

THE CHRISTMAS TIME MACHINE

by Brian Yapko



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**THE CHRISTMAS
TIME MACHINE**

Technology Meets Timeless Truths

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SYNOPSIS: Two self-centered teens are too busy texting, Twittering, and Facebooking to be fully present at their family’s Christmas. Later, left alone with their mad scientist uncle’s time machine, they tinker with it, and bam! They’re lost in time and space. When the dust settles, robed residents of Bethlehem politely inquire if they are census-bound. The trio meet shepherds, then Magi, and finally, the Holy Family. They are wonderstruck as they realize that it’s two thousand years ago, they’re a million miles from home, and the “story” is completely true. Overcome by the presence of the baby Jesus, each gives him a cherished item: little sis Alice gives her teddy bear, Andrew his iPhone, and Ashley her designer purse—then all three give him their hearts. An engaging poke at the materialism that undermines a meaningful Christmas observance. Being overly connected to social media and attached to gadgets just might resonate with your audience! Thankfully, you don’t need a time machine to visit Jesus. He’s alive now—and that’s the joy of Christmas.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 females, 10 males)

- DOC ELLIOTT WINTER (m).....The intelligent but eccentric “crazy uncle” in his sixties. *(22 lines)*
- MONTY WINTER (m).....Dad. *(22 lines)*
- CAROL WINTER (f).....Mom. *(21 lines)*
- ASHLEY WINTER (f).....Teenage daughter, about fourteen years old. *(45 lines)*
- ANDREW WINTER (m).....Teenage son, about thirteen years old. *(38 lines)*
- ALICE WINTER (f)The youngest daughter, about five years old. *(20 lines)*
- SELLER WOMAN (f).....Biblical vendor of pita bread. *(8 lines)*
- MERCHANT MAN (m).....Biblical vendor of hummus, falafel, and baba ganoush. *(6 lines)*
- ASHER (m).....A shepherd. *(19 lines)*

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ZEBULON (m)	Another shepherd. (14 lines)
BALTHASAR (m)	Magus 1. (7 lines)
MELCHIOR (m)	Magus 2. (7 lines)
CASPAR (m).....	Magus 3. (6 lines)
JOSEPH (m).....	Earthly father of Jesus. (6 lines)
MARY (f).....	Mother of Jesus. (10 lines)

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET: Sets can and should be very minimalist and flexible. It is best for the story if time periods are suggested primarily with costumes and props rather than with sets to emphasize the theme that our times and those of two thousand years ago are deeply connected. The only set piece that is really a “must” is the stable with the manger. If possible, some type of screen, curtain, or doorway may keep Mary, baby Jesus, and the manger obscured until the proper time. Otherwise, keep it simple.

COSTUMES

MONTY, CAROL, ASHLEY, ANDREW, and ALICE – All wear Christmas church attire. Keep in mind that Ashley wants to show off her eye-catching “designer” clothes, and her outfit should include a scarf.

DOC WINTER – Wears Christmas church attire, but over it, he wears a white laboratory coat. He also wears a watch and a wild white wig and glasses.

BALTHASAR, MELCHOIR, and CASPAR – Wear robes that are somewhat exotic—perhaps choir robes or other robes of silky or shiny fabric.

MERCHANT MAN, SELLER WOMAN, SHEPHERDS, MARY, and JOSEPH – Wear Judean/Bedouin robes of plain fabrics with head coverings and sandals. The shepherds may carry staffs.

PROPS

- old-fashioned alarm clock
- remote control (when it “breaks,” it doesn’t need to break apart, it may simply malfunction but remain in one piece)
- three wrapped gifts (for Monty and Doc’s two neighbors)
- ribbons and boxes (for Carol to clean up)
- teddy bear (Mr. Cuddles)
- two cell phones
- ear buds
- nice purse
- two portable carts with signs (for selling hummus and pita)
- pottery cup with water (which Joseph brings to Mary)
- doll (for baby Jesus)
- fancy bottles or boxes (representing gold, frankincense, and myrrh)
- a time machine

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

The design of the time machine as a television set is meant to accomplish two purposes: 1. It makes the creation of this prop very easy, since it may simply be a TV-sized moving box with some dials, buttons, and wires attached to it. It is even simpler when the time machine stays put in contemporary times and only the “clicker” accompanies the children through time and space. 2. A big theme in this play is the struggle between a modern technology which encourages narcissism and materialism versus the values that are represented by Jesus Christ and his church. Having a prop that looks like a TV serve as the time machine which actually brings characters closer to Christ is intended as an ironic resolution of this struggle. The machine ultimately proves unnecessary for having Christ present in our lives, but there are times when such “gadgets” can actually be helpful rather than hurtful. They have their place, and—ahem—time.

