

SOMETHING WONDERFUL A Christmas Musical

*Written and composed
by Elizabeth May Willson*



PUBLISHED BY

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A Christmas Musical
Written and Composed by Elizabeth May Willson

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SYNOPSIS OF PLAY

When a young child asks her grandmother if Jesus is pretend, just like the store Santas, you can bet Grandma has an answer! Putting away her sewing, Grandma reads the Christmas story from the Bible and as she does so, the holy story comes alive. Each scene is re-enacted on stage next to them including Mary and Joseph at the inn, the angels appearing to the shepherds, and the shepherds seeing the Christ child at the stable.

Five original and beautiful songs allow not only Grandmother and the child to sing but the angels and sheep as well. Songs and speaking parts allow for all ages and talents to participate, from preschool to adult. Large congregations can include everyone while smaller churches can easily double roles.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10 Speaking Parts, Choruses, Extras)

Speaking parts:

RECITATION GIVERAny age (Part can be doubled)
GRANDMOTHER**Tells story to Child. Can be adapted to grandfather.
CHILD.....Young girl or boy
MARY***Jesus' mother
JOSEPH ***Mary's husband
INNKEEPER.....Shows compassion (Part can be doubled)
FIRST ACTORIn "No Mistakes" recitation and plays a shepherd
SECOND SHEPHERDAnother
THIRD SHEPHERD.....Another
FIRST ANGEL.....Male or female

Singing parts:

PRESCHOOL CLASSES2-4 year olds; do hand movements to first song
LEAD SHEEPLeads song
SHEEP*Any number
ANGELS.....Any number
LADIES' CHORUSThree or more
MEN'S CHORUSFour or more

Optional extras:

OTHER SHEPHERDS.....Optional
TOWNSPEOPLEOptional--in audience to respond to shepherds

** Grandmother may sing or speak her song.

*** Need not be singers unless they join in final song.

Performance time: About 30 minutes. Can be extended by adding prayers, congregation singing, and a pastor's message.

SONGS

Don't Wake the Baby	<i>Sung by offstage chorus as preschoolers do the motions</i>
The True Story	<i>Grandmother and Child</i>
Something Wonderful	<i>First Sheep and Flock</i>
Shepherds, Make Haste!	<i>Men's Chorus</i>
Sometimes I Wonder	<i>Ladies' Chorus (3 part)</i>
Don't Wake the Baby - Reprise	<i>All Performers</i>

In addition, the traditional carols, "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Angels We Have Heard on High," may be included if desired.

SETTINGS

Grandmother and child are seated SR in living room where Grandmother is narrating Christmas story to a child in answer to questions about Christmas. Child is absorbing the story while adding imaginary details of her own. CS and SL areas are for inn, camp scene, and manger setting. No setting need be elaborate but can simply be suggested.

You will need: rocking or easy chair for the grandmother, floor lamp or end table with lamp, extra chair for child's coat, stool for child, decorations as desired; "inn" flats with a working door; moveable tray or board under shepherd's fire for easy and quick scene change; risers or benches for angels (optional); wooden manger with hay and loose hay or hay bales for seating for Mary and Joseph.

SCENE 1 - Grandmother and Child at home.

SCENE 2 - The inn in Bethlehem.

SCENE 3 - Shepherd's campfire at night.

SCENE 4 - Inside of the stable.

See page 12 for costume notes and patterns.

LIGHTING

1. Spotlight (one or more) that can be directed to SR, SL and CS.
2. Red spotlight or color wheel (for shepherd scene). This light is optional.
3. Shepherds' "fire" - red bulb or bulb covered with red material or flickering light.
4. Rheostat - to dim stage lights or spotlights.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: RECITATION GIVER comes to CS.)

RECITATION: "Welcome"

I'm here to welcome one and all;
We're glad you came our way.
May Jesus Christ bless every heart,
And, most of all, we pray
That we will glorify the Lord
In all we do and say.

(Music to "Don't Wake The Baby" starts up as recitation ends. PRESCHOOL and/or PRIMARY classes line up DSC. SONG: "Don't Wake The Baby." OFFSTAGE VOICES sing the words as children do the motions. After song, children exit quietly on tiptoe with fingers to lips. LIGHTS up on SR where GRANDMOTHER sits in a comfortable chair, doing needlework. SFX: Door slamming SL.)

