

# ***GLORY EXCELSIS***

*By Rhonda Marie*

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**STORY OF THE PLAY**

This Christmas story is totally country! The family is trying to ready the barn for the annual nativity scene but no one feels much like celebrating, since Brenda has just suffered a miscarriage. Eleven-year-old Anna Belle is taking it the hardest, especially since her favorite cat, Glory Excelsis, has been missing for days. But Sarah, a wise mother, comforts the family when she makes them realize that God must have known sadness too when He sent His only son to earth. That's why Christmas should be celebrated, to thank Him for His great gift. A warm and wonderful story with optional nativity ending.

**SETTING**

A basic barn set is used throughout the entire play. Use any props that will make the stage look like the inside of a barn such as fences for stalls, straw, farm tools, even small machinery. Provide several small stools or bales of hay for seats.

**SYNOPSIS**

**Scene 1:** About two weeks before Christmas.

**Scene 2:** A few days before Christmas.

**Scene 3:** Christmas Eve.

**Scene 4:** A few minutes later.

**PLAYING TIME:** About 35 to 45 minutes, depending if carols are sung and the optional nativity scene is used. Selection and number of carols is up to director.

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(3m, 3w, extras)*

**CALVIN:** Husband and father, patient and kind.

**SARAH ELIZABETH:** Wife and mother, sensitive to feelings.

**CALVIN, JR.:** Son, 15, hasn't outgrown boyish pranks.

**ANNA BELLE:** Daughter, 11, sensitive and excitable.

**BILLY BOB:** Young married man, and a cousin to Calvin Jr. and Anna Belle.

**BRENDA SUE:** Young woman, married to Billy Bob, expecting their first baby. Does not speak with a country accent.

**CAROLERS:** Any number, remain offstage.

**PROPS**

Two containers to carry eggs and a cleaning cloth.

Enough eggs to fill one container for Sarah Elizabeth.

Wrist watch for Calvin.

Slingshot for Calvin Jr.

Pitchfork, shovel, and broom to clean barn.

Small Christmas tree.

Box of Christmas tree decorations.

A manger.

Large empty box supposedly holding cat.

**COSTUMES**

All wear warm work clothes with minor changes to indicate time passage. Brenda Sue wears padding at the end of Scene 1 to look about 4 or 5 months pregnant. Calvin Jr.'s clothes are dirty and torn in Scene 3. Biblical clothes are required if nativity scene ends the play.

SCENE 1

“The Slingshot Effect”

*(AT RISE: SARAH ELIZABETH is sitting in the barn cleaning some eggs and singing, “Joy to the World.”)*

CALVIN: *(Calls from offstage.)* Sarah. Sarah Elizabeth!  
*(SARAH continues to sing until she sees CALVIN enter the barn. He continues to call her name.)* Sarah, Sarah Elizabeth!

SARAH: Well, Calvin, ya can see I'm right here. What'd ya need me fer?

CALVIN: Was that you singin' that Christmas song? I do declare Sarah Elizabeth, yer voice is in competition with th' angels in heav'n this mornin'.

SARAH: Oh, Calvin. *(Blushing.)* I don't see how I coulda married anyone sweeter 'en you, that's fer sure. But, Calvin, what'd ya need me fer?

CALVIN: *(Appears to have forgotten, rubs HIS chin.)* What'd ya mean, Sarah Elizabeth?

SARAH: Ya were callin' fer me, Calvin. Did ya need me fer somethin'?

CALVIN: I believe I did need somethin'. Just can't think a what it might'a been at th' moment. *(Suddenly, HE remembers.)* Oh, I remember. It weren't nothin' really. Probably didn't need ta ask ya, even. I was just wonderin' - *(SARAH cuts HIM off.)*

SARAH: Calvin, what is it ya wanted? Yer doin' everythin' but askin' the question.

CALVIN: *(Laughs sheepishly.)* Yer right as usual, Sarah Elizabeth. I coulda gone on ferever if ya hadn't a stopped me.

SARAH: *(Looks at HIM anticipating his question, but Calvin is silent. Finally, SHE has to ask.)* Calvin, what is it ya need? Yer piquin' my curiosity somethin' terrible.

