

FINDING CHRISTMAS

by Rachel Dvorak



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A Tale of Two Bethlehems

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SYNOPSIS: What a Christmas Eve. When Brian works overtime and comes home tipsy, that's it—his fed-up family goes to church without him. Alone, Brian trips and bumps his head. Suddenly, he's in an ancient marketplace—but thinks he's at a biblical re-enactment in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. An inquisitive lost child follows him everywhere, chattering constantly. Brian desperately wants to go home and just thinks David is really staying in character. He reluctantly accompanies the boy to the shepherd's fields to search for his parents. There, they are wonderstruck at a host of brilliant angels singing! When they overhear that David's Aunt Mary had a baby, they tag along with the shepherds—and seeing the infant, the miracle of Christmas pierces Brian's heart. When he comes to back in the 21st century, he realizes “peace on earth” begins at home. A heartwarming holiday show about family and forgiveness that merges life's problems with God's promises, then and now.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 females, 5 males, 1 either, 5-10 extras)

- BRIAN (m)30s-40s. Both an alcoholic and workaholic. He has little time for his children and less time for his wife. He can be funny in a sarcastic way. As the play goes on, his truly caring heart is revealed. *(124 lines)*
- JENNY (f).....30s-40s. Brian's wife. Overworked and underappreciated. She tries as best she can to put on a brave face, but she can only take so much. When Brian comes home drunk on Christmas Eve, she finally loses it. *(39 lines)*

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- EMILY (f)..... 11-13. Brian and Jenny’s daughter. Mature beyond her years. In many ways, she has had to become a second parent to her little brother. *(18 lines)*
- ISAAC (m)..... 6-8. Brian and Jenny’s son. A typical little boy in many ways. Idolizes his father. *(29 lines)*
- DAVID (m)..... 7-10. A young boy from Nazareth who has lost his parents. Inquisitive, curious, and a bit stubborn. (Boy playing Isaac could double as David.) *(70 lines)*
- JOSEPH (m)..... 30s-40s. Father of Jesus. Anxious but also warm and welcoming. *(18 lines)*
- MARY (f)..... Late teens-early 20s. Mother of Jesus. *(7 lines)*
- INNKEEPER (m/f) Any age. Man or woman. *(8 lines)*
- SHEPHERD 1 (m) Any age. *(9 lines)*
- MIRIAM (f) 50s-60s. Joseph’s mother and David’s grandmother. *(7 lines)*
- EXTRAS: Carolers, Townspeople, Shepherds, David’s Parents.

(Some of the extras may be doubled with a change of costume. For example, Carolers could also be Townspeople.)

PRODUCTION NOTES

SETTING: Modern-day Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Bethlehem, Judea, in 4 B.C.

CAST NOTE: 3 roles are specifically for children and/or young teenagers.

SET

SCENE 1: Family Living Room—A couch and a coffee table sit at Center Stage. A Nativity set is placed on the coffee table. A Christmas tree stands at Stage Right.

SCENE 2: Just Outside Bethlehem—Bare stage.

SCENE 3: Inside the Bethlehem Gates—A market-like area is set up On-stage with several crates of biblical-type merchandise set out. There is a wooden archway far Stage Right for the Inn.

SCENE 4: Fields Just Outside Bethlehem—Bare stage.

SCENE 5: A Hill Outside Bethlehem—Bare stage.

SCENE 6: Nativity Scene—Hay-filled manger.

SCENE 7: Family Living Room—Should be set up as in Scene 1, with the couch, coffee table, and Christmas tree.

LIGHTS: If possible, shut the lights off between scenes. This need not be theatrical lighting—it may be simply the sanctuary lighting. If possible, first one spotlight shines on David in scene 4, then several more spotlights appear. In the absence of spotlights, the “light” may merely be mimed (as if it is off in the distance).

PROPS: Phone for Jenny, piece of construction paper for Isaac, paper towel for Jenny, doll to serve as baby Jesus, and staffs for the Shepherds.

COSTUMES: Emily wears a fancy dress and wearing and a lot of lipstick to start. Isaac wears casual clothes first, then dresses in spiffy church clothes—a sweater, shirt and tie, vest, etc. Brian wears a rumpled business suit. Jenny has on a nice festive outfit for church. The biblical characters dress relatively the same, in neutral-colored robes. All need sandals. They may wear belts out of the same fabric as their robes, and matching or coordinating headpieces. The women wear them draped loosely and the men, secured with a cord.

