn't in the other room.

DESI addresses the audience.

DESI: It's been a month since I moved in here. It hasn't really been that bad. I mean, I'll be honest, I don't care much for this guy David, but I didn't really care much for Paul either. But I'm safer here than there; Paul's dangerous to be around.

I look at it this way: they're all the same. One man's no different than another, when you get down to it.

I will admit, though, David has been such a dear. He carves all these things for me.

On the down side, however, he keeps preaching to me. Like when I first got here:

The lights at the back of the room come up. DAVID is sitting in a chair, facing DESI. He doesn't move until she speaks.

DESI (turning to DAVID): I'm dirty, David. I don't deserve this kind of treatment.

DAVID (smiles): Of course you don't! I don't deserve this happiness either, Grace!

DESI (bitter laugh): What do you mean? What have YOU ever done? Told a little white lie? (pauses) David, your life has always been perfect! You shouldn't have any regrets! Let me ask you — what's the worst thing you've ever done?

DAVID (without pausing): I've committed murder.

DESI (shocked): You?

DAVID: Yes. A hundred times. When I think about the things those men have done to you, when I think about your father, when I think about LeMay ... well ... let's just say that I've killed that man a hundred times over, each more violently than the last.

DESI (shrugging it off): Well thinking about something isn't the same as doing it.

DAVID: Isn't it? What's the real difference? The same impulse is there, feeding on itself and on me. The desire is the same — wanting something so bad you'd do ANYTHING in order to get it. (DAVID stands) My point is, neither of us deserves this joy. But God gives it to us. The Bible says that every blessing comes down from the Father — God, that is. It's not in payment for good deeds that we do, it's just a gift. (pauses) When you get down to it, it doesn't matter how good we are or how bad we are. It's about how good GOD is!

The back of the stage goes dark, as DESI turns once more to the audience.

DESI: He's very persistent with his beliefs. Sometimes I wonder if that's good or bad. (pauses) He never touches me, you know, and never really wants anything from me. I'm not used to that kind of man. He ... respects me. (She's startled at the use of this word.) Yes. He does! He respects me! (sighs) Even when I'm hard to get along with ...

The lights come up in back. DAVID is standing. His arms are in front of him, pleading.

DAVID (firmly): Grace, you CAN start over! WE can start over. We'll do this together! My love for you isn't a weapon; it's a *lifeline*. Love cleanses and brings peace and hope and safety. Love shouldn't beat you down; it should lift you up. I don't want my love to be a threat to you! I want it to be security for you!

DESI: How can I love? What's done is done! I'm ruined; soiled! I'm poison, David! It's all inside me! It's permanent: carved in stone.

DAVID: (Smiling) Hmm ... sounds like you need a stone cutter. (stands with resolve) Very well, then! We'll dig and chisel it all out, and then we'll bury it!

DESI (bitter chuckle): You'll have to bury ME then.

DAVID (with a wry grin): All right, then! It's a deal! We'll bury *you*.

The lights go out in back. DESI turns back to the audience.

DESI: Did you hear him? He wants to BURY me? (She shrugs & moves on) Shortly after that, he made this for me. (she pulls an object from her pocket) It's a heart. He carved it from a piece of hematite. (smiles) He wanted me to bury it, to symbolically take my black heart of stone and put it deep in the ground where I can leave it. But I just couldn't. I mean, while I have this with me, it's a reminder of what my heart is ... and shouldn't be.

DAVID (off-side): Grace, it's time. Are you ready?

DESI looks in the direction of the voice.

DESI: Yes, David. I'll be right there! (turns back to audience) He's taking me to church today. First time. I'm nervous. But I'm doing it ... for him.

She puts the stone heart back in her pocket and exits through the door.

(transition into song)

Ride Of Your Life

John Gregory

Wishing on a shooting star
But dreams alone will get you far
Can't deny your feelings anymore
The world is waiting right outside your door
What are you waiting for

Come on here's your chance
Don't let it slip right through your hands
Are you ready for the ride of your life
Dreams are alright and go nowhere
Just reach out and pull them in and
Get ready for the ride of your life

In your heart you know what must do
You only got yourself to answer to
Don't let fear of fallen hold you down
Your spirit flying higher above the clouds
You go up there

Come on here's your chance
Don't let it slip right through your hands
Are you ready for the ride of your life
Dreams are alright and go nowhere
Just reach out and pull them in and

Get ready for the ride of your life

You are on your way no looking back
There's no future living in the past
You're free at last yeah
You're free at last

Come on here's your chance
Don't let it slip right through your hands
Are you ready for the ride of your life yea
Dreams are alright and go nowhere
Just reach out and pull them in and
Get ready for the ride of your life
Ride of your life

Come on, come on get ready
Yea, yea, yea
Dreams are alright and go no where
Just reach out and pull them in
Get ready for the ride of your life.

(transition into scene)

ACT TWO, Scene Four: later.
Location, outside David's church.

We see the doors, and the stained glass decorations, but we don't see inside the church. Through the doors we hear the sounds of worship and praise.

Suddenly, LeMAY shows up. He looks at the church and gives off with a shudder. Then he gathers himself up and walks through the doors. There's a long pause, during which the singing continues uninterrupted.

Finally, abruptly, the doors open and LeMAY comes out, with DESI in tow. He is holding onto her by the arm, almost dragging her out. DESI breaks out of his grip.

DESI (slightly angry): Paul! What was THAT all about?

DAVID comes out of the church as LeMAY responds to DESI's question.

LeMAY: You don't belong in there! You belong with me!

DAVID: No she doesn't! Back off, LeMay!

LeMAY (defiantly): Or WHAT, Jesus freak? You'll whack me with your Bible?

DAVID (ignores LeMAY's comment, speaks to DESI): Grace. Let's go back inside.

LeMAY: Let her go, Jesus freak! She's not your 'Grace' — she's my *Desiree*!

DESI has been strangely silent as the two men bicker. When she speaks, it's soft, deflated.

DESI: He's right.

DAVID: Good. Let's go back inside, Grace.

DESI (to DAVID): No, David. Paul is right.

DAVID (shocked): What?

DESI: I saw the looks on the faces of the people in your church. They knew who I am and what I am. And ... and they're right. I didn't want to admit it, but ... it's true. I am Desiree. I am a prostitute. Why can't you understand — this is what I have always been, and always will be?