MUSICAL CUES/SPECIAL EFFECTS

The time travel sequence requires a strobe or flashing light effect. Secular time travel music is needed for about five seconds twice in the early part of the play. This music may be improvised at the accompanist's discretion, but should be secular in nature—probably not any recognizable tune. The final time travel music, when Doc and the parents join the siblings in Bethlehem, should be religious in nature to reflect the journey and change the characters have experienced. A snippet of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" would work, but the final music choice should be left to the accompanist. You will also need musical accompaniment for "The First Noel," which concludes the play.

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AT START: *A very loud old-fashioned clock alarm rings. DOC WINTER enters and searches frantically for the alarm.*

DOC WINTER: *(Muttering to himself.)* It's time, it's time! It's Jesus' birthday! *(He finally finds the alarm and shuts it off. He turns and, with eyes wide and slightly manic, addresses the audience.)* Great Scott—it's Christmas! Merry Christmas, everybody! My name is Doctor Elliott Winter. I'm an inventor. Welcome to my home. *(He looks at his watch.)* Great Scott! Look at the time! I've got so much to tell you, and we've got so little time. Let's get started. *(He calls over to the wings.)* Monty, Carol! Come over here a minute. Bring the kids.

The WINTER FAMILY gathers at Center Stage.

DOC WINTER: You see these folks? This is my nephew Monty and his family. Say hello, Monty!

MONTY: Hello, everybody!

DOC WINTER: And this is Carol.

CAROL: Merry Christmas!

DOC WINTER: Their teenage daughter, Ashley.

ASHLEY: *(Busy texting and barely looks up.)* Whatever.

DOC WINTER: Their boy, Andrew.

ANDREW: *(Adopting a cool pose.)* Heyyyy, whassup?!

DOC WINTER: And little Alice.

ALICE: *(Blows a kiss and with her other hand holds up her teddy bear to the audience.)* And don't forget Mr. Cuddles!

DOC WINTER: Of course, Alice! We can never forget Mr. Cuddles! *(Back to audience.)* Well, this is my family. They're visiting me for Christmas, and we've had the most extraordinary morning. *(He leans forward.)* You see, I've invented a time machine. And this morning, we went back to the first Christmas! Let's start from the beginning.

DOC WINTER: *(Continued.)* Monty and Carol were arguing over here. *(DOC moves them to one side of the stage.)* The teenagers were being self-centered over there... and there. *(DOC moves them to another part of the stage.)* Alice and Mr. Cuddles were having a pretend tea party over here. *(Points where ALICE is.)* And I was in the laboratory giving the time machine a few nips and tucks. *(The time machine is a television-sized box with intricate buttons and dials. DOC uses a remote control to operate it. The machine itself does not travel with the characters—only the remote control. DOC points the remote control directly at the audience.)* Are you ready to go back a few hours in time with me? All righty, then! December twenty-fifth, ten o'clock in the morning. Here we go!

DOC presses the remote control, and then there is a strobe light effect and some time travel music, and the WINTER FAMILY'S Christmas morning is rewound back to the beginning.

DOC WINTER: *(Aside to the audience.)* Pretty cool, huh?

MONTY: *(Sings while unwrapping a present.)* Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa-la-la-la-la...

CAROL: *(Cleaning up ribbons and paper from the floor.)* I'm really tired of that one, Monty. Can't you sing something else?

MONTY: *(Sings.)* I heard the bells on Christmas day...

CAROL: No! Something else!

MONTY: *(Getting irritated, sings a little too loudly.)* We wish you a merry Christmas...

CAROL: Monty, I swear—you're impossible. *(She sighs.)* You know, Monty, Christmas only comes once a year. I wish the kids wouldn't disappear so quickly after opening their presents. I need help cleaning up!

MONTY: Good luck! It was a miracle getting them to church. Now they're busy playing with their cell phones—texting, Twittering, Facebooking, and who knows what else.

CAROL: You know, Monty, that's not right. It's Christmas, and we should all be together! *(Calling.)* Andrew? Can you help me?

