



PARADISE LOST

CAST

GOD	<i>Almighty Creator</i>
ADAM	<i>First Man</i>
EVE	<i>First Woman</i>
SERPENT	<i>Wily Creature</i>
CAIN	<i>Oldest Son of Adam and Eve</i>
ABEL	<i>Younger Son of Adam and Eve</i>

NARRATOR: When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to till the soil. Instead, springs bubbled up from the ground and watered all the land. Then God formed man from the dust of the ground—fashioning him with His very own fingers. God breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person. God named him Adam, which means *earth*.

Then the Lord God planted a garden in

Eden in the east, and there he gently placed the man he had made. He made all sorts of trees grow up through the newly-formed earth—trees that were stunning and that produced delicious fruit. A shimmering river flowed through the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. In the middle of the garden God cultivated the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it, but He also warned him:

GOD: You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—*except* the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.

NARRATOR: Man continued to live in the garden, and God saw that even though he had his every need fulfilled, Adam was lonely. The Lord God spoke again.

GOD: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.

NARRATOR: So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals.

ADAM: I will call you the lion. And you will be the bear. And you will be the serpent because you are so crafty.

NARRATOR: Every animal bowed as Adam bestowed its name upon it. Even the shrewd serpent bent its knees in recognition.

God saw that even among all these new creations, there still was no helper just right

for man. So He caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While Adam slept, God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. Adam could barely contain his excitement.

ADAM: At last! This one is bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh! She will be called *woman* because she was taken from *man*.

NARRATOR: This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked there in the garden, but they felt no shame.

Out of all the animals of the garden, it was the serpent who was the wildest of God's creations. One day the serpent sauntered up to the woman.

SERPENT: (*hissing*) Did God *really* say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?

EVE: Of course, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden. It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. Adam heard the order himself. God said, "You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die."

NARRATOR: The serpent laughed its hissy laugh.

SERPENT: (*hissy laugh*) You won't die! God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and *you* will be like God—knowing both good and evil. That's what He wants: to keep you ignorant.

NARRATOR: The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its

fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. The flesh of the fruit was sweet, but the aftertaste was bitter. Her mind was immediately opened to thoughts she had never had the power to think before. It was both exhilarating and frightening.

ADAM: Wife, what are you doing?

EVE: Here is this fruit. Take some and eat it.

NARRATOR: Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. His eyes, too, flew wide in amazement. Their minds had been opened. Yet a sinking feeling—a bitter pang of shame began to creep in upon them.

ADAM: Look at ourselves. We are walking around naked—just like the beasts!

NARRATOR: The woman drew her arms about her body.

EVE: You're right. What is this feeling? It's so strange! I don't like it. We've only felt happiness!

ADAM: It's shame, my wife. Shame for what we've done. Maybe we can undo it. Pull some leaves from that tree there! Hurry! We'll hide our nakedness.

NARRATOR: So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden.

ADAM: (*frightened*) It's Him! We must hide!

NARRATOR: So they hid from the Lord God among the trees.

GOD: Adam, where are you?

NARRATOR: Adam stepped forward from the trees.

ADAM: Father. I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.

GOD: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?

NARRATOR: Adam did not answer God's question, but turned to his wife.

ADAM: It was the woman *you* made as a companion for me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.

NARRATOR: God turned toward the woman.

GOD: What have you done?

EVE: The serpent deceived me! That's why I ate it.

NARRATOR: Then God called the serpent.

GOD: Serpent!

NARRATOR: The serpent came slithering out from a nearby bush.

GOD: Because you have done this thing, you are cursed more than any other animal. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in filth and eat dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman—

between your children and her children. Man will strike your head, and you will strike at his heel.

NARRATOR: Then God turned upon the woman.

GOD: I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy. In pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.

NARRATOR: Then God turned to the man.

GOD: Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree, whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, and only through endless toil will you eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.

NARRATOR: Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, which means "life," because she would be the mother of all who live. And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

GOD: Behold! The human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out and take fruit from the Tree of Life and eat it? Then they will live forever!

NARRATOR: So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the red earth from which he had been made. After sending them out, the Lord God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. He placed a

flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

Outside of the Garden of Eden, life for Adam and Eve was unbearable. The ground would barely yield an edible crop, and the couple fought the wild briars and thorns that grew so easily. Their stomachs were constantly growling. Neither one of them spoke the words that we ever in their minds: We have lost paradise.

In the wilderness Adam knew his wife Eve, and she became pregnant. When she delivered, she experienced all the pains that the Lord had told her of, but when the hours of pain were over, she held a baby boy in her arms.

EVE: With the Lord's help, I have produced a man!

ADAM: We shall call him Cain, which means "produced."

NARRATOR: Adam was at first overjoyed, but then he dimly remembered a time when he had named all the animals of the world. It brought a veil of sadness over his happy day.

In time Eve waxed great with child again, and she delivered yet another boy. As Adam looked upon his newest son, he remembered how the breath of God was once breathed into him.

ADAM: This son I shall call Abel, which means "breath."

NARRATOR: Adam and Eve had never expected to feel happiness again, but their sons, as they grew into young men, brought them a new source of comfort.

Over the years, the hard toil of tilling the soil bent Adam's back, and Eve's hair, which had once glistened with health, was coarse and brittle from her own hard days in the sun.

Wrinkles lined their faces and often they thought back to their glorious perfection in the Garden. Still, they did not speak of it.

As the boys grew older, their interests differed. Cain chose to be a tiller of the soil after his father and showed quite a knack for making the ground produce fruit. Abel, on the other hand, became a shepherd and was never happier than in the presence of his flock.