MUSIC: Carolers open the play by singing “Silent Night.” Christmas carols may be sung or played as interludes between the scenes. Additionally, scene 4 calls for singing from Off-stage. This may be prerecorded joyful/angelic music.

SCENE 1

AT START: *Family Living Room, Allentown Pennsylvania. Lights up. Stage is pre-set with one couch and a coffee table at Center Stage. A Christmas tree stands Stage Right. Far Stage Left, a group of singers dressed as Carolers stand and begin to sing "Silent Night." As soon as they finish, JENNY enters from Stage Right with a phone in her hands.*

JENNY: *(Into the phone.)* Brian, what do you mean you're still at the restaurant? *(CAROLERS exit Stage Left.)* It's Christmas Eve! The kids are already getting dressed for the candlelight service. I don't see why you had to do a business lunch today of all days! *(Pauses as she listens.)* I know the client's only in town for one day. You told me. *(Another pause.)* All right. But we're not going to wait for you. If you're not here and ready for church, the kids and I are going without you. *(Pause.)* Fine. See you then.

JENNY ends the call just as ISAAC enters running.

ISAAC: Mom!

JENNY: What is it, Isaac?

ISAAC: Emily won't get out of the bathroom!

EMILY: *(From offstage.)* Oh my gosh! I haven't even been in here that long!

ISAAC: She has too. She's been in there for at least forever.

JENNY: Isaac, don't be dramatic. *(Calls to EMILY.)* Emily, hurry up! Your brother's got to get ready too.

ISAAC: When is Dad going to get here?

JENNY: He just called me. He's on his way.

ISAAC: Good, because I want him to see the drawing I did.

JENNY: You did a drawing? All on your own?

ISAAC: Yeah.

JENNY: Can I see it?

ISAAC gives JENNY a piece of construction paper. She takes it with a smile, which becomes obviously forced as she looks at the strange drawing.

JENNY: *(Searching for something positive to say.)* Oh... wow, Isaac. That's really... is that Santa Claus standing with a dinosaur?

ISAAC: It's not a dinosaur. It's Godzilla.

JENNY: I see. And why are there red beams coming out of Santa's eyes?

ISAAC: Because last year Santa's sleigh fell in nuclear stuff, and he got laser vision. So now he can fight Godzilla with lasers that shoot out of his eyes.

JENNY: Well, that's really... imaginative.

ISAAC: Do you think Dad will like it? It was gonna be part of his Christmas present, but I decided I wanted to show it to him tonight.

JENNY: I'm sure he'll love it, Isaac. *(She absently looks at the clock on her phone, then moves Stage Right toward the Nativity set.)* Isaac, did you move the baby Jesus out of his manger?

ISAAC: No.

JENNY: Isaac, if you took it to play with, I won't be mad. Just bring it back.

ISAAC: I didn't! I swear! Maybe Emily took it.

JENNY heaves a sigh and moves toward Stage Right.

JENNY: Emily! We've only got fifteen minutes, and your brother still needs to get ready!

EMILY enters Stage Right in a fancy dress and wearing an inordinate amount of lipstick.

EMILY: I'm ready! Jeez!

JENNY: Emily, what did I say about makeup?

EMILY: It's just lip balm.

JENNY: Nice try. *(Hands EMILY a paper towel.)* Wipe it off, please.

EMILY heaves a dramatic sigh but takes the paper towel anyway.

ISAAC: *(In a stage whisper to JENNY.)* She's trying to look nice because Mark Larsen's gonna be at the service tonight.

EMILY: Isaac! That is so not true!

JENNY: Isaac, why don't you go get ready?

ISAAC: OK. (*Starts to move Stage Right then turns back.*) If Dad comes while I'm getting changed, don't give him the picture until I get out, OK?

JENNY: (*Hesitant.*) OK.

ISAAC excitedly exits Stage Right. EMILY, now devoid of lipstick turns to JENNY.

EMILY: Is he coming?

JENNY: He says he is, but... I don't know.

EMILY: Where is he this time?

JENNY: Having lunch with a client.

