

Upon This Night

By Terri Dill

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Dedication

I send my special thank you to the most amazing cast and technical crew anyone could ever hope to be a part of. You have touched my life, my heart and have blessed me in more ways than I can count. You have inspired me to write and to direct plays. Thank you for your dedication and continued support. May God continue to use us for His service.

To my family...God must have known that one day I would be a part of this ministry so he sent me YOU. He knew I would need someone to inspire my life, to support me when I felt I would fail, and someone to love me when I needed it the most. Thank you for always being there and for supporting my dream. You made this play happen.

To my husband Ron...what can I say, but thank you for understanding this passion of mine and for supporting me through it all. You have helped me to realize my dreams. You made it possible.

To my parents...thank you for believing in me, supporting my endeavors and for giving me so many memories of Fort Morgan. They were written into my plays as were so many memories of our families. They have been with me in spirit.

To my children Brandon and Kelly...you have been the heart and soul of my writing. You inspired me and encouraged me to pursue my goals. The love of the theater started with you both. I learned from you and your many wonderful talents. Thank you.

Premiere Performance: December 14 and 15, 2007 at the Fort Morgan United Methodist Church in Fort Morgan, Colorado.

Cast: Justin Pflug, Shirley Bowles, Phil Tarman, Sue Schaefer, Deb Polansky, Dan Schiller, Ashley Scott, Meghan Scott, Mike Scott, Kelly Dill, Amanda Rios, Brandon Kuretich, Kaitlin Carpenter, Bob Kula, Rich Clough, John LaPorte, Kevin Kuretich, Nick Garver, Sydney Murkins, Jarry Schaefer, Scott Baker, Dawson Frick, Mary Lou Schomburg, Fran Benham, Pam Nestor, Beverly Eyestone, Nelle Grosholz, Jack Benham, Lyn Deal.
Additional soloists: Jodi Garver, Barry Schaefer.

Crew: Director-Terri Dill; Assistant Director-Mary Zorn; Music Director-Shirley Bowles; Accompanist-Marj Kramer; Stage/Costume Manager-Patti Kuretich; Artistic Director-Carol Herbst; Sound Design-Kevin Shaffer, Dave Polansky, Tyler Shaffer; Lighting Design/Special effects-Art Maxwell, Nikkie Cooper, Karen Carpenter, Shaun Geisert, Randy Renken, Mitch Church, Hunter Maxwell, Graham Maxwell; Set Design-Terri Dill; Set Construction-Bob Fisher; Makeup-Kelly Dill, Amy Scott, Jodi Garver, Kelly Murkins; Flyers/Programs-Mary Zorn; Ticket Managers-Nancy Sailsbery, Ginny West; Usher Coordinator-Al Grosholz.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(Large flexible cast. Minimum with doubling 8 m, 4 w,
8 children, 8 angels, extras)*

MEN:

MAN / INNKEEPER / TOWNSPERSON: Any age.

PASTOR DAVIS / SHEPHERD 1: Any age.

WILL / KING 2: Soldier, husband to Ella, father to Jacob, 30s.

SAM / KING 1: Soldier, young man, 20s-30s.

BEN / KING 3: Soldier, young man, 20s-30s.

TOM O'CONNELL / SHEPHERD 2: Father of five young children.

JOSEPH: Mary's husband.

GABRIEL / TOWNSPERSON: Angel of God.

WOMEN:

ALICE: Townsperson.

MARTHA: Townsperson / Angel.

ELLA: Mother to Jacob, wife to Will, young woman, 30s.

MARY: Mother of Jesus.

ANGEL / TOWNSPERSON: Angel appearing to shepherds.

ANGEL CHOIR / TOWNSPEOPLE: 7-8 women.

CHILDREN:

JACOB: Newspaper boy / can double as a shepherd, 10 years old.

THOMAS O'CONNELL: Can double as a shepherd, 14 years old.

TIMOTHY O'CONNELL: 7-8 years old.

CALLIE O'CONNELL: 12 years old.

BETH O'CONNELL: 13 years old.

SARAH O'CONNELL: 8-9 years old.

