A Slight Change of Plan

A Christmas Play in One Act

by
Kevin Stone

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company."

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
95church.com
© 2013 by Kevin Stone

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://95church.com/slight-change-of-plan

DEDICATION

To Christy

STORY OF THE PLAY

Mary's best friend, Yana, and Joseph's best friend, Mendel, succeed in getting their friends together. And so begins a betrothal period in anticipation of a Jewish wedding. Joseph and Mary get to know one another better during the betrothal, and love grows. Joseph is also hard at work on an addition to his home in preparation for Mary to take up residence there.

Everyone's plans change, however, when the angel Gabriel appears to Mary with the news that she will bear the Messiah. Mary's pregnancy scandalizes the town, strains friendships, and threatens to end the betrothal. Mary humbly clings to the truth. Joseph is torn between his desire for justice and his love of Mary. Both their worlds are turned upside-down as they deal with gossip, betrayal, and broken dreams.

Enter Gabriel again, this time with a message for Joseph, whose plan to divorce Mary is given up in favor of God's plan. It's a happy ending, in which Joseph and Mary rejoice in the fact that God's plan is always far better than our own.

Running time: 45-50 minutes.

Continue the journey with Joseph and Mary as they make their way to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus in the sequel, "A Respectable Birth," also by Kevin Stone. For more details visit Eldridge Christian Plays, www.95church.com.

Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version. The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®.) copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 2 w)

MARY: A pretty Jewish girl in her late teens. She is an interesting mix of playfulness and piety, maturity and merriment. She gives the impression of being easily manipulated, but she knows what she believes and will not be trifled with.

YANA: Mary's best friend and self-appointed mentor. A generous dispenser of gratis advice, which she feels should be followed. Slightly older. Her loyalty to Mary is tested by what she perceives as Mary's betrayal.

JOSEPH: A Jewish carpenter in Nazareth in his mid-to-upper 20s. A just man who is a good worker, conscientious, creative, and reliable. He exhibits more of the fruit of the Spirit than most and also has a good sense of humor.

MENDEL: Joseph's friend and the publisher of a local newsletter. Tries to be helpful. Possesses a clear sense of right and wrong, but is so concerned with justice that he leaves no room for mercy.

GABRIEL: One of God's holy angels. He serves God by bringing two important and timely messages, one to Mary and one to Joseph. These divine messages cause a slight change of plan.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: An evening in Galilee
Scene 2: A short time later, at the footbridge
Scene 3: A few days later, late afternoon
Scene 4: A couple of weeks later
Scene 5: That night
Scene 6: A few days later
Scene 7: Three months later
Scene 8: That night

PRODUCTION NOTES

Setting: Nazareth, a small town in Galilee, in early first century A.D. The action takes place over a period of about three months, unfolding in Joseph's carpenter shop and Mary's bedroom, which is part of her parents' house. The main playing area is divided in half. Both are lighted independently from each other. At times, both halves of the stage are lighted, with action and dialogue taking place simultaneously. When this is to happen, the script will indicate a lighting change, and the copy will be split into two columns. Lines of dialogue or stage directions that exactly parallel each other are to be done simultaneously; staggered lines of dialogue should be delivered successively. There is never any interaction between the two halves of the stage.

Stage Right (SR) is Joseph's workshop. There is an open doorway, Up Stage, leading outside. A work bench with various tools is Right. A cot sits near the center line. Along the Up Stage wall, near the door, is a small table containing a lantern.

Stage Left (SL) is Mary's bedroom. There is an open doorway, Up Stage, leading to the rest of her parent's house. A bed sits Left. Above the bed is a window. Along the Up Stage wall, near the door, is a small table containing candles. Down Left is a small table with a container of flowers; the script will indicate what flowers will appear in each scene.

Center Stage (CS), parallel to the audience and crossing the center line into both sides, is a bench. The two ends of the bench are painted differently, the Right half to match Joseph's decor, and the Left half to match Mary's room. A separate playing area, used for Scene 2, contains a small footbridge.

Costuming is traditional Bible garb. Joseph wears a leather work apron when working. For Scenes 7 and 8, Mary has a "baby bump" showing three months' development. Scene 8 calls for a short piece of music to be played under Mary's recitation of the Magnificat.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on SL. MARY stands by the table, arranging some spring flowers in the vase. YANA sits on the left side of the center bench.)

MARY: I'm to go to the footbridge now?
YANA: Yes, slight change of plan. The footbridge, not the square.
MARY: Just walk to the footbridge?
YANA: Yes!
MARY: An aimless evening stroll?
YANA: You could always pretend to have something to do.
MARY: Yes, I could be looking for a quiet place to practice my castanets.
YANA: A little out of character, don't you think?
MARY: Okay, I could be shopping for a wedding dress.
YANA: A little premature. Pretend you're on an errand of some kind.
MARY: Like what?
YANA: You're delivering a message to the baker.
MARY: The footbridge is the opposite way from the baker's.
YANA: All right, you're delivering a message to the dairy man.
MARY: When it comes to pretending, you're not very practical.
YANA: The trouble is you have no imagination, my friend.
MARY: Overactive imaginations lead to trouble.
YANA: Non-existent imaginations lead to boredom. And spinsterhood.
MARY: Remind me again why we're friends.
YANA: Because you need me. How's this for practical? Go to the footbridge; there by the brook, you can pick flowers.
MARY: Already did that today.
YANA: He doesn't know that.
MARY: I don't know, Yana. This is a bad idea.
YANA: What do you mean? It's a great idea! One of the best ideas I've ever had!
MARY: Which is not saying much.

YANA: So, I had *one* bad idea, three years ago. Out of how many?
MARY: How do you define "bad"?
YANA: Fine. It was a thoroughly disastrous idea followed by several aftershocks of badness. But in my defense, I did *not* know that camel had stomach problems!
MARY: Forget it. It's ancient history. Of course, ancient history leads to more recent history, which leads to yesterday, which inevitably leads to today.
YANA: You know what I think? I think you over-think.
MARY: I should under-think?
YANA: You don't have to think at all. I've done the thinking for you, and this is a good plan. You should take the opportunity.
MARY: I have news for you, Yana. He doesn't even like me.

(LIGHTS UP immediately SR. JOSEPH tinkers at the workbench. MENDEL sits on the right side of the center bench.)

MENDEL:
Joseph. Trust me.
JOSEPH: Trust you?

MENDEL: It's all set up.
JOSEPH:
(With a sigh.) I don't know.

MENDEL: Go.

MENDEL:
You know you should.

(MENDEL stands.)

YANA:
Joseph? Trust me.

YANA:
He likes you.

MARY:
(A sigh.) I don't know.
YANA: He'll be there.

YANA: You should go.

MARY:
Okay. You talked me into it.

(YANA stands.)

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://95church.com/slight-change-of-plan

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!