EMILY: Who works on Christmas Eve?

JENNY: Your dad, apparently.

EMILY: Come on, Mom. You know he's at the bar, and he's just going to come home smelling like booze again.

JENNY: Well, if he does, he's not coming with us.

EMILY: Isaac won't be happy.

JENNY: Neither will I, but—

There is a knock at the door.

EMILY: Do you think that's him?

JENNY: He wouldn't knock. He has a key.

EMILY: You never know.

JENNY exits Stage Left. Soon after, ISAAC enters Stage Right dressed in a suit and tie.

ISAAC: Is Dad here yet?

EMILY: Mom went to check.

ISAAC: Do you think he'll like the present I made? At least it's not a tie. That's all he got last year.

EMILY: Sure he will, Isaac.

JENNY and BRIAN enter Stage Left in the middle of an argument. BRIAN is wearing a business suit, but it looks distinctly rumpled. He stumbles as he walks and just slightly slurs his words. It's clear that he's slightly drunk.

BRIAN: I'm telling you, I'm fine, Jenny! Really!

JENNY: If you're fine, then where's your key?

BRIAN: It's... it's in here somewhere. *(Searches his pockets.)*

ISAAC: Dad!

ISAAC rushes over to BRIAN and hugs him around the middle. BRIAN stumbles back, slightly surprised, then awkwardly pats ISAAC on the head.

BRIAN: Oh, hey kid.

ISAAC: *(Pulling away and waving his picture at BRIAN.)* Dad! Look what I made!

BRIAN: *(Looks at it one second.)* Oh, yeah. That's great, Isaac. *(Hands it back to ISAAC, who looks devastated. BRIAN turns back to JENNY.)* Look—I'm planning on going to the church... thing. Really, I am!

JENNY: Brian, you know you can't go looking like that.

BRIAN: Looking like what?

ISAAC: But we can't go without Dad! Dad has to go! Please, Mom! Please!

JENNY: Emily, why don't you take your brother out to the car? I'll meet you out there.

EMILY nods and takes ISAAC's hand.

EMILY: Come on, Isaac

EMILY and ISAAC begin to exit Stage Left.

ISAAC: *(To EMILY.)* Dad's coming too, right?

EMILY: *(Trying to stay positive.)* Sure. Dad's coming.

EMILY and ISAAC exit completely.

BRIAN: Look, Jenny. I know you don't want to let the kids down, so... just let me get changed, and—

JENNY: This has nothing to do with your clothes, Brian.

BRIAN: (*Beat.*) Come on, Jenny. I told you this was the only day the client could meet before the new year. This is a big project for me!

JENNY: It's got nothing to do with that either! Brian... I can't take this anymore.

BRIAN: You can't take what?

JENNY: You always coming home smelling like a brewery. Clothes rumpled. Slurring your words.

BRIAN: I only had a couple drinks!

JENNY: You honestly expect me to believe that?

BRIAN looks at JENNY and tries to answer, but realizes he has nothing to say.

JENNY: (*Nods, resigned.*) The kids and I are going to the candlelight service. You are going to stay here and sober up.

BRIAN: Jenny, come on—

JENNY: (*Speaking over BRIAN.*) When we get back and I've put the kids to bed, you and I are going to have a serious discussion.

BRIAN: Jenny, just let me come. It'll be good for the kids.

JENNY: It'll be better for the kids if you shape up and learn how to be a father. (*Storms off Stage Right.*)

BRIAN: Jenny, wait! Jenny!

BRIAN crosses near the coffee table. He stumbles and hits his head on the edge. He is knocked unconscious. Lights fade to black. A Christmas carol could be sung in the interlude between scenes.

SCENE 2

AT START: *Just outside Bethlehem, Judea, 4 B.C. BRIAN and DAVID are preset on a bare stage. BRIAN is lying in the same position he fell. DAVID is staring at him and occasionally poking him in the shoulders.*

DAVID: *(Poke.)* Are you asleep? *(Another poke.)* Why can't you wake up? *(BRIAN groans.)* Does that mean you're almost awake? What if I do this?

DAVID pinches BRIAN on his right cheek. BRIAN jerks awake.

BRIAN: Ow!