ANDREW: *(He has a new cell phone and can't hear with the ear buds in his ear. He sings and plays air guitar.)* Ch-ch-puh, ch-puh-ch-puh. Funky, funky holi-day, punky cool stuff today, hit the road, you're in my way....

CAROL: Andrew! Oh, that awful music! Forget it. *(Calls to her daughter.)* Ashley! Will you come here and help me? Ashley!

ASHLEY: *(Talking on her cell phone.)* ...and then he asked her to go to the mall. And you know what she— *(Looks up.)* Hold on. What, Mom? Sorry—I'm busy. *(Back to her phone.)* And then she said, "No way." *(Pause.)* Yes. Yes! No way!

MONTY: What do you expect? Teenagers.

CAROL: It's not just teenagers, Monty. Sometimes it seems like the whole world is full of "Sorry, I'm too busy to help you."

ALICE: *(Stands up.)* Mr. Cuddles and I can help you, Mommy!

CAROL: Thank you, sweetie, but some of these boxes are way too heavy for you. Finish your tea with Mr. Cuddles.

ALICE goes back to her imaginary tea.

CAROL: Well, I guess I can always ask your father... *(She looks hopefully at MONTY who looks at her for a moment and then looks away, pretending to be busy.)*

MONTY: *(Sings.)* Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la....

DOC WINTER: *(The FAMILY is getting on his nerves.)* Great Scott, Monty! No more fa-la-la-la-la! You're ruining my concentration!

MONTY: I'm sorry, Doc. Was I distracting you?

DOC WINTER: Never mind. I think I finally got the bugs out of this one. Look here, Monty and Carol. This is going to be my gift to you and the family for Christmas!

CAROL: A television set! Thank you, Uncle Elliott.

DOC WINTER: Great Scott, no! It's not a television set. It's a time machine!

MONTY: A what?

DOC WINTER: You heard me. A bona-fide time machine! Now that I've got the bugs out of it, we can go see Lincoln deliver his *Gettysburg Address* in person! We can go back and watch the Wright Brothers fly the very first airplane!

MONTY: A time machine? Amazing!

CAROL: Uncle Elliott, since it's Christmas, I'd like to go back to the forties to hear Bing Crosby sing "White Christmas" in person! Or maybe back to the 1840s to watch Charles Dickens put the final touches on *A Christmas Carol*.

DOC WINTER: All in good time, Carol. First I'd like to drop off some gifts for my neighbors, Mrs. Einstein and Mrs. Edison. They're alone today, and I'd like you to meet them. We'll only be gone for about an hour. Maybe Ashley and Andrew can babysit Alice while we're gone. I'll go grab the gifts. *(He exits.)*

MONTY: Einstein? Edison? Hmmmm.... those names sound familiar.

CAROL: *(Sighs.)* I hope Andrew and Ashley can tear themselves away from their cell phones and designer gadgets.

ALICE: *(Turns from her pretend tea.)* Don't worry, Mommy! I'll watch Ashley and Andrew while you're gone. They can have tea and cake with me and Mr. Cuddles. We're celebrating Jesus being born!

CAROL: *(Stoops down and hugs ALICE.)* What a good girl you are, Alice! That's right—today is Jesus' birthday, and you're going to spend some quality time with your sister and your brother. *(Calling.)* Ashley! Andrew! Can you come here, please!

ASHLEY: *(From off to the side.)* Mom, I'm busy!

ANDREW: *(Still listening to music and playing air guitar.)* Ch-ch-puh, ch-puh-ch-puh. Funky, funky ch-ch year, money, honey in my ear...

MONTY goes to ANDREW and pulls the earbuds out of his ears.

ANDREW: Heyyyy!

MONTY: *(Points to where CAROL is standing.)* Enough with the "ch-ch-puh," young man! March! *(ANDREW joins the family up front.)*

CAROL: Come on, Ashley. You march too, or no cell phone for a week!

ASHLEY: *(Panicked, into her phone.)* 'Bye, Chloe! I gotta run! *(She walks over to join CAROL, MONTY, ALICE, and ANDREW.)* What's up?

ANDREW: Yeah... *(Strikes his cool pose.)* Whassup?!

DOC enters carrying the two gifts for his neighbors.

MONTY: (*Sternly.*) Ashley, Andrew... (*He chickens out.*) Your mother has something to say to you.

