The Divine Appointment

By Karen Jones

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SYNOPSIS

The Divine Appointment is a short play about the nativity story. Instead of focusing on the main characters, the storyline is portrayed by the secondary characters: two busybody women of Nazareth, the camel drivers of the Magi, the lowly shepherds, and the innkeeper's wife and daughter. All these individual storylines lead to a stable in Bethlehem. This convergence appears to be divinely inspired as God Himself, through a small newborn baby, descends to Earth to meet mankind.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(7 - 8 m, 5 - 6 w, 1 flexible and angel choir)

ABIGAIL: Town gossip.

ESTHER: Town gossip.

HAMAN: Camel driver.

ISHMAEL: Camel driver.

AHAB: Camel driver.

YASMINE: Servant.

MARTHA: Innkeeper's wife.

MIRIAM: Innkeeper's daughter.

NATHAN: Shepherd.

CALEB: Shepherd.

AMOS: Shepherd.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

ANGEL CHOIR

GASPAR: Magi from the east.

EXTRAS: (optional non-speaking) Mary, Joseph, two kings

SETTINGS

Nazareth marketplace
Gaspar/ Herod courtyard
Note: The marketplace and courtyard scenes can be used with the same backdrop. By adding plants and statuary you can adapt the scene from the marketplace to the courtyards.
Stable with a small pile of hay
Hills over Bethlehem

COSTUMES

Traditional Bible apparel
Traditional Arab apparel (Long white pants and shirt with a colorful vest and belt. Turban on head.)

PROPS

Basket of fruit
Broom / rake for stable
Blanket
Cup / dice
Bedrolls
Campfire

SOUND EFFECTS

Camel snorting
Christmas music for angel choir (if desired)

SCENE 1

Setting: *Nazareth marketplace*
Cast: *Abigail, Esther, Mary (optional non-speaking)*

(LIGHTS UP: ABIGAIL is behind a table, arranging fruit for sale. ESTHER enters from SL carrying an empty basket.)

ABIGAIL: Why Esther, there you are. Where have you been, woman? I haven't seen you for ages. Is everything okay?
ESTHER: As well as it can be under the circumstances.
ABIGAIL: What do you mean? You're all right, aren't you?
ESTHER: Well, if being confined to your home, tending to your cranky mother-in-law is "all right," then I'm just peachy.
ABIGAIL: She's a handful, is she?
ESTHER: You wouldn't believe. There is just no pleasing that woman. Always complaining about something. If it's not my housekeeping, it's how unruly the children are. Or that I'm not treating her son as well as he deserves.
ABIGAIL: I can well imagine. You're a saint for taking her in like you did.
ESTHER: Well, I didn't have much choice, did I? She has other sons, but, just my luck, my Jacob is her favorite, so she decided to choose us.
ABIGAIL: The Most High will surely bless you for your generous spirit.
ESTHER: So says Jacob. But I'm beginning to wonder. Something has got to give. I would have sent Joanna to do the marketing, but I just had to get out of the house for a bit. So here I am. Anything to get away from that harpy. *(SHE starts sorting through the fruit and placing some in her basket.)* So what's been going on in the world while I've been in seclusion?
ABIGAIL: You mean you haven't heard?
ESTHER: Heard what?
ABIGAIL: *(Looks around and drops her voice.)* About Joachim and Anne's daughter, Mary.
ESTHER: That sweet girl. What's happened?

ABIGAIL: She's with child.
ESTHER: *(Drags out the word in shock.)* Noooo. She's just a child herself. Surely there's some misunderstanding.
ABIGAIL: Oh no. She's definitely in the family way. You should see her.
ESTHER: But who could it belong to? She's not married, is she?
ABIGAIL: She's betrothed to Joseph, the carpenter. But I'm not sure he's the father. Nor is he from what I've heard. But then, maybe he just doesn't want to own up to it.
ESTHER: Well, who else could it be?
ABIGAIL: Well, that's the question, isn't it? She spent the summer at her Aunt Elizabeth's house and when she returned, there she was. Big as all get out. So, it's either Joseph's or some scoundrel down in Zachariah's household.
ESTHER: But isn't he a priest of some sort? It's hard to believe he would let a thing like that happen under his roof.
ABIGAIL: Exactly. So that's why I think it had to happen before she went down there and they just sent her away until they could figure out what to do.
ESTHER: Oh, that is so hard to believe. *(Pauses.)* So what are they going to do? Is Joseph going to put her away?
ABIGAIL: I think he thought about it but decided not to. So that tells me, he may just be responsible for the situation.
ESTHER: Well, I guess that makes sense. Still, it's hard to believe that either one of them would do such a thing.
ABIGAIL: *(Looking off SR.)* Hush. Here she comes.

(The WOMEN turn their back to MARY as she enters from SR and proceeds across the stage. She glances at them, but continues on and exits SL. The women turn back to face the audience. If Mary is not cast, you may pantomime this.)

ABIGAIL: Can you believe the gall of that girl? Just parading the streets like that with all us upstanding citizens.

End of Freeview

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