DAVID: Oh, good! I thought you were dead for a few minutes, but then I saw you breathing so I knew you were sleeping.

BRIAN: How long have I been out?

DAVID: Since I found you. That wasn't too long ago

BRIAN looks around.

BRIAN: Where am I?

DAVID: You're in Bethlehem. My father says he's from here, but I don't remember it.

BRIAN: How'd I get to Bethlehem? That's fifty miles from Allentown. I couldn't have driven.

DAVID: You probably took a caravan. That's what my family did, only I can't find them now. See, I found this lizard that looked interesting, so I chased it through a bunch of rocks and when I came back to our spot, they were gone.

BRIAN: Wait. Who are you?

DAVID: I'm David ben Judah. Do you know my father? His name is Judah ben Isaac. But everybody calls him Judah the large, because he's really big. Sometimes when we go into big cities, they call him Judah of Nazareth, because that's where we're from.

BRIAN: I... no. Sorry, I don't know any Judah.

DAVID: That's OK. Do you want to go into town with me anyway?

BRIAN: I can't. I've... I've got to call a cab, or—

DAVID: Is cab another name for a caravan?

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BRIAN: What? You mean a Dodge Caravan? (*Looks at DAVID'S clothes and smiles as though he understands.*) Oh, I see. I forgot Bethlehem did this... thing every Christmas. Sure, kid. I need to find my caravan. (*Searches in his pockets.*) Where's my phone?

DAVID: What's a phone?

BRIAN: Look, I appreciate your commitment, kid, but right now I just need to call a car so I can get back to my family.

DAVID: If you need to find a caravan, most of them went into the city gates before sunset. That's why I was going there. I know my family's there. Yours probably is too.

BRIAN: I don't think I need to go that far. I might as well stay up here and look for a pay phone or something.

DAVID: Oh. That's OK, I guess. It's just—well, I hoped you would help me. I don't like going to new places on my own, and there are lots of people in the city tonight.

DAVID looks at BRIAN shyly. BRIAN looks at the boy and sighs.

BRIAN: You're sure there are cars—uh, caravans in the city?

DAVID: Positive. That's where we were all heading before I found my lizard. I still have him. Do you want to see?

DAVID reaches into his robes. BRIAN puts a hand up to stop him.

BRIAN: That's OK. I'll take your word for it. What'd you say your name was again?

DAVID: David ben Judah

BRIAN: Well, David ben Judah, my name's Brian O'Malley. (*DAVID giggles.*) What?

DAVID: That's a funny name. Where did it come from?

BRIAN: I don't know. Ireland, I think.

DAVID: I've never heard of that. Is it really far away?

BRIAN: Yeah. Pretty far. Look, why don't we head into town? Let's see if we can find a phone or a... caravan or whatever.

DAVID happily grabs BRIAN's hand. BRIAN's eyes widen as DAVID begins to drag him off Stage Left.

DAVID: I know the best shortcut to the city. It's right down this hill. My father told me about it before we got here. But that was before I found the lizard. Are you sure you don't want to see him? He's really friendly...

BRIAN and DAVID exit with DAVID still chattering as lights fade to black.

SCENE 3

AT START: *Inside the City Gates of Bethlehem. A market-like area is set up On-stage with several crates set out and people in biblical dress milling around the stage. DAVID enters, still leading BRIAN by the hand. BRIAN looks around him, surprised.*

BRIAN: Wow. You guys really go all out here, huh? I mean, with the costumes and everything.

DAVID: Does everyone talk like that where you're from?

BRIAN: Talk like what?

DAVID: Funny. Most of the words you say, I don't know. So, I just wondered. Does everyone from... *(Trying to remember how to say it.)* Iren land talk like that.

BRIAN: Do you mean Ireland?

DAVID: Yes. *(Slowly.)* I-or-land

BRIAN: Wouldn't know. I've never been there.

DAVID: But you said you were from I-or-land

BRIAN: I said my *name* was from Ireland. I live in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

DAVID: Oh. I've never heard of that either.

BRIAN: Of course not. *(Smiles at DAVID.)* You're a great little actor, you know? You don't break character for a second.

DAVID: What's an actor?

BRIAN: Never mind. *(Looks around.)* Now, you said there were caravans around here?

