

THE NIGHT THAT STARTED IT ALL

by Tambra Kay Petrie

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Imagine the perfect Christmas program, written with great care by a charter member of the congregation, and to be directed by the Youth Pastor, who has an enormous amount of directing experience. Everything should run smoothly, efficiently, perfectly.

Yeah, right! In a perfect world! Now, imagine the Christmas story written, directed and performed by teenagers! Candy canes used for shepherd staffs? Gingerbread men dressed as cows? Wise men as computer geeks? Snow ... in Bethlehem?

Follow the antics of CJ, the author of this wild and crazy nativity scene, along with Amos and Jordy, two idiotic stagehands, as they try to retell the story of the nativity from a "teenager's point of view."

After watching a rehearsal and weathering an emotional explosion from Mrs. Carter, the Pastor reminds CJ and the rest of the teens that, although it is okay to laugh and have fun in the Christmas program, there is still a holiness about the entire event that should never be toyed with. The final act provides a glimpse of the revised script by CJ. He ends the actual program with a touching summation of what the birth of Jesus meant to the world and to himself, recapturing the spirit of the original event.

(Playing time: 90 minutes)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 5 w, 1 flexible, 2 boys, 1 girl, many extras)

PASTOR: A friendly, young-at-heart man who relates well to teenagers; 35-40 years old. Dresses in shirt, tie and suit pants.

JOYCE CARTER: Approximately 50 years old. Very animated. She is a very strong Christian and takes her role as author of the annual Christmas pageant very seriously. Dresses in suits with matching hats, jewelry, and shoes. Even though she loses her temper in one scene, her change of heart and kindness should come across as genuine.

CJ: 14-16-year-old boy or girl; very creative, quick-witted, with leadership abilities. Dresses very casually. During actual performance, she/he wears dress clothes.

MARCY: 14-16-year-old-girl; intelligent, well-organized, a leader. Dresses in plain skirts and blouses with vests. Intelligent looking.

BRAD: 14-16-year-old boy; sarcastic, argumentative, leadership abilities. Dresses in polo shirts with Dockers.

TERRI: 14-16-year-old girl; sensible, intelligent, wears glasses, plain clothes, hair pulled back in a ponytail. During performance, she is dressed in a Biblical costume, as **Mary**.

WHITNEY: 14-16-year-old girl; very attractive, “airhead” blonde type, very emotional. Dresses very “preppy” and with latest fads. During performance, she wears an angel costume.

CAITLIN: 14-16-year-old-girl; talks a “mile-a-minute”, extremely emotional, bubbly, happy. During the performance, she wears a nice dress. She can double as **Angel** or as one of the **Teen Narrators** in the last act.

AMOS: 14-16-year-old boy; a surfer type, complete with “surfer” voice. Dresses the same as Jordy during the performance. The rest of the time he wears jeans, canvas tennis shoes, and oversized T-shirt. He can double as one of the **Soldiers** and/or a **Teen Narrator**.

JORDY: A clone of Amos. Also a 14-16-year-old surfer type. Wears oversized T-shirts, oversized blue jeans, canvas tennis shoes, sock caps. During performance, wears dark brown or black pants, dark brown or black oversized T-shirt, dark brown or black stocking cap that can pull over his face with eye and mouth holes, dark brown or black baseball cap, turned backwards; dark shoes; white socks. He can double as one of the **Soldiers** and/or a **Teen Narrator**.

DOUG: 14-16-year-old boy; runs the spotlight from back of auditorium for the performance. Very few lines. Dresses in jeans, T-shirt and tennis shoes for the rehearsal; wears dress clothes with tie for the actual performance.

MIKEY: 6-year-old boy; loud voice, hyper and stubborn. During the “performance” he should wear a dinosaur costume the first time, a hand-made donkey costume. The rest of the time he wears a T-shirt, blue jeans and tennis shoes.

CINDY: 6-year-old girl; whiny, loud voice. During the “performance” she should wear a hand-made rabbit costume the first time; a sheep costume the second time.