CAROL: Gee, thanks, Monty. All right, you two, listen up. You've both been obsessed with your presents from Aunt Marcia all morning. You texted all through church, you've ignored your family and Uncle Elliott, you haven't helped me clean up after making a big mess, and for heaven's sake—it's Christmas!

MONTY: That's right. It's Christmas and we're a family. We should all be together!

ASHLEY: We *are* together! I just wanted to tell Chloe about my new phone and my Gucci purse and my Ralph Lauren scarf, and how I'll be cooler than anybody else in school!

DOC WINTER: Great Scott!

ANDREW: Hey, we're together! Look at this! (*Strikes a cool pose.*) I did a selfie of me posing like this, posted it on Instagram, and now I've got three hundred thirty-one likes and forty-eight comments. Turns out I'm a Christmas Internet sensation!

DOC WINTER: Great Scott!

MONTY: (*Sighs.*) I'm disappointed in you guys. I had hoped that by visiting Uncle Elliott for the holidays and going to church that you'd pick up some of the spirit of Christmas, but no.

CAROL: Boasting about clothes? Selfies? Hmpf! We'll talk about this later. We're headed out for about an hour or so to visit with some of the neighbors. They're lonely because they don't have their families with them today.

ALICE: It's baby Jesus' birthday! Maybe Jesus can come have tea with the lonely neighbors and me and Mr. Cuddles!

MONTY: (*Bends down to hug ALICE.*) That's the Christmas spirit, honey! You never know! (*He stands up and points a stern finger at ASHLEY and ANDREW.*) Your mother and I want you to babysit Alice, and that means no iPad or iPhone or iMovie or i—anything.

ASHLEY: (*Exasperated.*) Dad, you don't even know all the names of—

MONTY: No I don't, and I'm not a bit sorry. Christmas isn't Christmas when everything is virtual and electronic.

DOC WINTER: (*Was frowning but now a lightbulb goes off in his head.*) Great Scott!

CAROL: What is it, Uncle Elliott?

DOC WINTER: *(He's up to something.)* Oh, nothing important, Carol. But before we go, just make sure the children don't touch the you-know-what!

CAROL: *(Playing along.)* Ah, of course. Ashley, Andrew, whatever you do, please make sure you don't tinker with Uncle Elliott's time machine while we're gone.

ANDREW and ASHLEY exchange looks and mouth the words, "Time machine?"

DOC WINTER: Do not tinker with this amazing new invention that can transport time travelers to the past and the future. Ignore that remote control over there on my desk! And whatever you do, don't pick it up and don't even think about pressing the green button on the far right side of it—the one that's second down from the top.

MONTY: Understood? Don't tinker with Uncle Elliott's time machine!

ASHLEY: *(Intrigued.)* Of course, Dad. We understand!

ANDREW: *(Winks at ASHLEY.)* We understand completely!

MONTY: All right, we're leaving now. See you soon!

ASHLEY: OK! See you... in good time! *(She winks at ANDREW.)*

DOC WINTER, MONTY, and CAROL exit.

ALICE: Sister? Brother? Will you have tea with me and Mr. Cuddles?
(She sings while she pours imaginary tea for ASHLEY and ANDREW.) Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way...

ASHLEY checks to make sure the adults are gone. ANDREW races over to the time machine.

ASHLEY: The coast is clear!

ANDREW: Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

ASHLEY: Oh, yeah!

ASHLEY and ANDREW: We are so tinkering with Uncle Elliott's time machine!

ALICE: *(Indignant, she stands up.)* You shouldn't do that!

ANDREW: *(Ignoring ALICE.)* How does it work?

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ASHLEY: Here's the dial. It says December twenty-fifth. That's today.

But there's no hour or year.

ANDREW: Here it is! It says one. Let's just try one for now. That would be an hour from now.

ASHLEY: Come here, Alice.

ALICE: *(Walks over to ANDREW and ASHLEY.)* I have a bad feeling about this, Mr. Cuddles!

ANDREW presses the button on the remote control. The lights flash and time travel music plays. After about five seconds, the music stops and the lights return to normal. ASHLEY, ANDREW, and ALICE have traveled in time to about two thousand years ago. The SIBLINGS are dizzy for a moment. They come to in an ancient-looking marketplace. SELLER WOMAN and MERCHANT MAN are selling their wares.

SELLER WOMAN: Pita for Sale! Hot pita!

MERCHANT MAN: Fresh hummus! Fresh falafel! Get 'em while they're fresh!

