Stargazers

By Andrew M. Frodahl

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DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to my dear friend and the sister I never had Teisha Priest. Thank you for all the years of encouragement and laughter. You continue to be a source of positive feedback both in writing and in life. Thanks for your support and prayers.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Ever wanted to walk in the footsteps of Mary and Joseph along the nativity trail? Stargazer Holy Land Tours promises that you will experience what it was like as you journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, just like they did over 2,000 years ago. Not only will you step where they stepped, but you will do it in style. The tour promises luxury yurts, the finest Jewish cuisine, and an expert tour guide. But sometimes the amenities in the brochure are just too good to be true. Join the retired Pastor and his wife, a newlywed couple, a travel critic, a photographer, and two missionary interns as they quickly realize their tour guide doesn't really have a clue where they are or what he is doing. Will the weary travelers overcome the scorpions, dehydration, land mines, man-eating lions, Bedouin bandits, poor accommodations, lack of food, and the incompetence of their tour guide? Will they reach Bethlehem by Christmas?

Running Time: about an hour.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4 M, 6 W)

WES: *(male)* A mid-twenties to early thirties missionary intern. He is more interested in Amy, than in serving.

AMY: *(female)* A mid-twenties to early thirties missionary intern. She is all business. She wants to do everything she can right as unto the Lord.

FAROUK: *(male)* Middle-aged man who failed as a Disney World tour guide. He has now taken advantage of the recent vacancy for lead tour guide for Stargazer Holy Land Tours.

MARK WITHERS: *(male)* Late sixties, a retired pastor of a small country church. This vacation has been a lifelong dream.

GINNY WITHERS: *(female)* Late sixties, Mark's wife. She has a strong bond with her Uncle Dan, now deceased. She is a lady who finds humor where there really isn't much. But she truly has the joy of the Lord.

LUCAS BOWERS: *(male)* Mid-twenties newlywed who is not impressed with the destination of their honeymoon.

BROOKE BOWERS: *(female)* Lucas' new bride. Her parents bought them this trip for their honeymoon in hopes that maybe Lucas would have a religious experience.

TEISHA MULLIVER: *(female)* The world-famous travel critic of T. Mulliver's Travels. This was not her idea of a vacation, nor a trip worthy of blogging about.

JOYCE MULLIVER: *(female)* Teisha's sarcastic sister. She is a night photographer specializing in photos of the stars. This trip was on her bucket list.

GIGI: *(female)* The Middle East version of Siri. This can be a pre-recorded voice-over, or done from an actor offstage.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Nativity Trail – Day One
Scene 2: Nativity Trail – Nightfall
Scene 3: Nativity Trail – Day Three
Scene 4: Nativity Trail – Day Four
Scene 5: Nativity Trail – Nightfall

SETTING

The Nativity Trail in Israel. The stage has a backdrop of desert and palm trees, basically a Middle Eastern landscape. Far down stage left is a campfire. A few palm trees or cacti can dot the stage for extra scenery. A few boulders big enough to sit on are near the campfire along with stump 'chairs.' For Scene 5, a crude remains of a stable is either stage right or left. The stable should look like it has survived for two thousand years.

PROPS

Binoculars, Disney World map, bomb sign that says 'DANGER MINE FIELD,' brochure, camera, missionary handbook, pebbles, (6) sleeping bags, audio recorder, coffee pot, urn, (4) cans of SpaghettiOs, small bowls, hatchet, (8) backpacks, yurt fabric, (2) cell phones, empty water jugs, water stick, canteen, knife, mini-shovel, dog bone, pen, bowls, palm branches, twigs for fire, shawl, pillow, headband, innkeeper hat, sheep head, cow head, donkey head, angel wings, staff, baby, manger, cloth, straw.

