

# DoveTale

By Ted Swartz, Lee Eshleman and Ingrid De Sanctis

## THE RECONCILIATION

**Characters:** Mary, Joseph, Leo the photographer, Gabriel

**Set:** Free-standing door

**Props:**

Sling for Joseph's arm, hammer with bow, bouquet of flowers, camera/camera bag, bridal veil, top hat for Joseph

**Length:** \_11\_ minutes

*(MARY arrives at JOSEPH'S door with a bouquet of flowers and a hammer. She knocks several limes. JOSEPH comes to the door dressed, with his arm in a sling. It has been three months since they have seen each other. The love is still there but they don't know what to say to each other. MARY rambles a bit.)*

**MARY:** Hi, Joseph. *(He says nothing so she just keeps talking.)* I just came by to talk to you for a minute and to see how you were. But I completely understand if you don't want to talk at all, you know, after everything. But I just wanted to come by and tell you that I understand how you feel. Yeah, I understand. And I brought you these. I wanted to buy you a stool, I mean, a tool. I wanted to buy you a tool, but the man at the hardware store wasn't much help. So I went to pick out a hammer and I thought this one was really cute. *(She hands him a hammer with a bow on it.)* And then I wanted to get you some flowers because I know a lot about flowers. So I got you these. *(She gives him flowers.)*

**JOSEPH:** Thanks.

**MARY:** *(Happy to hear him speak to her)* It's nice to hear your voice.

*(The following is awkward as they both try to figure out how to handle this moment.)*

**JOSEPH:** Three months is a long time.

**MARY:** I know. I'm sorry about that.

**JOSEPH:** You look great.

**MARY:** *(MARY crosses away and laughs)* Oh no. I've gained some weight. Too many zonker bagels. *(She looks at JOSEPH.)* You look tired.

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**JOSEPH:** Well, I haven't been sleeping too well lately.

**MARY:** *(Crosses back to him)* I'm sorry.

**JOSEPH:** No, please. Don't be.

**MARY:** What happened to your arm?

**JOSEPH:** Oh, this. Well, I woke up and it really hurt. I figured it was—I have no idea what happened. It really hurts.

**MARY:** A bad dream? Did you fall off the bed?

**JOSEPH:** Something like that.

*(SILENCE ... .then at the same time)*

**MARY:** Joseph...

**JOSEPH:** Mary... *(Beat)* Mary, I don't know what to say.

**MARY:** I don't blame you for leaving.

**JOSEPH:** Your parents told me you were at your Aunt Elizabeth's.

**MARY:** *(MARY crosses downstage as she remembers her time at her aunt and uncle's. She is looking out towards the audience as she speaks.)* Yes. Aunt Elizabeth's ... she had that baby, you know. His name is John. He came out screaming and yelling. He loves bugs. And he likes to play in the water, too. Uncle Zech is talking again. I finally understand what's happening to me.

**JOSEPH:** I don't, Mary.

**MARY:** *(Crosses back to Joseph.)* Joseph, it is a miracle. If you could just see Aunt Elizabeth and the baby. I know I'm asking you to understand by faith and just believe and that isn't fair...

**JOSEPH:** But I don't need to understand...

**MARY:** *(MARY keeps talking.)* One minute I'm ordering artichoke hearts and we're dancing and the next minute...

**JOSEPH:** Mary...

**MARY:** Of course you just left.

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**JOSEPH:** *(Finally getting her attention)* Mary. *(She looks at him)* Please let me finish. I'm not sure I need to understand everything now. What was I supposed to say? What was I supposed to do? We're dancing and then: "I'm pregnant." But I know I should have listened to you. And trusted you. But I left. There were so many things I wanted to say. But I left you there. Mary... I am so sorry that I didn't believe you and trust you. You are still the best person I know.

**MARY:** What are you saying?

**JOSEPH:** I'm saying that there's no one I want to spend the rest of my life with but you. *(Silence. MARY steps downstage and is thinking to herself. A long pause.)* I mean, help me out here, Mary.

**MARY:** I'm pondering. *(Beat. MARY turns around now and crosses back to JOSEPH.)* You know, I came here thinking that you never wanted to see me again.

**JOSEPH:** Mary, that is so far from the truth.

**MARY:** *(Speaking from the heart)* Joseph, what is happening to me, to us, is important. God is trusting us with this baby. Joseph, you know I love you more than anything else in the world. Except this baby. If you marry me, you marry us.

**JOSEPH:** How about Saturday?

**MARY:** *(Totally surprised and delighted)* What?

**JOSEPH:** *(Totally serious)* Today's what? Tuesday? That's plenty of time. You have a dress, right?

**MARY:** I doubt it will fit.

**JOSEPH:** Wear anything. I'm sure you'll be beautiful.

**MARY:** *(She is laughing and unsure if this is all for real.)* Joseph ... no, this isn't possible.

**JOSEPH:** Oh, I'm sorry. Let me try this again. *(On his knee, handing her flowers. MARY is all smiles at this.)* Mary, will you and this baby...