ADAM: Our sons are so different! Cain is serious and hardworking, while Abel is a pure-hearted dreamer, it seems. How can two brothers be so different?

EVE: You and I were created for each other. They were not. They are the world's first brothers. Perhaps there will always be rivalry between brothers.

NARRATOR: When it came time for the harvest, Adam reminded his sons that they must always offer a tribute to the Lord—the first-fruits of all their labors.

CAIN: (*angrily*) What about all my hard work? I'm just going to burn the best of my crop on an altar?

ADAM: It is to the Lord, so it will not be in vain.

NARRATOR: Cain brought a portion of his crop to where his father had built an altar. Together they set fire to it and offered it up as a sacrifice.

ADAM: Is this your sacrifice? Does this honor the law of the Lord that I taught you?

CAIN: It is enough.

ADAM: Abel is a shepherd and will offer a lamb. You offer only the lives of plants.

CAIN: You of all people should know how much work I've put into this harvest! What does Abel do? Sit and watch sheep all day? What work is there in that? The Lord should see how hard I work and be satisfied with that!

NARRATOR: After this was done and Cain returned to his crop, Abel arrives carrying a pristine sheep between his arms.

ABEL: Here you are, Father.

ADAM: Abel, what a beautiful sheep! I have never seen one quite this perfect. There is not a spot upon him! It reminds me of the first one I ever saw—long ago.

ABEL: He's the best, and that's why I want to offer him to the Lord.

NARRATOR: Adam smiled and placed his hand upon Abel's shoulder.

ADAM: Come. I know it will be hard for you to end this creature's life, so we will do it together.

NARRATOR: From afar Cain watched his father and his brother offering their sacrifice. His insides grew icy cold, and he turned to his crop and redoubled his work.

The next morning Adam called Cain to him.

ADAM: The Lord has accepted your brother's sacrifice, but he has not accepted yours.

CAIN: What? Why not?

ADAM: If you do not know the answer, it is not my place to guess.

NARRATOR: This news angered Cain, and he became dejected. What was worse was that he knew the Lord had accepted Abel's sacrifice, and that thought made his anger even fiercer. So the Lord spoke to Cain.

GOD: Why are you so angry? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, beware. Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and become its master.

NARRATOR: These words only made Cain angrier. Abel, seeing his brother's pain, tried to console him.

ABEL: Let me give you one of my lambs as an offering. Would that help?

CAIN: (*coldly*) Leave me alone.

NARRATOR: The black thoughts crouching at Cain's doorway slowly took over his body and his mind—polluting it.

CAIN: If He wants a sacrifice, I will give him a sacrifice.

NARRATOR: Cain left his crop-ground and went to where Abel attended his sheep.

ABEL: Cain, what a surprise! Have you come to see my flock?

CAIN: Come out to my field. I have something to show you.

NARRATOR: Abel nodded and followed behind his brother unsuspecting. Cain had

already worked the plan out in his mind. There was a large rock there in the midst of the field. He did not know for sure, but he thought it would be firm enough to break a man's skull upon it.

ABEL: What did you want to show me?

NARRATOR: Cain turned and seized his brother by the throat. Abel's eyes grew wide in horror. Cain threw his brother down upon the rock and began to beat him against it mercilessly. The surrounding wheat ran red with blood.

Cain was in the midst of his field, sitting upon the very rock he had used to murder his brother. He had thrown the body in the standing wheat. There was still a trail of blood visible from where he had dragged it. Cain knew the Lord would come, and he was waiting for Him. Maybe he would escape punishment. The body *was* hid, after all.

GOD: Cain.

CAIN: Yes?

GOD: Where is your brother? Where is Abel?

CAIN: How should I know? Am I my brother's keeper?

GOD: What have you done? His blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are cursed and banished from the ground that has swallowed your brother's blood! No longer will the ground yield for you—no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer upon the earth.

NARRATOR: Tears suddenly welled up in Cain's eyes, and he sobbed uncontrollably.

CAIN: My punishment is too much for me to bear! You've banished me from my land! You've banished me from your presence! If I am a homeless wanderer, I will be murdered in my sleep for sure!

GOD: No, if someone should murder you, I will give them a sevenfold punishment. I will put a mark upon you to warn people against killing you. In this way you will be protected.

NARRATOR: So Cain left the Lord's presence and headed into the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Adam and Eve were surprised when neither Cain nor Abel returned for the evening meal. At last they searched for them but could find no trace. The Lord gave them the devastating news. The first murder had been committed—a murder between brothers. Adam and Eve had never known how much pain the human heart could bear.

Once again Eve grew great with child. When this child was delivered, she exclaimed:

EVE: God has given me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.

NARRATOR: Adam smiled.

ADAM: We shall call him Seth, which means "appointed," for he is appointed to take the place of Abel.

NARRATOR: Seth brought his parents much joy because he was the very likeness of his father, who was made in the image of his Father, the Lord God, before him. Seth was the first of many more sons and daughters for Adam and Eve. When Adam was 930 years old, he at last suffered the fate he had brought upon himself years before—and died.

NOTES

- I insinuated the belief that at one point the serpent had legs since God's punishment is for it to crawl on its belly.
- I added dialogue to the portion of the story post-Eden.
- Speculation concerning why God refused Cain's sacrifice. Key word *some* of his crop. Or he needed to offer a blood sacrifice.
- I mentioned the exact way that Cain killed Abel. This is not specifically mentioned in the Bible.
- Christians associate the serpent with Satan. Mention this.