ANDREW: *(Rubbing his eyes.)* What happened?

ASHLEY: *(Standing up.)* I don't know, Andrew. I just don't know!

ALICE: *(Also standing up.)* I'm scared! Are you OK, Mr. Cuddles?

ASHLEY: It'll be all right, Alice! I'll figure out where we are. *(She checks her cell phone to find their location.)*

SELLER WOMAN: Pita for Sale! Fresh pita! Get it while it's hot!

MERCHANT MAN: Fresh hummus! Fresh falafel! Baba ganoush! *(He looks questioningly at the three SIBLINGS.)* Baba ganoush?

ANDREW: No, mister. We're from _____! [Insert state of where play is presented.]

ASHLEY: This is so strange. My cell phone doesn't have any reception, and there's no GPS. I can't figure out where we are!

ANDREW: *(Checks his phone.)* Same here. No GPS. *(He looks around.)* But the costumes are cool. *(He can't resist and starts to take a selfie with the MERCHANT MAN in the background while absentmindedly muttering.)* Ch-ch-puh, ch-ch-puh.

MERCHANT MAN: *(Muttering darkly at ANDREW's odd behavior.)* What manner of magic is this? *(ANDREW realizes he's offended MERCHANT MAN and hastily puts his phone in his pocket.)*

ANDREW: Sorry!

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ASHLEY: *(To the SELLER WOMAN.)* Excuse me, ma'am, but we seem to be lost. Can you tell us where we are?

SELLER WOMAN: Lost, are ya? Aye, I can see by your attire. *(Tries to guess their nationality.)* Ephesians? Phoenicians?

ASHLEY: *(Twirls to show off her clothes.)* Nordstroms.

SELLER WOMAN: *(Baffled.)* I see.... Are you here for the census?

ANDREW: What census?

SELLER WOMAN: Why, the one ordered by Emperor Augustus! He ruled that everyone in the Empire has to go to their hometown to get counted. I thought perhaps you were here like that nice couple who were going to have the baby. What were their names?

MERCHANT MAN: Mary and Joseph, they said. They were looking for a place to stay, and—can you believe it?—not one of our inns had any room for them. Not even for a pregnant lady!

SELLER WOMAN: It's a scandal! But there's no room anywhere in town. Boaz down the street has a stable. That's where Mary and Joseph ended up. A stable! What a place to give birth to a child!

ASHLEY: Couldn't they just, like, go the mall and hang out there?

MERCHANT MAN: *(Baffled.)* Hang out? Hang out, ye say? I don't quite understand your dialect, miss. I can see you're not from these parts. Are ye from Galilee?

ANDREW: No, we're from _____. [Insert city or church where play is presented.]

SELLER WOMAN: Huh?

ASHLEY: [Insert same location.] _____! You know, near _____? [Insert another nearby town.] *(SELLER WOMAN shakes her head.)* _____? [Insert still another nearby town.] *(Still no recognition.)* _____? [Insert with a local town, city, or church with a biblical name, such as Damascus.]

SELLER WOMAN: Ah, Damascus! [Or insert local biblically-named town/church named above.] Of course! I have family there. Well, you're pretty far from there. *(With drama.)* Welcome to Bethlehem! *(She turns back to her trade.)* Pita for sale! Hot pita for sale!

MERCHANT MAN: Hummus! Fresh falafel! Baba ganoush!

SELLER WOMAN and MERCHANT MAN exit the stage.

ASHLEY: Bethlehem! (*In a daze.*) Oh, no! Andrew, Alice, I think I know what happened. When you pressed one on the time machine, it didn't mean one o'clock. It meant year one.

ANDREW: Heyyyy, cool. That means we're in Judea for the very first Christmas! I want to see a chariot race. (*He takes out his phone.*) I can't wait to post pictures from here!

ALICE: (*Excited.*) The first Christmas! I want to see baby Jesus!

ASHLEY: (*Worried, almost shrieking.*) Andrew! Alice! What are you saying? We shouldn't be here. We have to get home! Give me that remote control! (*She grabs it from ANDREW's hand.*)

ANDREW: Ashley, give it back! You don't know what you're— (*He grabs at it, they both struggle over it, and the remote falls and breaks. ANDREW presses on it to no avail.*) Oh, no! Now what do we do?

ASHLEY: (*Pacing.*) We're trapped! We're marooned in Bible times!