DAVID: Why do you choose to allow your past to define who you are?

DESI's words are like a brick wall being constructed around her. She can hide behind them. Her attitude reflects back to "*I am a rock, I am an island / and a rock feels no pain, and an island never cries ...*"

DESI: What happens TO me becomes a part OF me. A person just takes in what happens to them. That's just how it is. It's unavoidable. What happens is what I am. It's a foul stench that I can't wash off of me ... because it IS me! I AM a prostitute. That IS who I am, David.

DAVID: NO! That's not true. That is what you DID. What you DO does not define who you ARE!

DESI is now standing taller, more like her former self, filled with false self-confidence.

DESI: Well, those are nice words, but I have lived an entire life that says you're wrong ... and the whole world agrees with me. Even the little boys of this village know the truth about me. They call me what I am: a slut and a whore. (she looks at DAVID; her expression begs him to 'give it up') When will you understand, David? I am a prostitute and that's what I'm meant to be.

DAVID (boldly): Grace, that's a lie!

DESI (resignedly): No it isn't. It isn't. Changing my name does not change my nature. David, my name is NOT Grace, it's *Desiree*: My name is *desire*! (turns to LeMAY) Paul, let's go.

LeMAY laughs at DAVID, and puts an arm around DESI's waist. She doesn't resist his touch, and the two of them walk away together while the worship and praise continues behind them.

As DAVID stands there, he explodes into a rage. He can roar with anger, shake his fists at the heavens, but he doesn't move from that spot.

(transition into song)

Jealous Kind

Jars of Clay

I built another temple to a stranger
I gave away my heart to the rushing wind
I set my course to run right into danger

I sought the company of fools instead of friends

Chorus:

You know I've been unfaithful
With lovers in lines
While you're turning over tables
With the rage of a jealous kind
I chose the gallows to the aisle
Thought that love would never find
Hanging ropes will never keep you
And your love of a jealous kind
Love of a jealous kind

Tryin' to jump away from rot that keeps on spreading
I find solace in the shift of the sinking sand
I'd rather feel the pain all too familiar
Than be broken by a lover I don't understand
'Cause I don't understand

Chorus

Love of a jealous kind, yeah
Love of a jealous kind
Love of a jealous kind

One hundred other lovers, more, one hundred other altars
If I should slow my pace and finally subject me to grace
And love that shames the wise
Betrays the heart's deceit and lies
Breaks the back of foolish pride

Chorus

Love of a jealous kind
Love of a jealous kind
Love of a jealous kind

(transition back into scene)

DAVID is still standing there. The look on his face is intense. His hands are balled up tightly into fists, and his body is visibly shaking as he wrestles with his rage. He fights the urge to run after Grace and to beat up LeMay.

Suddenly, determined, his fists pop open as the rage is surrendered. He takes a deep breath and drops to his knees in prayer, praying something like this:

DAVID (emotionally): Lord, you brought me to this place. You promised me that she would be my wife. You never promised me that it would be easy, though. She has chosen the familiar pain and despair over what she does not understand — your mercy and hope. Please forgive her for walking away from me, and from you. Work on her, change her heart, make her into the Grace we know her to be. (etc) Give me the

strength to go after her, to bring her back, to show your love in ways she can understand.

Lord, isn't this where she belongs? Isn't that what you have told me? And isn't that what you have been telling her? God, this is her HOME! This is her home ... (He continues to repeat the phrase)

(David's voice trails off as the music begins.)

Fade to black.

(transition into song)

When You Call

Detour 180

When are you coming home?
I knew you'd be a while
But aren't you sick of eating Loneliness?
Thought that you might like to remember
Thought you'd like to know

That when you call
I'll be waiting
When you return
I'll run to you

Counting the days away
I call out to your face, but in an empty place I find myself
Thought that you might like to remember
Thought you'd like to know

(transition into scene)

ACT TWO, Scene Five: that night.

Location, outside the brothel.

DAVID approaches the brothel. He is determined to get DESI back. However, there are two linebacker-types with swords standing at the door to the brothel. As he tries passing between them, they draw their swords and cross them before the door, making it real clear that he is not to enter.

DAVID (defiantly, through clenched teeth): Let me in there!

GUARD: No, sir. We have orders not to let you pass.

DAVID looks at the two men. They're not his enemy; they're only following orders. Then, without a sound, he turns and walks the other way.

ACT TWO, Scene Six: a few minutes later.

Location, DESI's room.

The room is dark. There may be a single candle lit, producing strange shadows against the walls. DESI is sitting on the bed. She is wearing a hooded cloak. The hood is over her head, and it's not even certain that it's her at first. She's holding the stone heart DAVID made for her.

There is a scraping sound coming from the window. DESI looks around, not certain where the sound is coming from. She returns to the object.

The scraping sound comes again, and this time she places it as coming from the window.

DAVID (softly): Desi!

DESI (softly): Who is it?

DAVID (softly): Let me in, Desi!

DESI opens the window. As she helps the person in, she realizes it is DAVID.

DESI: David! What are you doing?

DAVID: I had to see you. (he notices the hood for the first time) Why are you wearing that hood?

DESI turns away quickly. DAVID cautiously comes up from behind and gently puts his hands on her shoulders, turning her around. She doesn't fight it. He directs her so that she faces the light, then carefully draws back the hood from her head.

DAVID gasps. DESI's face has been badly beaten. She doesn't make eye contact, but looks to the ground as if defeated.

DAVID (whispers): Who ... who did this?

DESI backs up a couple of steps, quickly turning and covering her head. Her head is bowed, and she is slightly slumped over. DAVID comes up from behind and puts his hands on her back; she flinches in pain, making it known that her face wasn't the only thing that was beaten.

DAVID (intense concern): **Who did this?** (anger) Was it ... LeMay?

DESI is silent.

DAVID's breathing speeds up as the anger swells up inside of him. His fists ball up and he shakes with internal wrestling. Then his hands open with almost explosive force, and he lets go of the anger. His breathing returns to normal.

He approaches DESI (who isn't aware of what he just went through), and he places gentle hands on her shoulders.

DAVID (softly): C'mon ... let's sit on the bed. It's okay.

DESI goes along with his guidance, and they sit with a little distance between them, as they had done before in this room.

DAVID: Please, tell me ... what happened?