DAVID: Most people who came in today are probably staying at the inns. Some of them have family in town, but a lot of them don't.

BRIAN: OK. Then where's the nearest inn?

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DAVID points toward a wooden archway far Stage Right.

BRIAN: OK. Then we'll try there.

They move Stage Right. BRIAN mimes knocking. INNKEEPER answers.

INNKEEPER: Yes?

BRIAN: Hey. I've just come in from Allentown, and I was wondering—

INNKEEPER: If you're looking for a room, we're full. You won't have much luck at the other inns either.

BRIAN: Oh, no. I'm not staying the night. I was just wondering if you had a phone I could use.

INNKEEPER looks at him strangely before answering.

INNKEEPER: If phone is some kind of animal, I've never heard of it. Besides, all of ours are locked in the stable for the night. If you want to hire one out, you'll have to come back in the morning.

BRIAN: Look, I appreciate all this... dedication to authenticity, or... whatever. I'm sure the kids love it, but I'm just trying to get home. Do you have anything I could borrow? A car, a bike? I'll take anything.

INNKEEPER: As I said, all the animals are locked up for the night. You shouldn't be traveling after dark anyway. There's plenty of robbers in those canyons who are looking for easy prey.

BRIAN: *(Clearly frustrated.)* Wow. OK.

INNKEEPER: Will there be anything else, sir? I do have customers waiting inside.

BRIAN: No. *(Sarcastically.)* Thanks for your help.

BRIAN turns to leave, but DAVID tugs on his hand before he can. BRIAN leans down towards him.

BRIAN: What?

DAVID: *(In a stage whisper.)* Can you ask about my family?

BRIAN: You can ask for yourself, can't you? Why are you so shy all of a sudden?

DAVID: I don't like talking to strangers.

BRIAN: But you're fine with talking to me?

DAVID: You were asleep when I found you. That's different.

BRIAN sighs and turns back to the INNKEEPER.

BRIAN: There is one more thing.

INNKEEPER: What is it?

BRIAN: The kid's looking for his family. Has anyone from Nazareth come through asking about a little boy?

INNKEEPER: Plenty of people from all over have come here, but none of them have said anything about a missing boy.

BRIAN: *(Sarcastic again.)* Great. Thanks.

INNKEEPER: There were some caravans that came in too late to find lodging. I know some of them made camp near the shepherds' fields outside of town. You might check there for the boy's family.

BRIAN looks back at the INNKEEPER.

BRIAN: Shepherds' fields, huh?

DAVID tugs on BRIAN's sleeve again. BRIAN leans down towards him.

DAVID: The shepherds' fields are right outside the gates of the town.

BRIAN: Do you know exactly where?

DAVID nods.

BRIAN: *(To the INNKEEPER.)* OK, we'll check there. Thanks.

The INNKEEPER exits. DAVID takes BRIAN's hand again and begins to lead him.

DAVID: The fields are on the other side of the shortcut I took you through. That's probably why you didn't see them when we came in the first time. But don't worry. They're not that far.

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BRIAN: You know, it's weird.

DAVID: What?

BRIAN: I must've been to Bethlehem a million times. This looks nothing like how I remember it.

DAVID: It might have been a different Bethlehem. There are lots of towns named after it, but Father says this is the only real one.

BRIAN: Maybe.

DAVID pulls BRIAN off Stage Right. Lights fade to black. Possible song interlude.

SCENE 4

AT START: *Fields Just Outside Bethlehem. Stage is completely bare. BRIAN and DAVID enter Stage Left.*

DAVID: And my father says that one day, a new king will come from Bethlehem. We haven't seen him yet, but all the prophets say he'll come from here.

BRIAN is stumbling and clearly exhausted from the hike.

BRIAN: Yeah... that's great. Look—could we sit down for a minute?

DAVID: But the shepherds' fields are just over that hill.

BRIAN: I'm sure they'll still be there in five minutes. There's no rush.

BRIAN sits on the edge of the stage. DAVID sits with him.

DAVID: Are you tired?

BRIAN: *(Sarcastically.)* How did you guess?

DAVID: *(Sincerely.)* Because your eyes are all red and you're breathing heavy. Is it because you've been traveling all day?

BRIAN: Not exactly. I've been working, but.... *(A bit embarrassed.)* To tell you the truth, I wasn't really doing much of that.