ALICE: Don't worry, sister! Baby Jesus can save us!

Two shepherds, ASHER and ZEBULON, enter the market square and overhear the SIBLINGS.

ASHLEY: (*Helplessly.*) Alice, it's not like that. This isn't just a Bible story in Sunday school. We're two thousand years ago and just about a million miles away from home!

ANDREW: Yikes, Ashley, you're right! Even if the Bible story is true, Jesus is just a little baby. How can he possibly save us?

ASHER: Children, we do not mean to interfere, but we heard you mention Jesus.

ZEBULON: The Christ child.

ALICE: (*Jumping.*) Baby Jesus, baby Jesus! He can save us!

ASHER: Out of the mouth of babes. You're right, little one. He can save us all.

ZEBULON: We are on our way to see Jesus this very minute. Through him you can be found!

ASHLEY: But you can't possibly understand the fix we're in. We're lost in time and space.

ZEBULON: (*Nodding calmly.*) As are we all.

ASHLEY: (*Suspiciously.*) Who are you, anyway?

ASHER: Young maid, we are shepherds of the field who were guided to this place, the City of David.

ANDREW: Heyyyy! The shepherds from the Bible! (*He strikes his cool pose.*) Whassup?!

ZEBULON: Your foreign ways baffle us, youth, but we will say, “Heyyyy” in return.

ASHER and ZEBULON: (*Imitate ANDREW’s cool pose and say together.*) Heyyyy!

ASHLEY: Wow! Are you *the* shepherds? The ones in the gospel that the herald angel came to?

ASHER: (*Exchanges a glance with ZEBULON.*) How can you know that, young maid? Did the angel come to you, too?

ASHLEY: (*Hiding their time travel secret.*) Um, no.

ASHER: (*Shaking his head.*) How you know about the angel is only one of many mysteries we have seen this day! Tell them, Zebulon!

ZEBULON: We are simple shepherds. We keep watch over our flocks by night. But last night an angel of the Lord stood before us!

ANDREW: A real angel? No way!

ASHER: (*Gravely.*) Yes way. A real angel! The glory of the Lord shone all around us. We were terrified!

ANDREW: (*Becoming mesmerized by their story.*) Then what happened?

ASHER: The angel—he said, “Do not be afraid.”

ZEBULON: I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. For born to you this day in the city of David is a Savior (*Luke 2:10-11*).

ASHER: The Messiah.

ASHER and ZEBULON: (*Together.*) The Lord.

ASHER: This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger (*Luke 2:12, NRSV*). (*Aside to the SIBLINGS.*) That’s who we are looking for now.

ZEBULON: (*Continues the story.*) Suddenly the angel was surrounded by a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying... (*Luke 2:13*)

ANDREW: (*With uncharacteristic wonder.*) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward all... (*Luke 2:14*).

ASHER: How could you know what was said to us, youth?!

ASHLEY: It’s a long story.

ZEBULON: It is indeed. A tale as old as time.

ANDREW: (*Thoughtfully.*) Wow! It's all true then! (*He turns away, deep in thought. A pause.*)

ASHER: Children, we see that you are baffled and lost. The holy child Jesus will help all who are lost to be found. Come with us.

ASHLEY: I don't know...

ANDREW: (*Unexpectedly.*) I think we should go with them.

ASHLEY: Andrew! Really?

ALICE: Baby Jesus, baby Jesus! I want to see baby Jesus!

ANDREW: (*Slowly, with great seriousness.*) I think I want to see baby Jesus too, Alice.

ASHLEY: (*After a pause and a sigh.*) What were your names again?

ASHER: Asher.

ZEBULON: And Zebulon. At your service.

ASHLEY: Well, Asher and Zebulon, I'm Ashley, this is Andrew, and this is our little sister, Alice.

ALICE: (*Holds up teddy bear.*) And Mr. Cuddles!

ASHLEY: (*Slightly embarrassed.*) Uh, and Mr. Cuddles. I guess we're going with you. Wow! To see Jesus!

ASHER: Let us go, then, and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us (*Luke 2:15*).

As they walk across the stage toward the stable, they are confronted by three exotic characters, BALTHASAR, MELCHIOR, and CASPAR, carrying gifts.

ASHLEY: (*To ASHER.*) Oh, no. Who are they?!

BALTHASAR: Wait, travelers!

MELCHIOR: Attend us, fellow wanderers!