DESI: I came back to him. I did everything he asked me to. I didn't try to make him angry ... really, I didn't. I don't know why he started hitting me ... I couldn't fight back!

DAVID: You know we've got to get out of here. Next time he'll kill you.

DESI: It doesn't matter. Nobody wants me anymore.

DAVID: Not true. Not true. I want you. I always have.

DESI: How can you? I'm not beautiful anymore. I'm *ugly*.

DAVID (shrugs): What difference does that make? It's not what's on the outside that matters, anyway; it's what's on the inside.

DESI: That's even worse. I'm poison. I'm garbage. I'm filthy. (she begins to weep)

(transition into song)

Never Been Unloved

Michael W. Smith

I have been unfaithful
I have been unworthy
I have been unrighteous
And I have been unmerciful

I have been unreachable
I have been unteachable
I have been unwilling
And I have been undesirable

Chorus:

Sometimes, I have been unwise
I've been undone by what I'm unsure of
But because of you, and all that you went through
I know that I have never been unloved

I have been unbroken
I have been unmended
I have been uneasy
And I've been unapproachable

I've been unemotional
I've been unexceptional
I've been undecided
And I have been unqualified

Chorus:

Unaware, I have been unfair
I've been unfit for blessings from above
But even I can see the sacrifice you made for me
To show that I have never been unloved

(transition back to scene)

DAVID: That may be what you *used* to be, but it's not what you CAN be. You can be more beautiful on the inside than on the outside.

DESI (vaguely at first): I ... I remember. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" But that's not me. I've been broken down, crushed, confused, lost in despair, persecuted, abandoned, struck down ... destroyed.

DAVID: *Marvelous!*

DESI (surprised and shocked): What?

DAVID (with a slight chuckle): The apostle Paul said the same things in Second Corinthians chapter four, verses 8 through 10. "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." He was where you were, but he didn't let it finish him off. (he smiles at her) You don't have to be a beautiful maiden to impress me. I loved you right from the start ... even before I saw you.

DESI: That doesn't make sense.

DAVID (patiently): No, it doesn't. Maybe it's not supposed to. Maybe you just have to believe me when I say that I love you, and leave it at that.

DESI (exasperated): How can you love me?

DAVID: The only reason why I CAN love you is that God has put HIS love inside of me. HIS love, not mine. My love is selfish ... always has been, always will be.

DESI: I can't understand it.

DAVID: Okay. Let's try it this way. Once upon a time there was a man who was idolized by millions. When he came into town, people lined the roads with their coats to show their devotion. Spontaneous parades accompanied him wherever he went. Then, for no reason whatsoever, everything changed. He was falsely accused of a crime. And the people turned on him like wild dogs. They wanted him dead. And they finally got what they wanted. He was slowly tortured to death. And he died. And the strangest thing was that — even as he was being tortured — he didn't have a single bad word for those people. In fact, he prayed that they would be forgiven for what they were doing.

DESI: Oh, my! Who was he?

DAVID (simply): Jesus! It's Jesus Christ. On the cross he prayed, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they're doing!"

DESI (sighing): I couldn't do that. David, I know you love Jesus ... and I want to love Him also ... but I can't! I can't forgive; I can't forget.

(transition into song)

A Faith like That

Jonah 33

I have read about the days of old
About the men who followed You
And how they saw the supernatural
And became the chosen few
So I come before You now
Tearing off my earthly crowns
For this one thing I have found

CHORUS:

I want a faith like that
To see the dead rise or to see You pass by, oh, I
I want a faith like that
Whatever the cost, I'll suffer the loss, oh, I
I want a faith like that

I'm not looking for a miracle
Signs and wonders or things thereof
I caught a glimpse of what You want for me
And what I have is not enough
I read the story one more time
Of those who gave to You their lives
With no fear or compromise
(CHORUS)

I want a faith that can move any mountain
And send them to the seas
I want a faith that can break every stronghold
That keeps You, that keeps from me
And I want a faith like that
To see the dead rise or to see You pass by, oh, I
(CHORUS)

I want a faith like that
A faith like that

(transition back into scene)

DAVID: I don't know if I could either, to be honest with you. But HE did. It's his love that can love you when you don't think you can be loved. And it's his love that wants you even when you're waist-deep in the

middle of the dungheap.

DESI (head low, ashamed; voice almost a whisper): Me?

DAVID: God has seen past the hard shell you've put around yourself, to the hurting little girl inside. He has shown me this. And I want to hold that hurting little girl, and tell her it's going to be okay, and never let her go. That's the love I have for you ... and that's why I call you Grace.

DESI slowly brings a hand out of her cloak. In her hand is her mother's brooch. She looks at it for several seconds.

DESI: I have always been afraid to hope. I hoped once for a family; I ended up with a father that rejected me, and a mother that tried to kill me along with herself. I hoped for a happy ending; I got ... Paul. I hoped for freedom; I got chains. There's times I wonder if there's even such a thing as freedom; I seem to trade one set of chains for another, one prison for another. I don't want to hope. Hope exposes me to pain, and I ... don't ... want ... the pain.

DAVID: Grace.

DESI: What?

DAVID: Grace: the answer. Grace is what God gives us even though we don't deserve it. God gave you grace when he brought me to you. It's a conspiracy. God's conspiring to give you grace when you don't want it, and love you whether you like it or not. All the while, He will never force His love and grace on you!

DESI: Like you have never forced yourself upon me, David? (he nods, she pauses) When you were at the window, you called me Desi. Why didn't you call me Grace?

DAVID (grinning): Frankly, I didn't think you'd come to the window if I called you Grace. (pauses, looks around) I've got to get you out of here, get you to safety.

The door suddenly bursts open. It would be better if it was kicked off of its hinges. LeMAY and one of the guards step into the room.

LeMAY (defiantly): The only place YOU'RE going is into a six-foot hole!

LeMAY draws his sword. He waves it expertly.

DAVID: You would strike me down without giving me a chance to defend myself? Is that fair?

LeMAY: Now why in the world would I want this to be fair? (he laughs) But since I'm an expert with the sword, and you're not ... let's make it interesting.

LeMAY gestures to the guard, who turns his sword over to DAVID. DESI backs up fearfully. DAVID takes the sword. It's heavy, and he waves it awkwardly.

LeMAY (through gritted teeth): Now you die, Jesus freak!