AMOS / SHEPHERD BOY / TOWNSPERSON: 12 years old.

JOSIAH / SHEPHERD BOY / TOWNSPERSON: 10 years old.

EXTRAS:

Townspeople for beginning of play and for finale.

Please see end of script for music suggestions.

Performance Time: About an hour.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Christmas Eve in Bridger Falls, MN, 1917.

Early nightfall on a street corner. Two women, Alice and Martha, have stopped to visit about their day. A small boy, Jacob, is seen selling newspapers. Many pass him by without acknowledging him. He is dressed poorly and in need of warmer clothes. He notices of a light in the window of the O'Connell home. He watches as the father reads to his five children from the Bible. Some of the children are decorating a Christmas tree. Jacob remains at the window watching the family for a moment, not wanting to move for fear he may miss something. He slowly returns to the street corner in front of the local church where he takes a moment to read the church's announcement board. The longing of this child is heard through the prayer he offers to God. He returns to the window of the home where he watches the family's celebration.

Scene 2: The War

The story now takes us to a small bunker where three soldiers are talking about spending Christmas Eve in a foreign land and how they long to be home. Will is witnessing his faith to Sam and Ben. Will reflects on the wonder of the night and even though they find it hard to have faith in this God, Will continues by reading the Christmas story from the Bible.

Scene 3: The Annunciation / Scene 4: Joseph's Dream Scene 5: The Stable / Scene 6: The Shepherds Receive the Message

As if sending us back in time, we relive the Christmas story as told through the scriptures. From the Annunciation to the shepherds and wise men, we see Mary and Joseph finding their way to the stable and the coming of the long-awaited Christ child.

Scene 7: The Mothers

We return to the small town to see Jacob and his mother at the church's door. Jacob begs his mother to join him for the Christmas Eve service. As she sends him inside without her, she sings of her child so strong in his faith. At the other side of the stage, Mary, in the stable, sings of her newborn son. Their song of love supports these two scenes separated only by time.

Scene 8: His Love

Once again we are brought to the bunker where Will has shared the story of the birth of Christ. Ben and Sam are touched by the message of the night and how much God truly loves all of His children. After some soul searching, they pray to God for His strength. Will closes by saying, "In that stable two thousand years ago, a Child was born, sent by God to save the world."

Scene 9: The O'Connell Home

Scene 10: Upon this Night

We return briefly to town where the O'Connell children worry about Jacob and then to the stable where wise men and shepherds alike worship the newborn king.

Scene 11: Friends

On Christmas day we return to the small town where the O'Connell children approach Jacob to find out why he has been watching them at night through the window of their home. A bond of friendship is formed as Jacob reveals that his father is a soldier at war and has not been heard from for several months. Jacob feels the fears of his mother. The children comfort their new friend and invite him to join in a day of fun in the newly fallen snow.

Scene 12: The Meeting

As fate would have it, Mr. O'Connell meets one of the women in town, who is also alone. They share a bond and it isn't long before she becomes a part of his life.

Scene 13: The Homecoming

At nightfall, the O'Connell family is seen at home playing games and music as they enjoy each other's company. Jacob enters the stage carrying his newspapers under his arm. He sits on the church bench, staring into the sky. After a while he stands as if to get a better look at the night sky then slowly crosses over to the church message board. He reads the message, *Because you believed in me*, and becomes excited knowing God has sent him the sign he has been looking for. He runs off to find his mother so she can witness the "sign." A soldier is seen coming into town carrying a large duffle bag. He crosses over to the bench, and sits down to rest. The soldier is Will, Jacob's father. Jacob enters pulling his mother by the arm, talking excitedly about the message on the board. It is here the family reunites as Will realizes this is his son and wife, whom he has not seen for a very long time. The audience is now taken into four freeze scenes. Spotlighted are the O'Connell family; Will, Mother and Jacob; two soldiers standing by the bunker, heads bent in prayer; and spotlighted and the focus of the stage is the scene at the stable with Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. There is a slow fade to black. The play ends with a spirit of hope through the message of the manger. The ending should draw a parallel of time periods that span over two thousand years for "upon this night," we are all connected.

End of Freeview

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