COSTUMES*

WES – Jeans and a flannel shirt.
AMY – She should be in the best hiking gear. Top of the line.
FAROUK – Dressed like a boy scout leader. Or in full safari gear. The more over-the-top ludicrous, the better.
MARK WITHERS – Comfortable, casual clothes.
GINNY WITHERS – Comfortable, casual clothes.
LUCAS BOWERS – Like he ordered his clothes right out of the L.L. Bean catalogue.
BROOKE BOWERS – Same as Lucas, from L.L. Bean.
TEISHA MULLIVER – Not dressed for nature.
JOYCE MULLIVER – Same as Lucas and Brooke, from L.L. Bean.
*These are mostly suggestions. Feel free to be creative.

SOUND EFFECTS

Scene 2: Thunder
Scene 4: Lion's roar
Scene 5: Thunder

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The Nativity Trail. The backdrop is of the Judean wilderness. Rolling hills & palms. A tour guide named FAROUK is holding a map and peering off into the distance. Two interns, AMY and WES, are right behind him. Six tourists – MARK, GINNY, LUCAS, BROOKE, TEISHA, and JOYCE – are behind them. Brooke is carrying an urn. Farouk looks in his binoculars, and it's obvious that he is lost.)

WES: He has no idea where he is going.
AMY: Shh! Don't say that. You'll scare the tourists.
WES: Amy, he is lost. We've made a complete circle in the past hour.
AMY: No, Wes. You don't become a tour guide of an international touring agency if you don't know where you are going. I'm sure he has been doing this trail for decades.
LUCAS: My feet! Are we stopping for the night anytime soon?
BROOKE: Babe, don't complain. I'm sure we are almost there.
TEISHA: Losing the donkeys hasn't helped my back any.
JOYCE: Oh, Teisha, where is your sense of adventure?
TEISHA: The brochure said pack mules will handle <u>all</u> luggage.
JOYCE: Well, that was before the intern sneezed and scared them off.
WES: That wasn't my fault! *(To AMY.)* Someone forgot to tie them.
AMY: They were tied!
GINNY: Not very tight, dear.
MARK: *(Excited.)* Ginny, can you believe it? This dirt, right here, *(Picks up dirt.)* is the same dirt Mary and Joseph trod! This air we are breathing, *(Breathes in.)* is the same air the mother of our Lord inhaled!
GINNY: Oh, he is so excited.
LUCAS: Dude, it's dirt covered in donkey dung.
BROOKE: Do you mind me asking why you are carrying that lovely vase?
GINNY: Oh, *(Laughs.)* sweetie, this isn't a vase. It's an urn.

WES: An urn? You're carrying around a body? Gross.
GINNY: Not just some body, it's my dear Uncle Dan. God rest his soul. He paid for this trip.
BROOKE: He did?
GINNY: Yes… you see, Mark and I have dreamed of this vacation all our lives. But with Mark being a pastor for forty years of a small country church, it doesn't leave you with much savings. But when my Uncle Dan passed, he wanted his ashes spread over the fields of Bethlehem, where the shepherds had watched by night.
BROOKE: Oh, wow, interesting.
GINNY: He left enough money in his will for us to turn it into a vacation.
LUCAS: This is no vacation, lady. I feel like I'm on the run from the law. Hawaii… now that would have been a honeymoon.
BROOKE: Babe, don't start.
GINNY: Honeymoon?
BROOKE: This is our honeymoon.
MARK: Congratulations! And you picked travelling this historic trail. Well done!
LUCAS: I didn't pick anything! I wanted Hawaii.
BROOKE: Babe, this was a gift. I couldn't say no and hurt my parents' feelings.
LUCAS: So, I suffer? I know why they sent us here, Brooke.
BROOKE: It's pretty?
LUCAS: Pretty awful!
MARK: This shows us how rough it was for Mary and Joseph long ago. Back then they didn't have the luxuries we have when travelling. Warm cots inside a luxury yurt powered by generators. Why, we won't even miss *Wheel of Fortune*.
BROOKE: *(Remembering.)* That's right, hun, the luxury yurts. Won't be long and we will be all cozy and snuggled up in our own private yurt.
GINNY: Why did her parents pick this trip?
LUCAS: Her parents want me to have a religious experience. They're a couple of faith feelers.
BROOKE: Lucas!
GINNY: Sounds like my kind of folk. Ha-ha. No offense.

End of Freeview

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