LeMAY strikes first, tapping DAVID in the leg and dropping him to one knee. DAVID puts the sword up to defend himself, while fear is mirrored in his face. The two men exchange sword blows. DAVID doesn't

make contact, and is barely able to defend himself. Things continue for several tense seconds. LeMAY toys with DAVID, nicking him here and cutting him there, all flesh wounds.

LeMAY: You haven't a chance, Jesus freak! And that little whore of yours is next!

That does it.

DAVID gets his second wind — and then some. His eyes flare, his teeth clench, and all the flesh wounds don't matter anymore. He takes LeMAY totally by surprise, wielding his sword like a butter knife, hacking unmercifully at LeMAY's sword. I want this to look like David suddenly became Conan the Barbarian, and the little sword became a battleaxe. I want David to strike over and over and over and over, with LeMAY unable to do anything but hold his own sword up to defend himself. LeMAY backs up, and up, and finally DAVID gets in a blow that drops him. (I'll leave that up to the actual swordsmen.)

LeMAY lays on the ground, unconscious and bleeding, or groaning. Either way, he's been defeated.

DESI: Is he ...?

DAVID: Dead? No he's not dead. (speaking in LeMay's direction) But he'd be wise to continue to play dead! (Turning again to Desi) But ... speaking of death ...

DESI: Yes, Mr. Emmett. I believe you have a commitment to keep! You have promised to bury me!

DAVID: So I have. I will do the burial ... but someone else will need to take care of raising you from the dead.

The GUARD looks at the scene with mouth open. DAVID extends the sword to him as if to say, 'Do you want to be next?'

DAVID (voice is low, cold): You will let us pass.

The GUARD moves aside, his arms wide and his hands open. He offers a little bow of surrender. There is respect in his eyes.

DAVID reaches a hand to DESI. She reaches out and takes it. Then they rush out the door ... and to freedom.

Fade to black.

ACT TWO, Scene Seven: later.

Location, the river.

(In the final production, this scene was filmed earlier, then projected on the overhead with the song in the background.)

Here's where we show DESI's baptism. I'll leave it up to you to put in the right words. When she rises from the waters, she's so thrilled. She hugs DAVID.

(transition into song)

Down to the River to Pray

Alison Krauss

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

O sisters let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
O sisters let's go down,
Down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

O brothers let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
Come on brothers let's go down,
Down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

O fathers let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
O fathers let's go down,
Down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

O mothers let's go down,
Let's go down, don't you want to go down,
Come on mothers let's go down,
Down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

O sinners let's go down,

Let's go down, come on down,
O sinners let's go down,
Down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

Fade to black.

End of ACT TWO

ACT THREE, Scene One

Location: A chapel of sorts, where a wedding is to take place.

In the background, there is silent activity, as preparations are being made for a wedding (streamers hung, flowers placed, chairs arranged, etc.).

The NARRATOR (with trumpeters and lyre-player) stands before the stage.

The trumpets are blown for attention.

NARRATOR: Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye! (pauses) In the first two acts of our story, we are introduced to the main characters. Desiree Mataios, a young woman with a tragic past who gave in to a life of prostitution until David Emmett entered into her life. David, led by God to free her from her life of hopelessness, drew her away from her pimp, Paul LeMay. Time has now passed. Desiree has finally, after accepting David's Savior as her own, accepted her new name of Grace, and her love for David grows beyond her own defenses. Finally, Grace accepts his offer of marriage.

The NARRATOR smiles, bows, and walks away.

A moment later, MARC starts moving through the audience from the back towards the stage. He is dressed in finery, dressed to attend a wedding, and his excitement should flow over the audience.

MARC (as he winds through the audience): Excuse me! Excuse me! Pardon me! Brother of the groom coming through! Brother of the groom! Hi, howaya, I'm Marc Emmett — brother of the groom!

He continues towards the front, occasionally glancing towards the stage where DESI is directing preparations. There are a few girls attending her, and one of them brings the wedding dress to her. She holds it before her, and the others admire it. At this point, MARC spots her, and makes the connection.

MARC stops cold, and his excitement turns instantly to shock. He turns to somebody in the audience; this can be a plant if we don't think we can get the right answer from a random contact.

MARC (anxiously pointing): That woman up there. The one with the dress. Is that the bride?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

MARC: Oh, my! NO! It can't be! (he squints to see her clearer; his tone is devastated as he talks to himself) It IS. It's ... Desiree. She hasn't changed since we were together. But it can't be possible! She's a whore ... she can't be marrying David, can she? (determined) I can't let this happen. I've got to stop him from marrying a whore.

MARC moves cautiously around the stage so he can't be seen by DESI, and makes his way to where DAVID is.

DAVID tries giving him a hug in greeting, but he's pulled away by MARC.

DAVID: Marc, I'm so glad to see you made it! (sees the look on MARC's face) Marc, what is it? You look troubled.

MARC: I am troubled. How much do you know about the woman you're marrying?

DAVID (not fazed): I know quite a bit about her. Are you worried about anything in particular?

MARC (looking him in the eye): That woman is a prostitute.

DAVID (unfazed, smiling): Correction — was a prostitute. She isn't one anymore.

MARC: She's not who you think she is. She's not WHAT you think she is! Her name isn't even Grace. It's *Desiree*. David, if you knew what I know ...

DAVID: Marc, HOW do you know what you know? (in shame, Marc turns away) You see her with your eyes only, but I see her with my heart. I KNOW her, and her name IS Grace, and she is about to be my wife. She's SUPPOSED to be my wife! You just don't understand, Marc. You can't understand.

MARC: Oh, I understand alright! I understand that you're a fool and you are making the biggest mistake of your life! Now you're asking me to stand here and let you do this? I can't, David. You are my brother and I cannot let you go through with this. I love you too much.

DAVID: I love you too, brother, but I do not need your permission or your approval. (gentle defiance) I AM marrying this woman.

MARC: David, she has you wrapped around her little finger. You are blind to her manipulation. She's an actress, playing a part — like she's done every night of her pathetic existence — and you are just a means to an end. She's conspiring against you, to take you for all she can.

DAVID: A 'Grace conspiracy'? (smiles) If there IS a conspiracy around here, brother, then it is God conspiring against Satan on our behalf. Marc, it's been so long since you had any real relationship with God, so I don't think you can really hear what I am about to say, but I am doing this out of OBEDIENCE.