DAVID: What were you doing?

BRIAN: Things I shouldn't. Drinking, mostly.

DAVID: What's wrong with drinking? Isn't drinking good when you're in the desert?

BRIAN: Not the kind of drinking I do.

DAVID: Do you mean wine? My father drinks wine. But not as much as my uncle Benjamin. Father says that Benjamin shouldn't drink so much, but my uncle never listens to him. Do you drink a lot of wine like Uncle Benjamin? Is that what makes you tired?

BRIAN: Listen, kid. I've got a headache, so if you could just stop talking for a minute, that'd be great.

DAVID: Did the wine give you a headache?

BRIAN: Yeah, it did. And the questions don't help.

DAVID: What *does* help for headaches? I've never had one, so I don't know.

BRIAN: Silence.

DAVID: My mother says I'm not very good at silence. See, I try to be, but every time I try, I just think of another question, and—

BRIAN: David! For one minute, just shut up! (*DAVID looks at BRIAN, surprised. Then his lip begins to quiver as though he's about to cry. BRIAN immediately turns to the boy, apologetic.*) Look, David, I'm sorry. Please don't cry. I'm just—

DAVID: You don't like me very much, do you?

BRIAN: That's not true. I like you fine.

DAVID: But you don't want me to ask you questions.

BRIAN: Look, I'm just tired.

DAVID: If you were tired, why did you come with me? You didn't have to. You could have stayed in town and looked for your own family.

BRIAN: I-I guess it's because you remind me of someone.

DAVID: Who?

BRIAN: My son, Isaac. He's about your age—maybe a little younger.

DAVID: Does he ask you questions?

BRIAN: Oh, non-stop. Why's the sky blue? Why did the dinosaurs go extinct? You know, all the typical stuff. He's always trying to get me to play with him, too. I haven't had time lately. I've been... busy. You know, with work and stuff.

DAVID: I thought you said you were busy drinking.

BRIAN: Yeah. That too, I guess.

DAVID: Do you yell at Isaac when he asks you questions?

BRIAN pauses.

BRIAN: Sometimes, now that you mention it. Yeah, I guess I have yelled at him a couple times. *(Pause.)* David, I'm sorry about that. I shouldn't have yelled, OK? I just—

DAVID stands and crosses to Upstage Left.

DAVID: What's that?

A bright spotlight appears and shines on DAVID. BRIAN gets up to follow him.

BRIAN: What's what? That light?

DAVID: It doesn't look like a light now. It looks like a man. But he's in the sky.

BRIAN squints at the light.

BRIAN: What the—

DAVID: Do you see it?

BRIAN: Yeah. Yeah, I see it. Or I... I think I do.

DAVID: It looks like the man is saying something. I can't hear what it is. It's too far away.

BRIAN: This is impossible.

Several more spotlights appear, along with singing from Off-stage. DAVID smiles, delighted. BRIAN backs away, terrified.

DAVID: There are more of them now. Lots and lots more! They're singing! Can you hear them?

BRIAN: This is a dream. It's got to be a dream!

DAVID: They must be angels! Messengers from God. My mother told me about them!

BRIAN: *(Pacing, pinching his arm.)* Wake up. Come on, wake up! Wake up!

Suddenly all the lights disappear.

DAVID: They're gone now. Where did they go?

He looks to BRIAN, who is still pacing.

BRIAN: I'm going to wake up any minute now. I'm going to wake up, and I'll be back home.

DAVID: Who are you talking to?

BRIAN: Now that I know it's a dream, I can wake up. *(DAVID moves to Stage Right and looks off into the distance.)*

DAVID: There's people coming!

He runs back to BRIAN and hides behind BRIAN's legs as the SHEPHERDS enter.

BRIAN: You're... you're the shepherds.

The SHEPHERDS ignore him and rush quickly toward the other end of the stage. DAVID tugs BRIAN's sleeve.

DAVID: Ask them about the caravans.

BRIAN: Hey! *(The SHEPHERDS stop and look at him.)* Do you know if there are any caravans camped out near here?

SHEPHERD 1: The only one we know of found shelter near a stable just outside of town. That's where we're headed.

BRIAN: Let me guess. The angel told you to go there?

