



# **The Next-To-Last Supper**

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MARY: Jesus, would you sit down? You're making me nervous.

JESUS: Forgive me, mother. I know not what I do.

MARY: You know not what you do? I know not why you this way backwards talk. Have you been changing water into wine again?

JESUS: No. Mother, as I said unto you on the occasion of your friend's wedding at Cana, I will help you out this once, but thou must not go expecting. . . . Actually, a drink might not be that bad. Would you care for some?

MARY: Sweet Jesus, what's come over you? Drinking on a Thursday night? And no, I wouldn't care for some, not if it's what you made at Cana. Nobody with any class drinks Cold Duck anymore. Even a goody-two shoes like you should know that. I'm sorry. I take that back. It's my own fault. I told your father. I said, Joe, even the Lamb of God can stand a little culture and refinement, let's get him some ballroom dancing lessons and maybe a wine tasting class. Maybe art appreciation. Or improvisational theater. Something broadening. But you know your father. Carpentry and Hebrew school, carpentry and Hebrew school. Well look what all carpentry work and school did? It made Jesus a dull boy! A dull single 33 year old boy having dinner with his mother on a Thursday night. I should have said something, I know, and I'm sorry. But, Jesus, your father had enough of a cross to bear, I figured, what with being married to a blessed virgin.

JESUS: Cross!

MARY: I beg your pardon?

JESUS: Nothing.

MARY: All right, well, if it's nothing, sit down and eat your supper. There'll be plenty of time for pacing the floor and staring at the ceiling once you've cleaned your plate. Would you sit down? You've barely touched your supper. I thought you loved my lasagna.

JESUS: I do love your lasagna. I just can't fill up. The guys are taking me out tonight.

MARY: You mean to tell me you let me slave over a lasagna all day today when you knew you were going out with your friends? What guys? Why didn't you tell me this before? Who's more important than your mother?

JESUS: I don't know, maybe the entire human race?

MARY: Jesus, you may be 33 years old, but I can still smack the beatitudes out of you.

JESUS: Do unto others, Mother, as you would have them do unto you.

MARY: Hello! Have you confused me for one of your groupies? Does this look like the Mount to you? Blessed are the courteous, who inform their mothers in advance they'll be skipping out on her meal. Blessed are those who have met a nice girl by their mid-thirties, who have settled down and given me grandchildren. Blessed are those who don't have such a fresh mouth as to say everyone in the world is more important than their mother.

JESUS: Mother, you're not understanding what I'm trying to tell you.

MARY: Blessed are those who don't have the nerve to call their mother stupid in her own house. For they shall inherit the house. Maybe the earth, too, but I'm not going to make any far out promises, unlike some holier-than-thou sons of mine I know.

JESUS: Mother, I never said you were stupid. Would the Lord have chosen you to bear me if you were not sound of mind?

MARY: It always comes back to you, doesn't it? Somebody I know really thinks he's God's gift. Listen, I have news for you, buddy. Being a blessed virgin isn't all it's cracked up to be. Don't look at me like that. You try being the only teenager on your block an angel has come and spoken to. Sure, he said be not afraid, and you're going to have God's baby and all of that, but he didn't bother to tell any of my neighbors. Do you want to guess what they called me? It wasn't blessed virgin, I can tell you that much. And I don't think I need to tell you again what poor Joseph's life was like.

JESUS: No, you really don't.

MARY: Blessed are those who don't tell their mother what she can and can't say in her own house. Gee, Jesus, I wonder where you get your phenomenal rhetorical style from. Blessed are those who give credit to their mother when they rip her off during their Sermon on the Mount. Oh, that Jesus, he's such a good speaker. Do you know how much I have to hear that? Oh, Mary, where did you ever get such a brilliant son? Oh, he's so brilliant, so merciful, he's such a good boy, Mary, they say. But they don't know how he let me slave over a supper he had no intention of eating!

JESUS: Mother, in no way did I intend to hurt you. I thought you loved to cook lasagna for me, and I couldn't bear to disrupt that happiness. Besides, lasagna is great because it'll feed you for days ... if you don't feel like cooking.

MARY: When don't I feel like cooking? Only when I'm breaking my back making a sauce from scratch my son has no intention of eating. Tell me, which boys are you going out with? From the neighborhood? Maybe we'll have them in for lasagna instead. What saith thou about that?

JESUS: Well, I would, but I think they made reservations for an upstairs room, kind of like a banquet hall. You know – Peter, Paul, Andrew, Thomas, Philip, Matthew, Bartholomew, James Z, James A, Simon, John, and Judas. And Mother, the thing about this supper that's so important –

MARY: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Judas? Judas who?

JESUS: Judas Iscariot.

MARY: Ah-ah. Ah-ah. The other eleven are okay, but there's something about that Iscariot kid I don't like at all. I don't know why the rest of you bother with him. He's trouble. Mark my words.

JESUS: Mother, I know I'm treading on thin ice here, but the idea "Judge not lest ye be judged" comes to mind.

MARY: You're going to sit there and let your lasagna get cold because you're defending that Iscariot piece of garbage to me? The torments I have to endure....

JESUS: Speaking of torments, mother, I have been trying to find a way to tell you...it is not the happiest message I bear, and as it grieves me to bring you tidings of sadness, I have forestalled in the telling, thereby allowing you to suffer the ignominy of a lasagna cooked in vain – however I must also say unto thee that the lasagna will provide a bounty of meals in the days to come, for you see, tonight –

MARY: Jesus, I know, I know. Go on already!

JESUS: What dost thou know, Mother? Hast the Lord Himself sent tidings?

MARY: I know that instead of having a nice piece of lasagna you have to go eat in some seedy tavern with your little posse.

JESUS: You know, Mother. I wish that it were that simple.

MARY: What could be simpler? You love that Iscariot more than you love your own mother. I understand. So go. But don't forget that Mary and Martha are coming over for bridge at 8:00, so be back in plenty of time for that.

JESUS: Mother, I don't think you're aware that being the Lamb of God is, as you say, all it's cracked up to be. Believe me, I know I couldn't have done it without you. And I'm sorry I haven't been able to give you credit for the speeches, but if I told where I was getting this stuff from, that might conflict with the whole idea of it being the word of God.

MARY: Oh, poor baby. Poor little lamb has to suck it up and let everyone praise and glorify him while he plagiarizes his mother. I feel bad for you, Jesus. I really do.

JESUS: Mother, what do you think it means when they call me the Lamb of God?

MARY: What do you mean, what do I think it means?

JESUS: The way you say it, it sounds like I may as well be the Puppy of God. See, the thing about being the Lamb of God, as opposed to say, the Puppy of God or Kitten of God--

MARY: Yes, teach me, Jesus. Isn't that what all the kids say? Oh, Jesus, teach us. Oh Jesus, lead us. Oh, Jesus, I will give up my job to follow you. Not a bad offer you're making there, Lambikins – why didn't you ever ask me to quit my job so I could sit around and listen to you talk and eat your instant miracle snacks? Could it be that somebody needed to stay home and wash your socks? Well, go on, teach me, but you better help me clear the table while you're at it.

JESUS: Mother, why don't you rest, and I will cleanse the table of its scraps and speak to you from deep within my heart, of the true meaning of the Lamb of God.

MARY: Hey, I'd love some time off, but I'm not going to be responsible for any besmirching of your snow white lamb fur. Besides, after this you have to help me pick up before Mary and Martha get here. And I want all your laundry together tonight, because I'm doing a big wash in the morning. You know, it's almost eight. Why don't you just meet your friends another night? I mean, what's so special about tonight? Friday's good, right?