MARC (arrogantly): I go to church! I pray! And I know what the Bible says about adulterers and fornicators!

DAVID: You GO to church, but you never feel His presence! You PRAY, but you never commune with the Father! And whatever you know about God's WORD is not backed up by knowing God. Marc, I am talking about RELATIONSHIP and you are talking about RELIGION.

MARC: I can't be a part of this. She's tricked you into this marriage. She's deceived you, David. Can't you see it? She doesn't love you; she CAN'T. You are just the cart to carry her out of her hell-hole. Once she's free, she will drop you like so much garbage.

DAVID: I am sorry you cannot be a part of my wedding day. I have always imagined you at my side at this moment. You're my brother and I want you here. And I know Grace —

MARC: *Desiree!* Her name is Desiree! (he says it slowly "dez-er-ay" for emphasis)

DAVID: I know GRACE does not truly love me ... yet. But she will. She will, Marc. You are right about her love and you are right about her past, but don't you think "Hell" has had her long enough? Can't you be excited that God in His mercy, wants desperately to redeem her?

MARC: She doesn't deserve you, David. And she doesn't deserve redemption. I can't be a part of this.

DAVID (pleading): Marc, no! We're here to celebrate, not to mourn.

MARC (starting to turn away): I'm sorry, David, but I can't celebrate. You're making a mistake in thinking that this ... *whore* ... can EVER turn over a new leaf.

DAVID (sighs): I'm sorry, Marc. I truly am. I wish you could rejoice with me. But this wedding is going to go off as planned, with ... or without ... you.

MARC: I'm sorry, too. I wish you could see just how blind you are to what she is. And I will pray that your eyes are opened. Goodbye.

And, without another word of farewell, MARC walks away from DAVID, off-stage. DAVID watches after him, opening his mouth a couple of times to say something, but unable to. Finally, with a sad face, he turns his back on his brother and heads back to the stage. He walks up to DESI, who might greet him with a busy hug.

DESI: You look downcast. Is there something wrong?

DAVID: No, everything's fine. I ... just found out that my brother Marc is unable to be here today.

DESI (concerned): Oh! I'm so sorry! Is everything all right? Is he ill?

DAVID: I don't know. (turns towards the preparation) Is everything coming along well?

DESI: Yes! It will be a beautiful wedding!

Fade to black.

ACT THREE Scene Two: Some months later.

Location: Outside of DAVID and DESI's home.

(Suggestions on set: Split the stage down the middle. On the left is the outside of the house, on the right the inside. Bushes and other foliage indicate the outside. This can also work for the outside of the brothel /

inside of the brothel.)

Time has passed. DAVID and DESI/GRACE have settled into their home. It's evening, and somebody's creeping around outside. It's dark, and might be interesting to have the person dressed like LeMAY (let the audience wonder). But then a light comes through the window and illuminates the prowler ... identifying him as MARC.

As he watches them, he might be conversing with the audience, voicing his thoughts aloud.

MARC (to audience): Can you believe it! Three months later, and he's still married to that whore! It makes me want to vomit! How long can she keep pretending to be changed! I've been watching them all this time, just waiting for her to trip up. What an act! But I'll not give up until I prove to David that she has not changed her ways. It's not as if I like lurking in these bushes. (acts very noble) I love my brother, and I'm doing it for him. He's so blind to what she's doing! And as the older brother, it's my responsibility to correct this gross mistake and set him right!

Inside, DAVID and DESI are arguing. MARC continues watching with interest.

DESI (agonizing): It's been confirmed OVER and OVER again: I don't fit! I don't belong in this village! I don't belong in this world, and I certainly don't belong with your church people!

DAVID (after a long pause): Look, if Ruth and Rahab and Bathsheba and Mary belonged, I think there might be a place for you. I think there's hope for you, Grace!

DESI: Hope? (She clasps at the brooch around her neck.) I'm too afraid to hope, David. Hope has betrayed me my whole life. And ... who are those women? I didn't meet a single one of them women today.

DAVID: No, probably not. They aren't women at the church, they're women in the Bible. They are important people in the Bible! And listen to this, Grace: Rahab was a prostitute. Ruth slept all night at the feet of a man that she wasn't married to, and Bathsheba was a married woman who had an affair with a married man. When she got pregnant, her lover later had her husband murdered. And Mary felt the humiliation of being unmarried and pregnant ... by someone other than her husband.

DESI (surprised): Those kind of people are in your Bible? Lowlifes? Losers?

DAVID: Not only are they in the Scriptures ... those are all women in the ancestry of Jesus!

DESI (suddenly exasperated): I don't understand it! I just don't understand it!

DAVID (after a long pause; holds his hands up): Tell you what, Grace. I've got to get some things in the village. This will give you some time to think, okay? (smiles, grabs his jacket and heads for the door) I'll be back in a couple of hours. I love you.

DESI (half-heartedly): I love you, too.

DAVID goes through the door and off-stage. MARC continues to watch, but moves aside in order not to be seen. DESI paces a little in the room; it's obvious that she's troubled. She finally settles into a rocking chair, slowly rocking back and forth.

MARC (to audience): AHA! Here's my chance!

MARC moves out of sight. A few moments later, there is a light tapping at the door. DESI quickly answers it.

DESI: Who is it?

MARC: It's Marc Emmett, David's brother. Can I come in?

DESI (surprised): Marc! (she throws open the door) Oh, please come in!

MARC comes in. DESI is excited.

DESI (closing the door): David will be so glad to — oh, no!

MARC (innocently): What is it?

DESI (apologetically): David just went into town! He'll be a couple of hours. Would you like to wait here for him — I'm sure he'll be thrilled to see you! Please, have a seat!

MARC has a seat in one of the chairs. DESI sits in the rocking chair. They say nothing for a few seconds.

MARC's tone is hypocritical and subtly sarcastic, while appearing concerned on the outside.

MARC: Yes. I apologize for not being able to be at your wedding. It was ... unavoidable.

Meanwhile, DESI looks strangely at MARC.

DESI: You look familiar. Have we met before?

MARC: As a matter of fact, we have. (pauses) It was some time ago, and you went by the name of ... Desiree.

DESI's eyes grow wide as she recognizes MARC as a former customer.