SONG: "Don't Wake The Baby"

SEE, SEE, THERE IN THE MANGER,
OH, WHAT A HEAVENLY SIGHT!
HUSH, HUSH, JESUS IS SLEEPING.
DON'T WAKE THE BABY TONIGHT.

ROCK, ROCK, MARY HAS ROCKED HIM
'TIL SLEEPY EYES ARE CLOSED TIGHT.
HUSH, HUSH, JESUS IS SLEEPING.
DON'T WAKE THE BABY TONIGHT.

DOWN, DOWN, HE'S COME FROM HEAVEN,
BRINGING OUR DARK WORLD THE LIGHT.
HUSH, HUSH, JESUS IS SLEEPING.
DON'T WAKE THE BABY,
DON'T WAKE THE BABY,
DON'T WAKE THE BABY TONIGHT. SHHH.

CHILD: (*Rushing across stage, setting down small overnight bag, pulling off hat, coat, etc., as SHE speaks.*) Grandma! Grandma, I'm here! (*Moves toward GRANDMOTHER, throwing coat onto a chair so that it falls off onto the floor*) Guess what I saw!

GRANDMOTHER: (*Lowering needlework for a hug*) Hello! Slow down, dear...and pick up your coat first. (*As CHILD turns to fold coat over chair*) Now, then, what did you see?

CHILD: We've been shopping, and there are pretty lights everywhere...and carolers singing...and I saw Santa in the store (*Pauses*)...and then I saw two more outside on the sidewalk.

GRANDMOTHER: Well, you've certainly had a busy day! (*Resumes HER needlework*)

CHILD: (*Moving closer and watching HER work*) Grandma?

GRANDMOTHER: (*Looking up again*) Yes?

CHILD: Could you tell me something?

GRANDMOTHER: I'll try. What is it?

CHILD: Well, I saw three Santas today. How can I tell which one is the real one?

GRANDMOTHER: Do you really think there's a real one?

CHILD: *(Thinking)* No-o-o, I guess not...but everyone acts like there's one, and I've heard so many stories...some of my friends believe he's real. Grandma, is he?

GRANDMOTHER: No, dear. Santa's just pretend. He's like a storybook character that someone made up just for fun.

CHILD: I thought so...but, Grandma, if Santa's just pretend, Jesus is still real, isn't He? Someone didn't just make Him up, did they?

GRANDMOTHER: Oh, honey, you know Jesus is real, and the stories about Him are true because they're written in God's Word.

(GRANDMOTHER and CHILD sing.)

SONG: "The True Story"

CHILD: EACH CHRISTMAS THEY TELL ME SUCH WONDERFUL THINGS
ABOUT SANTA AND REINDEER THAT FLY.
OF JESUS AND SHEPHERDS,
A BRIGHT SHINING STAR,
AND ANGELS THAT COME IN THE SKY.
BUT I'M ONLY LITTLE AND I GET MIXED UP;
ARE THEY TRUE ALL THE STORIES I'VE HEARD?

ADULT: A CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW SO HIS SPIRIT CAN GROW;
WE'LL FIND WHAT IS TRUE IN GOD'S WORD.

ADULT: THE SANTA AND REINDEER ARE ONLY PRETEND,
BUT THE STORY OF JESUS IS TRUE.
HE'S GOD'S ONLY SON WHO LEFT HEAVEN'S BRIGHT HOME
TO COME AS A BABY SO NEW.
THEN JESUS GREW UP AND HE DIED FOR OUR SINS,
SO THAT WE COULD REACH HEAVEN ABOVE.
IF WE WILL RECEIVE AND THEN TRULY BELIEVE,
THE STORY OF GOD'S MATCHLESS LOVE.

GRANDMOTHER: *(Reaching for HER Bible on table)* Would you like to hear the real story of Christmas again?

CHILD: *(Sitting on floor or small stool and leaning against GRANDMOTHER'S chair)* Okay. I'll try to remember all of it.

GRANDMOTHER: *(Turning pages to Luke, Chapter 2)* Well, first the Bible tells how Mary and Joseph...that's Jesus' mother and earthly father...had to take a long journey to Bethlehem to pay their taxes. When they arrived in Bethlehem, they were very tired, and it was almost time for Jesus to be born...

(LIGHTS fade on SR and rise on SL. There should be no break in the action.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: MARY and JOSEPH are standing near door to an inn. Joseph knocks and waits.)

INNKEEPER: *(Opening door)* I suppose you're looking for a place to stay tonight, too. Everyone is! I'm sorry, Mister, there's not one square cubit of space left in here.

