

SPARK OF CREATION

CHILDREN OF EDEN

- MUSIC AND LYRICS: Stephen Schwartz
- STYLE: Modern Musical Theatre
- YEAR: 1991
- CHARACTER: Eve

Synopsis:

The musical opens with the creation story from the Book of Genesis and the Storytellers, who narrate the piece, help Father (God) bring the universe and life into existence, including Father's new children, Adam and Eve. **Adam and Eve fall in love with one another. Eve, however, still hungers for something more; she wants to see what lies beyond the garden ("The Spark of Creation").** She meets a snake that tempts her with the fruit from the forbidden tree and the possibilities that open up for her if she eats it. Eve eats the fruit and is awakened to the possibility and the world that lies beyond. Eve attempts to trick Adam into eating the apple in several apple-related dishes, though she stops him before he consumes any of them. Eve tells Adam that she ate of the Tree of Knowledge and, as Father calls from the distance, the two hide in the garden. Father finds his children and, after discovering Eve has eaten the apple, tells her that she must leave the garden as she is no longer innocent. And, in a twist from the Genesis tale, Adam is then torn between these two choices: he can either stay with Father in Eden, or he can eat the fruit and be banished with Eve. Adam decides that, even though it means leaving the garden that he loves with all his heart forever, he must be with Eve ("A World Without You").

Adam and Eve, along with their children, continue with their lives, hoping and praying that Father will one day return and bring them home to Eden. Cain complains to Abel about the problems that their parents created for them and his desire to see what lies beyond ("Lost in the Wilderness"). Cain, embittered, packs his things, tells Father and Abel that he is going to go find his future out in the wasteland, and leaves the glen ("Lost in the Wilderness (Reprise)"). Adam and Eve, deeply worried about Cain's safety out in the Wasteland, find some comfort in the fact that they have been able to create a life and family for themselves outside of Eden ("Close to Home"), but this peacefulness is once again shattered when Cain, back from his journey, tells the family that he has found a ring of giant stones, seemingly providing evidence of other humans. Cain takes the family to see the stones in the wasteland, with Eve and Abel just as excited as Cain.

The family fight about the discovery of the stones culminating in Cain threatening to leave forever and taking Abel with him. Abel, fighting through his heartbreak, decides to stay with his parents. Cain, beginning to leave, is forcibly stopped by Adam, who slaps Cain, which sends him to the ground. Cain tells Adam that he will kill him and the two attempt to fight, but when Abel intervenes, he is thrown off Cain, who, in his rage, beats him to death with a stone ("The Death of Abel"). Cain leaves the remaining members of his family, telling Adam that it should have been him that should be dead. Father, in his anger, decrees that Cain's descendants will always bear a mark for the sin of their ancestor ("The Mark of Cain").

Many years after Abel's death and Cain's departure, Eve lives with her children and grandchildren and prepares herself for death. She attempts to speak to Father about Cain's departure from the family, Adam's grief over the loss of both his sons, the birth of another son, Seth, who has since had children of his own, and Adam's recent death. She prays that her children and her grandchildren will regain the garden that was lost, as Father allows her into heaven ("Children of Eden").

The storytellers reconvene and continue their story, following the lineage of both Seth and Cain, eventually tracing all the way down to Noah and his family, whose story comprises the second act's plot ("Generations").

Father, after centuries of facing the race of Cain, tells Noah that a storm is coming to wipe them all away, save Noah's family, as they remain the few who are untainted by Cain's lineage. Noah begs Father to reconsider, but Father leaves him with the command to build an ark for both his family and two of every animal ("The Gathering Storm").

Noah has three sons, and the eldest two, Shem and Ham, have wives, but his youngest son, Japheth, is unhappy with the wives Noah has tried to obtain for him. Instead, he wishes to marry the servant-girl, Yonah, a descendant of the race of Cain, and Japheth tells this to his surprised family ("A Piece of Eight"); however, Noah will not allow Yonah on the ark, due to her being a part of the race of Cain. All the animals, played by the Storytellers, come to the ark so that they can board and be saved from the flood ("The Return of the Animals" and "Noah's Lullaby").

Later, Noah finds Yonah outside and explains to her that she cannot board the ark, though he wishes she could and he leaves to board. She understands her plight and continues to face her problems with an open heart and mind, as she always has ("Stranger to the Rain"). Japheth finds Yonah as she's leaving and attempts to convince her to sneak on to the ark with him. Japheth tells Yonah that he doesn't care about the repercussions of his actions, as long as he can be with her. The two vow to spend whatever time they have left with one another and board the ark ("In Whatever Time We Have"), just as Father unleashes his wrath on the earth and the race of Cain ("The Flood").

For forty days and forty nights, the rain continues, never ceasing, and tensions on the ark are high, with couples fighting and discussions on how to stay alive in these desperate conditions, including killing animals on the ark for food ("What is He Waiting For?"). Yonah, having stayed undiscovered, releases a dove to find dry land and save the residents of the ark ("Sailor of the Skies"). The family discovers Yonah, and Shem and Ham wish to throw her overboard, but Japheth intervenes. It escalates into a fight, directly mirroring the one between Adam and Cain generations ago, and it is only because Yonah intervenes that one of the brothers is not killed. Noah is unsure as to what he must do, sends the family away from him and attempts to talk to Father. His wife asks him if Father speaks to him anymore, and when Noah answers "No", she tells him, "You must be the father now;" that Noah has to live without God telling him what to do ("The Spark of Creation (Reprise 2)"). Noah sings of the difficulties that he has faced in being a father, while at the same time Father sings of the problems he has faced in being a father, but both come to terms with the fact that if you love something, you must let it go ("The Hardest Part of Love").

Noah calls the family together once more, all of them desperate for guidance and hope ("Words of Doom"). He decides to give Japheth and Yonah his blessing as the family gathers together to spend whatever time they have left as a happy, loving family ("The Hour of Darkness"). Then the dove Yonah released returns with an olive branch in its mouth, signifying nearby land, and the family again sees the light of the stars. The family rejoices as Mama leads the family in the gospel song ("Ain't It Good?"). Father gives humanity the power to control its fate and gives his blessing to find their future without his direct influence ("Precious Children"). As the family lands and leaves the ark, they separate, taking various animals to their new homes across the world. As they say their final goodbyes, the family sings of the problems they will face and their desire to return someday to the Garden of Eden ("In the Beginning").