DESI (shocked): Oh, my! And you are David's brother?

MARC (nodding): Yes. Oh, please don't give it a second thought. I recognized you, and wanted you know that it doesn't matter at all to me. I just was ... making conversation. (awkward pause) You appear to be troubled. It's not because of me, I hope? Aren't you a Christian?

DESI (brightens a bit): Yes.

MARC: So am I. Let me help you through this, Grace. Grace ... that's your name now?

DESI: Yes. I'm still finding it difficult to get used to, although I'm getting better. At first I resisted the change, but things have been easier as time goes by.

MARC: And have there been changes?

DESI (smiles): Oh, yes! I see the changes now. I see that 'grace' is not only my new name, but also my

spiritual condition. David is so wonderful. He's been patient with me in my growth. (pauses) But there is something that does trouble me.

MARC: Please, speak. (smiles) Remember, I'm family.

DESI: Yes. (pause) Well, I know so much has been done for me, and David loves me more than any man could ever ... spiritually. But I feel ... unworthy ... of all this love. I'm not sure what to do. I want to be the best wife ever ... but ... I'm damaged goods.

MARC: That is a dilemma. Does David know about this? Does he know that your feeling ... torn?

DESI: No! And, please, don't tell him!

MARC: I promise. It'll be between just the two of us. (pause) I have a solution. It may sound strange, but ... leave him.

DESI (surprised): Leave David?

MARC: Oh, I'm not talking about leaving him for good, mind you, but just until you resolve this issue within yourself. You could spend the time fasting and praying. Maybe you could even develop your own ministry apart from David; I'm sure you must have special gifts ... er, uh ... that is, spiritual gifts.

DESI: Are you sure that's the right thing to do?

MARC: Yes, of course it is. You must be true to yourself, isn't that right? You can't build a healthy marriage being double-minded.

DESI (dubious): Yes.

MARC: And if you were to continue in this ... deception ... it would eventually come out, true?

DESI: Yes, I suppose it would.

MARC: Then leaving David is the most sensible thing to do. It's the best thing for him, after all. If you really love him, you'll leave him. Then, when you return, you'll be a much better person, and a better wife to David.

DESI: Yes, I think you're right. I will do it.

MARC: I'm sure you'll see that this will solve all our problems. Anyhow, I must go. (stands) Thank you for allowing me to have this time to visit with you. And, just to let you know, I will be praying for you.

DESI (urgently): You can't leave yet! David will want to see you!

MARC (patiently): Grace, he and I will have plenty of time to talk. Right now you two just need to concentrate solely on this marriage.

DESI and MARC walk to the door. To offer him a hug might be too much for the time frame, but it would be appropriate for a sister-in-law to her brother-in-law (especially after he has 'helped' her so much).

DESI: Thank you again for your time, and your advice.

MARC: It was my ... pleasure, Grace. Be well.

MARC leaves the house. DESI locks the door, then returns to the rocking chair.

DESI (praying): Jesus, I know I'm not true to you. I also know I'm not worthy of David's love, or of yours. But Marc is right, I need some time to be alone, to get myself right. But I know I can't do that alone. Make me into the Grace that David wants so badly. (etc) And please be with David while I'm gone. Amen.

Fade to black.

ACT THREE, Scene Three: Several days later.

Location: David's house.

DAVID is in the living room, as we left it. But he is pacing nervously. Suddenly there is a knock at the door. Answering it, it is his brother MARC.

MARC (out of breath): I got here as fast as I could. What is it?

DAVID: It's Grace. She's left.

MARC (feigning surprise): No! When?

DAVID: Sometime in the middle of the night. (holds up a piece of paper) When I woke up this morning, this note was on her pillow. (reads the note) Dearest David. I have left you in order to find myself. While still here, I live a lie. Please forgive me. I love you. (looks up from the note; anxious) She wants to "find herself?" What does that mean? Oh, Marc, why would she do such a thing?

MARC (feigning sympathy): I don't know. (sits down) And she seemed to be doing so well. I hate to say it, though, but I did try to warn you.

DAVID (angrily): Shut up! Shut up! I don't want any of your sanctimonious garbage! I love Grace ... it seems like I always have. And I still think there is hope for her yet.

MARC: You're not going to chase after her again, are you?

DAVID stops. He stares ahead for several seconds. Then he sits down in a nearby chair. He looks like he has just aged half a lifetime. His body is slightly bent over, as if carrying a huge weight. And he lowers his head as if in resignation.

DAVID (weakly): No. If this is her home, and if she loves me, then she HAS to come back on her own. I'll wait for her here. All ... I can do for her now ... is pray and wait.

His head slumps, in exhaustion rather than in prayer.

Hold this scene for a few seconds, then fade to black.

(transition into song)

Run

Kutless

Why do you run why do you hide oh don't you know I
just, just want to be with you, to be with you
Hey, why do you run why do you hide oh don't you know
I just, just want to be with you, to be with you...

Whatever happened to the love, the love you had for me
When you first came to me
Don't you know that I died, died so I could be with
you forever.
And I'm waiting for you
And I'm waiting for you

Why do you run why do you hide oh don't you know I
just, just want to be with you, to be with you
Hey, why do you run why do you hid oh don't you know
I just, just want to be with you, to be with you...

Find a place of solitude, and I'll speak to you
As you pray to me
Don't you know I'm waiting here, waiting for you to
read and hear my words
I'm waiting here missing the time the times we shared
oh, please come to me

So, why do you run why do you hide oh don't you know I
just, just want to be with you, to be with you
Hey, why do you run why do you hide oh don't you know
I just, just want to be with you, to be with you...

(transition into scene)

ACT THREE, Scene Four: Several weeks later.

Location: In front of the brothel.

The 'street' in front of the brothel is filled with boxes and other debris, showing that it is a very cluttered neighborhood.

MARC EMMETT is walking through this street. He moves around the boxes. He moves low, as if he's afraid of someone in the building ahead seeing him. His attention is on one particular place ahead of him; one particular building.

At some point, he stops and addresses the audience.

MARC: I am very concerned about my brother David. It has been several weeks since that whore Desiree left him. As I suspected, she has not returned, nor have we heard anything from her.

You would think that my brother would put this chapter of his life behind him and move on, but no. I am sorry to say that he is so despondent that I truly fear he may die of grief.