JOSEPH: *(Gestures to his left)* Is there anything--

INNKEEPER: *(Shakes his head)* No, nothing down that way either. It's complete confusion here in Bethlehem with all these people coming to be taxed!

OFFSTAGE VOICE: *(Shouting)* Innkeeper!

INNKEEPER: *(Looking sympathetically at MARY)* Look, maybe you could stay in the stable out back. *(Points)* Sorry...*(JOSEPH hesitates.)* Go ahead. No charge.

OFFSTAGE VOICE: *(Shouting)* Innkeeper! Where are you?

INNKEEPER: *(Shouting back)* Hold your camels! I'm coming! *(Closes door)*

JOSEPH: *(Putting arm around MARY and moving off around the inn)* You can rest while I unpack our things. God will take care of us. Everything will be fine...*(Voice trails off)*

(LIGHTS fade off SL, come up CS where THREE PEOPLE are holding a discussion.)

RECITATION: "No Mistakes"

FIRST PERSON: I wonder why there wasn't just

One small room in the inn--
A nicer place for Jesus' birth
There surely must have been.

SECOND PERSON: God had that stable all picked out.

Those inns weren't sanitary;
The beds were shared, and there would be
No privacy for Mary.

FIRST PERSON: I guess the inns were not so clean

Or private in that day...
But why a stable? What a place,
With animal and hay!

THIRD PERSON: Yet animals are warm and quiet,

And dry hay from the loft
Is comfortable as any bed,
And warm and clean and soft.

FIRST PERSON: I would have picked a grander place!

SECOND PERSON: But Christ was meek and lowly--

And even though it wasn't grand,
His presence made it holy.

THIRD PERSON: It shows how much He sacrificed

To come here for our sakes.
God chose that stable long ago--
And God makes no mistakes!

(LIGHTS down. MUSICAL interlude, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem," vocal, instrumental, or congregational, while shepherd scene is being prepared at CS.)

Scene 3

(At RISE: LIGHTS up on SR where GRANDMOTHER is again reading to CHILD.)

GRANDMOTHER: *(Reading Luke 2:7)* "...And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room in the inn."
(Looking at the CHILD) So, you see, Jesus, the mighty Son of God who made the universe, came down to earth that night as a tiny, helpless baby.

CHILD: This story is better than a fairy tale! Are the shepherds next?

GRANDMOTHER: That's right. The Bible says, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

CHILD: They didn't have a clue about Jesus being born, did they, Grandma?

GRANDMOTHER: Apparently not...at least not till the angels came.

CHILD: I think the sheep knew, though. I've heard that animals can tell when something is about to happen.

GRANDMOTHER: *(Shaking head)* Well, we don't know that for sure, but I suppose it could be so. I once read that animals can predict earthquakes and tornadoes.

CHILD: *(Leaning back and staring into space)* This was a lot more important than as earthquake. I wonder if those sheep knew...I wonder...

(LIGHTS SR fade as "campfire" lights come up DSL revealing two or more SHEPHERDS sitting around it. FIRST SHEPHERD stands DSR as SHEEP file down aisle, past First Shepherd in front of GRANDMOTHER and CHILD. SHEEP proceed to CS where they mill around with occasional baa-ing.)

FIRST SHEPHERD: *(Speaking gently and pointing with staff)* Ho, Shaggy...Ho, Wooly...Settle down now...Over here...*(SHEEP grow quiet and lie down one by one at CS.)* That's it. Quiet now. Lie down. That's better...

SECOND SHEPHERD: *(Raising HIS head)* What's the matter, Daniel?

FIRST SHEPHERD: They're just restless tonight. I think they're all right now.

THIRD SHEPHERD: *(Rising on elbow)* You can get some sleep now, Daniel. It's my watch for awhile. Come and lie down.

(Makes room for him beside fire; DANIEL lies down. SECOND SHEPHERD doesn't get up. Looks at quiet SHEEP, yawns, and dozes off. Absolute quiet for a few seconds, then MUSIC for "Something Wonderful" starts softly. FIRST SHEEP rises and comes to CS. Other SHEEP rise on hands and knees. SONG: "Something Wonderful." After song, SHEEP rise and file out at SL as "campfire" fades and LIGHTS come up at SR. ANGELS file in from SL and get in place DCS with FIRST ANGEL in front, or elevated, with OTHERS concealed as much as possible behind First Angel.)

End of Freeview

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