BETHLEHEM BOUND

by Margery Peterson

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STORY OF THE PLAY

This is a part of Nativity story that isn't in the Bible, but could have happened. With Mary and Joseph, the shepherds in the field, the women at the well, the Three Kings, and the little drummer boy, we prepare to embark on that special journey to the manger … sharing their worries, their joys, and their faith along the way. The play ends with that magical, mystical moment when humankind first lays eyes on their Savior, followed by a celebration of music. Ideal for younger actors, this play appeals to audiences of all ages.

Approximate playing time: 30 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(6 m, 7 w, 10 flexible parts)

Narrator
Joseph
Mary

Innkeeper
3 Shepherds
Drummer Boy
Drummer Boy's Mother
Innkeeper's wife
6 Angels
3 Wise Men
4 Holy Women

SETTING

Scenes are played in different parts of the sanctuary or theatre, in the front, the back, and even the aisles, wherever there is room. The Narrator, standing at the side of the stage or altar, opens each scene reading from a book.

COSTUMES

All characters dress in typical biblical clothing.

SYNOPSIS/PROPS

Scene 1: Mary and Joseph at home, packing for the trip. Props include table, chair and Joseph's sandal.
Scene 2: Joseph seeking shelter at the inn in Bethlehem.
Scene 3: An angel appears to the shepherds in the field. Props include packs and blankets for shepherds.
Scene 4: The women at the well. Props include water jugs.
Scene 5: The Wise Men begin their journey. Props include gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and a bright star hanging by the altar.
Scene 6: The drummer boy and his mother. Props include his drum and a cloak.
Scene 7: The faithful gather at the manger. Songs include "What Child is This?"; "The Little Drummer Boy"; "Angels from the Realms of Glory"; and "Joy to the World."

Scene 1

(AT RISE: SPOTLIGHT on NARRATOR, who stands at lectern and reads from a book, with drama.)

NARRATOR: In the days of Herod the King, the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary. And the angel said unto Mary, "Thou shalt bring forth a son, and call his name Jesus. He shall be known as the son of the highest, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Mary answered, "Behold, the handmaid of the lord." And the angel departed from her. It came to pass that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed, each in his own city.

(SPOT off NARRATOR and on JOSEPH at home, packing for the trip. MARY is offstage. The dialogue is spoken with humor.)

JOSEPH: Mary! Mary, where are you?
MARY: Yes, Joseph. I'm coming. What is it? *(MARY enters, very pregnant, holding HER back.)*
JOSEPH: I can't find my sandal. Have you seen it?
MARY: I saw them both here just awhile ago. Maybe it got kicked away. Why are you only wearing one sandal?
JOSEPH: Oh, I got a corn on my foot. It hurts more when I wear sandals. Here's that sandal. You were right, it got kicked under the table.
MARY: Joseph, how will you walk for two days with a corn on your foot? Would it help if you wrapped your foot in strips of rag?
JOSEPH: That might help. But, my foot surely doesn't hurt any more than your back. How is it today?
MARY: It aches. I feel like an upside-down camel. I don't know how camels can walk around like they do and not get a backache. Maybe it's because the hump is on their back. Maybe they get stomachaches instead. That's probably why they're so mean.

JOSEPH: What do the women in the village say about your condition? Are they talking to you yet? Or only behind your back still?

MARY: Certain ones will talk to me now. Some say I'm carrying high, others say I'm carrying low. Some say I've gained too much weight, others say I've not gained enough. Some say it must be a girl because I stick out so far in front. If they only knew! *(SHE laughs.)*

JOSEPH: *(Laughs too then becomes serious.)* I'm worried this old nag of a donkey won't make the long trip. I wish we had a fine coach to travel in. At least I wish we knew how long this will take. But since this is the first census, there's no way to know.

MARY: This trip worries me too, Joseph. I worry most that the child will be born while we're away. It's my first baby and I don't know much about that either. Oh, I must remember to pack swaddling clothes, just in case.

JOSEPH: Bethlehem is so far. My family has drifted a long way from its beginnings in David's time.

MARY: It is God's will that we go, so I will trust him for a safe trip. I'm certain He will care for us.

JOSEPH: *(Holds HER hand.)* As always, your faith inspires me, Mary. I, too, will trust God for a safe journey to Bethlehem, and the Child's birth, if it comes to pass.

(LIGHTS out)

End of Freeview

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