He rarely eats or bathes, and I have not seen him come out of his house in many days. It concerns me. For a while I wondered if he had been putting on a false face of grief with which to gain the sympathy from the neighbors, or mislead me. But I watched him from a distance; at night I saw him through the windows, where he cannot see me, and I know that this is not an act. He is truly grieving, as if for the dead.

And it's all because of that ... woman.

I wish she were dead. Then my brother could put this behind him and move on. But no. She still lives.

So now it's up to me. The Good Book says that a dog returns to its vomit. Well, I finally decided to prove to my brother that the whore has returned to her whoredom.

That's why I'm here, in this seedy neighborhood. To find her.

(self-righteously) Of course, I hate being here. If it weren't for my brother, I wouldn't get within ten miles of this place. It's full of sinners.

AHA! (looks ahead, points) THAT is where she is! I should've known! THAT is where she did business! Of course ... it was so obvious, I should've come here from the start!

(takes a couple of steps closer to the building; tone is forceful, defiant) Once I have my proof, once I have seen her with my own eyes, I will go to my brother and bring him here! One look at her on her old stomping grounds, and it will shock him out of his depression.

(sighs) Then, God willing, he can put that ugly chapter behind him and move on in his life.

Of course, he'll have to admit that I was right about her from the beginning. He will have to admit that he had made a great mistake. He fell prey to her conspiring.

Yes. It was a conspiracy, all right ... a 'grace' conspiracy. She conspired against my brother to have him believe that she could ever be a 'Grace' when she's nothing more than a 'Desiree'.

Well, we'll soon change that.

MARC stands tall and finishes walking across to the front of the brothel.

Someone is standing at the door.

GUARD (same one as before): Can I help you?

MARC: I'm here to see ... Grace. Or Desiree. Is she in?

GUARD: Yes. (turns) Follow me.

The two of them enter the building.

ACT THREE, Scene Five: minutes later.

Location: Inside the building, in Desi's old room.

Okay, it's the same room she had before. But this time it looks a whole lot different. It would be nice if it were painted, but that's too much to ask. Let's put some signs on the wall, things having to do with Jesus. The room is no longer dark, but a brighter place. Flowers, colors, scents. Everything suggests that this is a totally different place than it used to be. The previous furnishings are there, but are different; there are a couple of chairs. A small table. A vase with some flowers. There are books around; mostly Bibles, but others could be there.

DESI is sitting at the table, her back to the audience. Her head is bowed. It could mean that she is depressed, down, despondent, sad. Or it could mean what it is, that she is sitting there reading her Bible.

GUARD: Grace, someone to see you!

DESI's head raises. Now we see that she's been reading. She closes the book.

MARC walks into the room.

DESI (smiles): Marc!

MARC is standing there, stunned. He's taking in all the things around him, the changes to the room, the fact that it doesn't look like he was expecting it to look. Then he looks at DESI, and gives her the same once-over. She doesn't look like a backslidden sinner would; she looks very nice, and she smiles at him. She may even greet him with a hug.

DESI (cheerful): How good to see you! How did you find me?

MARC (confused): Uh, I ... I tracked you down.

DESI (concerned): Marc, you look pale. Please, come, have a seat. Can I get you some water?

MARC sits at the table. He sees the well-used Bible and holds it up. He's still speechless as she returns with a glass of water. She sits in the other chair at the table.

DESI: What brings you here, Marc?

Before MARC can reply, another woman comes into the room.

DIEDRA (anxiously): Grace, Grace! We've got a problem in the kitchen. The mice got to the grain again, and have eaten half of it ... and nobody wants to touch the rest. What do we do?

DESI (patiently): Calm down, Diedra! Transfer the rest of the grain from the bag to a clay jar, one with a good lid. Keep the jar on a higher shelf. Then go to William's bakery and let him know that we are in need of some bread for tonight's meal. Let him know we'll exchange four quilts for whatever grain he can help us with. We'll bring it up at tonight's meeting and see who will be willing to make the quilts. Now, go!

DIEDRA (sighs): Thank you, Grace. God bless you! (speeds out the door)

DESI (to MARC): I'm so sorry I had to trouble you with business. Sometimes I wonder what they'd do if I wasn't around.

MARC (obviously confused): This ... isn't a brothel anymore?

DESI: Goodness, no! (laughs, then realizes her error) Well, of course, how would you know? (sighs) Where do I begin? Yes. After I left David, I wandered around aimlessly for several days, not knowing where to go. I ended up back here, in my old neighborhood. I found this building deserted. I later found out that Paul LeMay had been killed by the husband of one of the girls he was using as a prostitute. Making a long story short, I took the building over and converted it into a shelter for former prostitutes wanting to get their lives right with God. Since then, God has blessed us abundantly. We have twenty-three girls here, all former prostitutes, now Christians devoted to Jesus Christ. This place is no longer seen as a brothel. (chuckle) The girls have taken to calling this place the House of Grace, but I take no credit for what has happened. I give all the credit, all the glory to Jesus Christ. If it wasn't for him, I would've died down here. We provide crafts and other services to the neighborhood in exchange for grain and vegetables ... such as you saw with Diedra.

(She continues to speak with great animation while the lights dim and the music plays)

Reborn

Rebecca St. James

If you see a change in me don't wonder
There's someone in my life, a peace I can't describe
For I've been reborn
If you see a change in me don't wonder
I found a whole new life
A hope that I can't hide
For I've been reborn

Have you ever felt
A longing, a searching within your soul for something more
But you don't know what for
There's One who will reach across the distance
From the heavens to the earth
Because He loves you
He loves you

If you see a change in me don't wonder
There's someone in my life, a peace I can't describe
For I've been reborn
If you see a change in me don't wonder
I found a whole new life
A hope that I can't hide
For I've been reborn

If you see a change in me (X4)

Have you ever felt
That something's missing within your soul
You want something more

But you don't know what for
There is only One you need
But you've got to believe that he loves you
Enough to give His life

If you see a change in me don't wonder
There's someone in my life, a peace I can't describe
For I've been reborn
If you see a change in me don't wonder
I found a whole new life
A hope that I can't hide
For I've been reborn

(transition back into scene)

DESI: But, enough of me. How is David?

MARC (stunned): Oh.

DESI (concerned): Marc ... are you all right? Would you like me to pray for you?