CALVIN: *(Flustered, says the first thing that comes to mind.)* The time!

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SARAH: It's gotta be comin' close ta noon. I don't have a watch, but my stomach's sure tellin' me it's about time fer lunch. What's happened ta yer own watch, Calvin?

CALVIN: Nothin'. It's right here on my wrist. (*Shows her his watch.*)

SARAH: (*Appears confused.*) Then, why were ya needin' ta know th' time fer, Calvin?

CALVIN: Ya didn't allow fer me ta finish. I was askin' th' time Billy Bob was a comin' ta help me an' Calvin Jr. clean this here barn fer th' Christmas nativity celebration.

SARAH: (*Begins to talk as if SHE'S off dreaming.*) Ah, yes, th' Christmas nativity. How many years has it been, Calvin, that we had th' live Christmas nativity play held right here'n this ol' barn?

CALVIN: It's been a few, that's fer sure. But, now, Sarah Elizabeth, do ya happen ta know when Billy Bob would be a comin' ta help us?

SARAH: (*Ignores HIM.*) Every year seems more 'en more people come ta see th' nativity. It's work, Calvin, that's fer sure. But, it's worth it, don't ya believe it's worth it, Calvin?

CALVIN: (*Folds HIS arms across chest and smiles lovingly, yet reproachfully at SARAH.*) Now who's goin' on en on without stoppin'?

SARAH: (*Blushing, again.*) I'm sorry, Calvin, yer, right. It's just that I got so much joy inside me fer Christmas. Ya surely know that's true after bein' married ta me fer all these years.

CALVIN: I surely do, and I dearly love ya fer it. (*Walks over and gives SARAH a big hug, then says with emphasis.*) But, do ya know when we could be expectin' Billy Bob?

SARAH: Fact is, I went 'en ask Billy Bob and Brenda Sue fer lunch. But, Brenda Sue just hasn't been feelin' her best since she's been in th' family way. They could be here fer lunch, and then again, they could not. I reckon it depends on how Brenda Sue's feelin'. I jest hope we're not askin' too much a'Brenda Sue ta be Mary in the nativity play.

CALVIN: Now, Sarah Elizabeth, ya know fer a fact, Brenda Sue's excited as ev'rything ta be Mary in the nativity play.

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SARAH: Yer right as always, Calvin ...

*(SARAH and CALVIN are interrupted by ANNA BELLE calling them.)*

ANNA: *(Calls from offstage.)* Ma! Pa! *(Enters the barn.)*  
Have ya seen Glory Excelsis today? *(Looks around the barn for HER cat.)* Here kitty, kitty, kitty. Glory Excelsis, where are ya kitty? *(Approaches SARAH.)* Ma, have ya seen Glory Excelsis anywhere?

SARAH: Why no, child. Did ya check up th' house? Ya know that cat tries ta sneak inta th' house every chance she gets. She's gettin' awful spoiled if ya ask me, Anna Belle.

ANNA: Ya can't blame 'er fer wantin' ta get in th' house with cold weather comin' on, Ma. She's just tryin' ta keep warm.

CALVIN: It's plenty warm in the' straw in this here barn, Anna Belle. That cat's gotta learn 'er place. Caught 'er after th' chickens again th' other day. Been meanin' ta speak ta ya about th' matter, too. We're gonna have ta lock 'er up in th' barn and get 'er use ta bein' a barn cat.

ANNA: Pa, barn cats are wild as can be. Glory Excelsis is gentle as th' day is long. It's not 'er personality ta be stayin' in any ol' barn.

SARAH: What yer Pa is sayin' bears hearin', child. That cat can't live in th' house this winter neither. She's all over th' furniture and she's all but done away with my plants.

ANNA: *(Pleads.)* Momma. I promise I'll teach 'er better. She's only a kitten. She'll learn. I know she'll learn.

CALVIN: Anna Belle, that cat's full grown. She's like ta have 'er own kittens one day soon.

ANNA: *(Excitedly.)* Wouldn't that be wonderful, Mamma! *(Looks at SARAH to agree.)*

SARAH: *(SHE winces at the thought of more kittens, and therefore, her answer does not sound entirely sincere.)*  
Wonderful, Anna Belle. It would be absolutely wonderful.

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