**MARY:** *(Interrupting)* His name is Jesus.

**JOSEPH:** Okay. *(Back to what he was going to ask)* Will you and this baby Jesus let me be husband to you and father to him?

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**MARY:** (*MARY is clearly moved by this question*) Yes Joseph, that will be nice. Really nice.

**JOSEPH:** Good. (*JOSEPH gets up off his knee and they start to make plans.*) So we have some flowers, we have napkins...

**MARY:** Nine hundred with the wrong slogan.

**JOSEPH:** We can just mark that out... We have each other.

*(They are looking into each others' eyes by now. The mood is sweet and honest.)*

**MARY:** Yes. (*Beat*) Yes, we do. (*Smiles*) We do.

*(LEO the photographer enters. A quirky and too happy kind of fellow. Delighted by the sight of MARY and JOSEPH. He hands them a hat and veil. While LEO comes downstage and talks to the audience, JOSEPH puts on the top hat, MARY the veil. They get in position with MARY holding the flowers and JOSEPH holding the hammer.)*

**LEO:** Oh, this is so adorable. It positively screams "Kodak moment!" Dearly beloved, my name is Leo, and I'm the official wedding photographer. I also happen to be Joseph's first cousin, twice removed, once against my will ... and Joseph and Mary have asked me to capture these precious moments on celluloid. So as soon as they're ready, we'll make the old magic happen. Oh, (*Looks at MARY and JOSEPH*) they look positively gothic, don't you think? All right, you two, looking good! Now, on three, we want some nice big smiles. One, two three! (*Camera click*) Very nice. OK. Good, good. Let's do another one now. This will be a little bit different, Mary and Joe. I'm gonna come at you from kind of a more rakish angle, and I want something in your face that seems to tell a story: love, hope, dreams, betrayal, anger, missing it, getting it, and then bringing it all back home. That's it, you got it, you're done. Bye bye! Whoa! So long!

*(MARY and JOSEPH run off and LEO focuses on the audience.)*

Oh, my goodness. Now, Joseph and Mary asked me, on their behalf, to thank all of you wedding guests for coming here today. It meant a very lot to them, especially because they know that you came from long distances, some of you, and all of you on rather short notice, and they're just glad you're here. So they said, Leo, make sure you take a group portrait. So we're gonna see here. I think it would be best if I switched over to tele-wide for this one. (*Starts to take the photo and then asks everyone*) Could everyone just lean toward the middle a little bit, please? Okay. On three, say your favorite dairy product. One, two, three! (*Yells*) Yogurt?? Now, Joseph and Mary also said, Leo, make sure that you take

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some candid, because we want those unguarded moments with our dear friends that ... whoa...

*(Snaps a photo)*

I learned something very interesting at the community college. I took a photography course and I learned a fascinating fact. Evidently, the most common mistake that amateur photographers make is to put their subject right smack in the middle, all framed, all nice and neat, cut and dried. It makes for a boring photograph, and furthermore, it's not the way life is, is it? Is life all centered and nice and neat, the way we think we'd like it? Of course not! It's a crazy knuckle ball that comes down the middle and then veers off to the side, and somehow it all works out. But that's life, and that's how your photos ought to be, that's what your art should say. So we're gonna try something a little bit experimental here with you folks. I think you're gonna enjoy this.

*(Snaps another photo)*

Okay! I think I'll frame that one and give it to Joe and Mary. Listen, I've gotta go. My daughter has a soccer game, so I'm gonna have to head out here. But make sure that you get over to the refreshment table. I understand that it's been catered by Bartholomew's. But make sure that you go over and get some wedding cake and just have a great, grand day. Thanks for coming. It's just wonderful to have all of you here.

*(If GABRIEL is playing the role of LEO, he drops the camera and hat behind the door, and becomes GABRIEL again. If LEO is played by another actor, he exits, and GABRIEL enters.)*

**GABRIEL:** Well, it certainly was a beautiful wedding. I was there, too. And when nobody was watching, I went over and got myself a little piece of wedding cake. It was angel food. Well, the next thing you know, Joseph and Mary have dusted the rice out of their hair and six months have passed. Six months of getting to know each other all over again. Six months of dreaming about becoming a true family. It was really a remarkable time in their lives. Just then, big government stepped in, double time. Listen to this proposal, would you? Say, why don't you take a long, torturous journey to a distant land, on a donkey, while you're pregnant, so we can tax you?

*(Voices from offstage interrupt him.)*

**MARY:** Turn left up there, Joseph.

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\*\*\*\*\* SCRIPT PREVIEW \*\*\*\*\*

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**JOSEPH:** I'm pretty sure he said right.

**MARY:** He said LEFT!

**GABRIEL:** Let's join the happy couple.

*(GABRIEL exits)*

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PREVIEW

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