MARC bursts into tears. His head falls forward into his hands, and he cannot keep from weeping uncontrollably. DESI doesn't understand what's going on, but just lets him get things out. Then, after several seconds, his head lifts. His face is wet with tears, and his breathing is swift, but he is able to finally get things out.

MARC (very emotional): I'm sorry ... I'm so, so sorry! I have betrayed you! I have sinned against you and against God!

DESI (calmly): Tell me.

MARC (very emotional): I hated you from the start! You reminded me of my own sin. I despised you, and the fact that you were marrying my brother. So I conspired against you. (bitter laugh) I was the 'Grace conspiracy' — it was I who conspired against Grace. I watched you secretly with my brother, and conspired to get rid of you from his life — and from mine. When you were up that night, I was outside watching, waiting for my opportunity to move against you. When I told you to leave my brother, I was doing it to get rid of you. I thought that, if you were out of his house, you would revert to your old ways. I was so wrong — so very, very wrong! I came here to expose you, to find proof that you had returned to whoredom, and show that to my brother to shock him out of his depression.

DESI (urgently with concern): David — depressed?

MARC: Yes, yes! Right from the start, he has grieved for you, and has wasted away almost to nothing!

DESI (urgently with concern): We must go to him!

MARC (agreeing): Yes! Yes!

The two of them leave the room.

ACT THREE, Scene Six: shortly after.

Location: DAVID's home.

The room is dark. DAVID is sitting in the rocking chair. He's not moving. The door opens. DESI and MARC rush in, and DESI quickly goes to DAVID's side; she kneels at his side, while MARC lights a lamp. DAVID looks years older than he is. His face is drawn and he almost looks catatonic. His eyes are closed.

DESI touches, caresses DAVID's face, and kisses his head. He may not respond to her touch for a few tense seconds. Let the audience wonder if DAVID has died like DESI's mother had. But then DAVID starts to stir. His voice is strained.

DAVID (whispers): Grace?

DESI (full of compassion and relief): Yes, my love, I am here!

DAVID's eyes open, and he turns to see DESI. New life begins to flow into him. He reaches for her. There are tears and kissing and crying and weeping. MARC is standing off to the side, watching this take place, and there isn't a dry eye in the place.

DAVID (strained): I ... thought you were gone.

DESI: I was, but now I'm back. Forgive me for leaving you, my love!

MARC drops to his knees at DAVID's side and bows his head low.

MARC: My brother, please forgive me! I am at fault! I conspired against your marriage! And I was the one who talked Grace into leaving you!

DAVID puts a hand out onto MARC's head. As he looks up, the hand is alongside his head. DAVID looks at his brother, at the tears, and nods.

DAVID: You? (pause) I forgive you, my brother.

MARC bursts into weeping and sobbing. After several seconds, Marc looks up again.

DESI: What you meant for evil, God turned into good. As in the story of Joseph and his brothers. If you had not persuaded me to leave David, the shelter would not have been built, and all those girls would not know the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

DAVID (gaining strength): Do you see the difference now?

MARC: Yes. I do. I can call you Grace now. Grace gave her heart over to God, and he has cleaned it thoroughly. But I was more the Desiree, the sinner, the prostitute than she was. My heart is black with my sin. And I don't know what to do.

DAVID: Of course you do. You always have. You have heard God speak to you, but you have not listened. It's letting Jesus Christ into your heart, into those stony places, and letting him take over your life. You have tried for years to make yourself clean, and have found that you cannot. That has frustrated you, and made

you jealous of everyone who has been able to become clean, such as Grace. But now, you see, you can't do it. You have to let Jesus do it in you. That's the only way. (weak laugh) That's the 'grace conspiracy' you never saw ... God's grace has been working on you all these years, bringing you up to this moment, this point in time, preparing you for the decision he knew you would eventually make. Now. Are you ready to make that decision?

MARC (tearful, emotional): David, do you remember the day our father took us down to the river to be baptized? I did that only out of jealousy of you. You got baptized; I got wet. You found relationship; I found religion. David, I never HAVE been a Christian! (pause) Yes. Yes I'm ready.

The three leave the stage arm-in-arm.

Fade to black.

(transition into song)

He'll Do Whatever It Takes

Phillips, Craig & Dean

You don't know just how far away from home I've been
She said as she looked into my eyes
Could it be I've strayed beyond mercy's outstretched hands?
Now his grace no longer stoops to hear my cry.
You see, I just want to know,
Tell me how far will He go?
Will He still reach to me in spite of where I've been?

chorus

And I told her (Let me tell you)
He'll do whatever, whatever it takes!
His grace reaches lower than your worst mistakes,
And His love will run farther than you can run away!
My friend, He'll do whatever, whatever it takes.
He'll do whatever it takes.

I heard his love is patient; that He always hears prayer
That His love will follow you despite the miles,
But my best years of life I wasted
Why would He even really care?
What have I to give that He would find worthwhile?
You see, I just want to know,
Tell me how far will He go?
Will He still reach to me in spite of who I am?

chorus

bridge

He'll just keep reaching
Until He finds a way to bring you back where you belong.
Come on back home!

chorus

(transition back into scene)

The lights come back up again. MARC is the only one standing there — soaking wet as if he just came from being baptized — looking out at the audience. He walks to the edge of the stage and stands there. He gives the altar call. Something simple, like a deep look at them all, and the words:

MARC: Have you not asked some of the same questions? Like me, have you wandered so far away from Him that you wonder if you gone beyond mercy's limits? Have you lived a religious life, void of a relationship with the only one who can offer you life and meaning? Like me, have you grown weary of the hypocrisy of it all?

Or do you relate more to DESI? Are you more comfortable with the false-identity that the Enemy has given you than you are with the new identity Jesus offers? Do you prefer to be "Desiree" over accepting "Grace?" Is it so difficult to believe that His love will still reach to you in spite of where you've been? Do you ask, "Will He still reach to me in spite of who I am? Why would He even really care? What have I to give that He would find worthwhile?"

Perhaps you connected more with DAVID. Have you felt God's tugging at your heart, but have ignored it for so long? I know, it makes no sense; it's crazy, but the truth is, Jesus is desperately in love with you, and He will do whatever it takes.

MARC gives a thoughtful pause, with a gentle knowing grin.

MARC: As a matter of fact, He already has.

Quick fade to black.

THE END