CASPAR: Shepherds and youths—where go you?

ASHER: (*Gestures to the SIBLINGS to be quiet.*) We are but humble shepherds of the field.

ZEBULON: (*Referring to the SIBLINGS.*) We are here searching for answers while we try to care for these lost young sheep.

The MAGI all bow in kindly greeting.

ASHER: Please rise, strangers. Who are you?

ASHLEY: *(No longer afraid.)* I know, I know! The three Magi, sometimes known as the three wise men or the three kings.

BALTHASAR: You have deep knowledge, maiden! We are indeed scholars from the East.

MELCHIOR: We are here because we followed the new star which will lead us to the King of the Jews.

CASPAR: The new Messiah!

ANDREW: *(Connects the song to the circumstances.)* “We three kings of Orient are...” You’ve followed the Star of Bethlehem to see the Baby Jesus!

CASPAR: Youth, how do you know such things? Are you a Magus?

ANDREW: No. I’m an _____. [Insert appropriate state resident name, such as “Oregonian.”]

CASPAR: *(Confused.)* I see!

ASHLEY: *(Grasping for the familiar, takes out her cell phone.)* Andrew, do you want me to take a picture of you for Instagram?

ANDREW: *(With new maturity.)* No, Ashley. Not this time. *(ASHLEY seems troubled by the change in ANDREW’s personality.)*

ASHER: Why, great Magi, we shepherds and these lost youths also seek the same Messiah, but we have lost the trail.

ALICE: *(Tugs on BALTHASAR’s robe.)* Are you grownups looking for a big, bright star?

BALTHASAR: Yes, child. Speak!

ALICE: *(She points.)* It’s right there, silly!

ZEBULON: I see the star! Thank you, child. It shines directly yonder, above that stable.

MELCHIOR: Let us go there at once!

The SIBLINGS, the SHEPHERDS, and the MAGI approach the stable. JOSEPH emerges from the doorway and lifts a screen that reveals MARY and the baby Jesus. He carries a cup of water back to MARY.

ASHLEY: *(Panics when she sees the HOLY FAMILY.)* Stop! I’m scared.

ALICE: Don’t be scared! It’s Jesus. He loves us.

ANDREW: I’m scared too. Wow—Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus! *(Breathing deeply.)* Here we are at the very first Christmas!

JOSEPH sees the group and waves, beckoning them to come over.

JOSEPH: Good evening, strangers! Don't be shy. We are all travelers on a journey! Are you looking for shelter?

BALTHASAR: (*Bows.*) We are looking for a newborn babe—a child who is the newborn King.

JOSEPH: (*Grasps BALTHASAR's hand.*) I tell you truthfully, stranger—I know not if he is to be a king. But to me, he's the most remarkable child on earth. Follow me. (*He leads the group to the stable.*) This is my beloved, Mary.

MARY: Joseph, so many people! God's peace to each of you!

MELCHIOR: (*The MAGI bow.*) Hail, Mary. You are full of grace.

MARY: How your words touch me!

JOSEPH: And this little one is Jesus.

ALICE: (*Comes forward.*) Happy birthday, Jesus!

ASHLEY: Yes, happy birthday!

ANDREW: (*Very serious.*) Happy birthday, Lord Jesus.

MARY: (*Noticing ASHER and ZEBULON.*) Welcome, shepherds of the field! We are grateful for the visit, but why are you here?

ZEBULON: The angels sent us. They came to us in the field and heralded the birth of this child, your son!

ASHER: He is to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of all mankind—the Messiah!

MARY: (*Looking to heaven.*) Oh, God of our ancestors, it is true, then! (*Back to baby.*) Oh Jesus, my son!

JOSEPH: Thank you, good shepherds.

MARY: I shall ponder your words and treasure them in my heart forever!

MELCHIOR: Oh, Holy Family!

CASPAR: We visitors from the East bow before you.

MELCHIOR: We come bearing gifts!

BALTHASAR: May we present our gifts to the Christ child?

MARY: Yes, good strangers. Of course!

BALTHASAR: (*Bows and gives gift.*) Little King, I bring you gold.

MELCHIOR: (*Bows, gives gift.*) Holy child, I bring frankincense.

CASPAR: (*Bows, gives gift.*) Prince of Peace, I bring you myrrh.

MARY: Thank you, kind strangers. God's blessings upon you.

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CHRISTMAS TIME MACHINE

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