JIMMY: 6-year-old boy; loud, hyper, stubborn. During the “performance” he should wear a poorly made penguin costume the first time, a hand-made cow costume the second time.

CHILDREN’S CHOIR

EXTRA KIDS: Can serve as nativity characters including three shepherds, three wise men, Herod, Joseph, and young child as Jesus.

Time: Present Day, mid-October – December.

Place: A mid-sized church in California.

See additional production notes at the end of the script.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: TEENS are talking on stage of church auditorium, in choir loft. It is a Sunday night in October.)

PASTOR: *(Enters, hurriedly.)* Hey! Thanks for sticking around to meet with me. Sunday nights are hectic with all the different meetings going on after church. So, I really appreciate you guys being so patient. Okay! If everyone will take their seats, we can get started.

(KIDS sit in choir loft. JORDY and AMOS pick up chairs and head for door.)

PASTOR: Something has come up that I need to ...

AMOS: Uh, where should we take 'em?

BRAD: He meant sit down and shut up, you bozo!

AMOS/JORDY: 'Kay. *(Sit down quickly exactly where they are.)*

PASTOR: Well, thank you, Brad. Not quite the way I would have put it, but effective.

BRAD: No problem.

PASTOR: In case you haven't heard, Brother Rick was called out of town for a family emergency, and we're not sure when he'll be back.

KIDS: Why? What happened? Etc.

CAITLIN: *(Speaks very fast, almost without breathing.)* Oh! Oh! Oh! I know! I know! Let me tell it! Please?! Oh, please, please, please!!!!

PASTOR: *(Chuckles.)* All right, Caitlin, go ahead.

CAITLIN: *(Very excited – speaking very fast, without breathing.)* Okay, so, I heard my mom, like, talking to Pat Jones, who heard from Sherry England, who was on the phone with Karen Wright, who heard from Eileen Banks, who heard from Brother Rick, who got the call from his mom last night that, like, his dad was working out in the yard, shoveling snow and stuff. Then, he, like, grabbed his chest and fell over – you know, like Shelly Marks did last week in study hall when she tripped on the overhead

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CAITLIN: *(Continued.)* projector cord and fell flat on her face. There was blood everywhere! So, the paramedics show up and rush to the emergency room, and then they find out it was, like, a really bad heart attack, and he died, like, three times in the emergency room, but the doctor brought him back. So, Brother Rick went to Cincinnati and...

AMOS: *(Interrupting.)* I saw Shelly this morning. She didn't look dead.

CAITLIN: Brother Rick's dad!

AMOS: Brother Rick's dead?

JORDY: Man, I didn't even notice him in study hall.

AMOS: Who would, with Shelly's blood all over him.

JORDY: So, why'd Shelly go to Cincinnati?

CAITLIN: Brother Rick's DAD is in Cincinnati!

AMOS: But, you said the doctor brought him back here.

CAITLIN: No! No! No! The doctor brought him back to life!

AMOS: Brother Rick?

CAITLIN: His dad!

JORDY: Hey, did he have one of those "out-of-body" experiments?

AMOS: Ooh, yeah, the one with the bright light? I LOVE that one!

CAITLIN: HELLO????? I was telling a story here.

PASTOR: Thank you, Caitlin. I'll take it from here.

CAITLIN: But, I wasn't finished. They kept interrupting me.

KIDS: Ahhh, too bad, poor baby, etc.

PASTOR: Okay, listen up! Brother Rick's father had a massive heart attack last night and is in critical condition at the Cincinnati Medical Center. Which means that Brother Rick will be gone for quite a while. We need to keep them in our prayers right now.

AMOS/JORDY: Ohhhhhh.

CJ: So, what you're saying is, he won't be able to teach our class for a while. No problem. I'll teach.

KIDS: As if! Yeah, right! In your dreams! Etc.

PASTOR: Actually, I've found a substitute for your class. It's the Christmas program that has me worried.

MARCY: What about Mrs. Carter?

End of Freeview

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