

NO TRUMPETS BLOWING

STORY OF THREE SHEPHERDS

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Three shepherds hear the message of the Christmas angels. Each man has a loved one he hopes to bring to the Savior. Some come and some do not. Those who do, find love, joy and peace. A very simple play to produce. A small choir, or special music, enhances the wonder of that long-ago night when the Christ Child came to earth.

SETTING

Very simple. The same furniture is used in Scenes 2-4 and almost no furniture in Scene 1 and 5. One small table, several stools or hassocks, one longer bench, wooden coatrack, two small stands or end tables (TV tables may be used.) Tall candelabra, if available, table candelabra, if available, manger, doll and blanket.

Prologue: Stage is empty except for two small stools sitting opposite one another at front stage. They are draped in burlap or brown material to resemble boulders.

Inn: One small table at front SL with empty mugs and bowls upon it, wine pitchers, bottles, etc. Behind the table there is a stool. At UPS, left of CS a small stand holds a water bottle or pitcher. At SR front there is another small stand with a fancy wine bottle (showing colored liquid) and a silver drinking cup. Bethshira's long bench, covered with a bright throw, sets at an angle toward middle stage. A small stool for Nathan sits near it.

Solomon's home: The inn furniture remains almost in same position but all of it is covered with rich looking covers. A coatrack stands at USR. Floor candelabra is lit as scene opens. Other stage accessories such as flowers, fruit, etc., can be used.

Amos' home: A very slight shift in furniture from left to right. Small table is now on SR front and coatrack is a USL. Table candles are used. They are unlit as scene opens. Covers over the furniture has been changed to more somber colors and accessories have been changed slightly. This home is comfortable but not as luxurious as Solomon's.

Stable: Manger is a little off USC. Stool behind it. Bench is at SL and a stool at far SR.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 6 w)

NARRATOR: May be choir director. Lines should be memorized.

LEMUEL: An aged shepherd who believes he has lived too long.

AMOS: A lonely man longing for family love.

NATHAN: A idealistic shepherd, 18-20 years old.

SOLOMON: Lemuel's son, too anxious to keep marital peace.

ANNA: Solomon's wife, nagging and selfish.

ELIZABETH: Their small daughter, 6-9 years old.

RACHEL: Amos's wife, bitter and withdrawn.

BETHSHIRA: Sophisticated, beautiful singer at the inn, 18-20 years old.

SERVANT: Gentle, shy girl, 16-17 years old.

MARY: Mother of Jesus.

JOSEPH: Carpenter of Nazareth.

SYNOPSIS

Scene 1: Prologue on path to Bethlehem.

Scene 2: A room in the inn.

Scene 3: Solomon's home.

Scene 4: Amos' home.

Scene 5: The stable.

PLAYING TIME: 55-60 minutes.

COSTUMES

All wear typical biblical costumes. The singer is dressed somewhat exotically with much eye make-up and a hair piece decorated with clips and flowing veils. Elizabeth wears a long night garment. Anna and Solomon are more richly dressed than Rachel and Amos.

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LIGHTING: This can be very simple. When possible, prologue should be done in blue moonlight. Bright lights in the inn and in the home of Solomon. Dim footlights and candles in the scene with Amos and a rosy spotlight on the manger during the stable tableau and scene.

MISCELLANEOUS PROPS

Shepherd crook

Heavy walking stick

Lantern (*An old railroad lantern works well.*)

Bag of coins

Stringed instrument (*Toy gilded with silver paint.*)

Sewing basket, etc.

One or two scrolls

Small candle holder

(Any extra accessories such as flowers, fruit baskets, etc. can be used in the home scenes.)

MUSIC

The musical portions of this program are as important as the play itself. Care should be taken to have the choir director thoroughly familiar with the scenes so that the musical numbers chosen can do the utmost for the production. A variety of music should be used; in choir, solos, instrumental. The titles suggested should be easily available in music and Christian book stores. Many other songs would be equally effective.

Rehearsals can be easily arranged, since each segment of the play can be worked out by itself. No actor is burdened with too many lines. Choir and cast should have at least two full rehearsals with narration and lighting.

PROLOGUE

CHOIR: *(Lively.) "Go Tell It on the Mountain," J.W. Work*

NARRATOR: It is night, and above the Judean hills, three shepherds have heard a marvelous thing. Voices from heaven spoke to them while the midnight sky was bright with light. "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." Now on a path leading upward from the fields of the shepherds, the three men are resting on their way to Bethlehem. Lemuel, the old one with silvery hair, believes he has lived too long. Nathan, the young one, with hard brown arms has a longing to give a gift to the beautiful girl in the village. And Amos, the middle-aged, has eyes as cold as granite, for his heart longs for love and the sound of children playing about his hearth. It is with faith, the three of them have turned toward Bethlehem to find the Savior. For what man would ordinarily expect the Savior of the world to be an infant in a manger? Who, indeed, would expect God, to love the world so much that He would send His only Son? But the shepherds do believe what the angel has said. And each rejoices in his own heart as he thinks of the Child of Promise, "... unto us a Child is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: CURTAIN opens on empty stage. SHEPHERDS enter slowly. Amos leads carrying a lantern. Amos walks as if anxious to keep going but Lemuel and Nathan enter slowly. Lemuel is leaning on his heavy walking stick. Nathan carries a light crook. Nathan helps Lemuel settle on the nearest boulder.)

NATHAN: We will rest until you have caught your breath, Lemuel.

LEMUEL: *(Breathing slowly as if exhausted.)* You do not have to wait for me, Nathan. Amos is anxious to go on.

NATHAN: *(Sits on opposite boulder.)* Of course we will wait for thee. Have you not waited longer than either of us for the Messiah to come?

LEMUEL: *(Fervently.)* Were it not for that hope, Nathan, I would be sorry I have lived so long.

NATHAN: *(Affectionately.)* I am glad you are still with us. The folds will not be the same when you are gone.

LEMUEL: *(Heavily, sighing as HE speaks.)* The sheep may miss me ... but my son's house will know more peace. I have lived too long, Nathan ... I am a nuisance to my daughter-in-law.

NATHAN: *(Heartily, trying to cheer HIM.)* But the little one loves you, does she not?

LEMUEL: *(Brightening.)* My granddaughter? *(Proudly.)* Aye, she does. But then Elizabeth has not grown old enough to know that the old can be a burden.

NATHAN: *(Rises and pats HIS shoulder.)* She will never cease to love thee. *(Turns to AMOS.)* Amos, you have not spoken since we left the sheep. Did the opening of the heavens close your lips?

AMOS: *(Reasonably.)* I have nothing to say.

NATHAN: But are you not excited? Was it not a strange and wonderful thing to have angels talk with us. Why do you suppose they brought the tidings to us, Amos?

AMOS: *(Almost gruffly.)* How should I know why the angels do what they do?

End of Freeview

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