SHEPHERD 1: You saw them too? Then you must come with us! They say the king has been born today! His mother is in the stable just north of the city.

DAVID tugs BRIAN's sleeve again.

DAVID: *(In a stage whisper.)* My Aunt Mary was supposed to have a baby. She and my Uncle Joseph rode with us in the caravan. Mary's his wife. Well...she's not really his wife yet, but I'm supposed to say she is because she's having a baby, and you have to be married to have babies.

SHEPHERD 1: Are you coming with us? We have to hurry.

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BRIAN: Sure, sure. We'll come with you. (*The SHEPHERDS exit. BRIAN takes DAVID's hand and begins to follow them.*) Maybe once I see the baby Jesus, I'll wake up.

DAVID: How do you know the baby's name?

BRIAN: Just trust me, kid.

BRIAN and DAVID exit. Lights fade. Possible song interlude.

SCENE 5

AT START: *A hill Outside Bethlehem. The SHEPHERDS enter, followed by DAVID and BRIAN. BRIAN is out of breath once again and holds his head.*

SHEPHERD 1: It should be just up this hill.

BRIAN: That's what you said ten minutes ago.

SHEPHERD 1: There are a lot of stables around the outskirts of town.

After so many years, they all start to look alike.

BRIAN: That's great. Look—I've got to rest. Come back and tell me when you've found them, will you?

SHEPHERD 1: Are you sure? Truly, it's not far.

BRIAN: Yeah. I'll catch up with you. Or, who knows? Maybe I'll just wake up on my own.

DAVID wanders over to Stage Left just as the SHEPHERDS are about to exit up Stage Right.

DAVID: Uncle Joseph! (*The SHEPHERDS turn around as DAVID rushes to BRIAN.*) Brian! I can see Uncle Joseph and Grandma Miriam coming! They'll be able to take us to Aunt Mary and the baby.

JOSEPH enters, followed by MIRIAM.

MIRIAM: Really, Joseph. I don't need help looking for David. You should be with your... well, you should be with Mary.

JOSEPH: Mother, Mary is sleeping, and understandably so. Ruth is taking good care of her. I didn't want you walking alone after dark.

DAVID: Grandmother!

MIRIAM: David! *(She rushes over to him and gives him a big hug.)*

Thank the Lord! *(She pulls away from him and looks at him sternly.)*

Do you have any idea how worried your parents have been? Why on earth did you run off like that?

DAVID: I didn't mean to. I just... I saw a lizard, and... I was only going to be gone for a minute, but then you weren't there and I couldn't find you. But then I met Brian, and he helped me. *(He grabs MIRIAM's hand and drags her over to BRIAN.)* Brian, this is my grandmother. She was looking for me!

BRIAN: I can see that. *(He stands.)* Nice to meet you.

MIRIAM: Thank you so much, sir. I don't know what his mother would have done if we had not been able to find him.

DAVID: And these are shepherds. They came to see the baby.

SHEPHERD 1: With your family's permission of course, ma'am.

MIRIAM: *(Taken aback.)* Are you friends of Joseph? Or Mary?

SHEPHERD 1: Not exactly, ma'am. We were told to come. It's—it's difficult to explain.

DAVID: They saw an angel!

MIRIAM: Now, David, there's no need for your stories.

DAVID: But it's true! We saw it too, didn't we, Brian? *(DAVID doesn't wait for an answer.)* The angel told the shepherds that they were supposed to go see the baby. And then there were a whole bunch of angels, and they started singing.

MIRIAM: David, really.

DAVID: But it's true!

SHEPHERD 1: In the boy's defense, we were told by someone or something to come and see the child. We've even brought some of our lambs as gifts, if you will accept them.

MIRIAM: Well, I don't see any harm in it. And now that we've found the boy, we might as well go back to the stable and settle in for the night. You can follow me.

MIRIAM exits Upstage Left. The SHEPHERDS follow. DAVID goes back to BRIAN, who stands at the edge of the stage, unsure of what to do. JOSEPH stands to the side of him, appearing equally unsure.

DAVID: Brian! Aren't you coming?

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BRIAN: Yeah, sure. I'll, um...I'll be there in a minute. I've just got to catch my breath.

DAVID: Is the wine still making you tired?

BRIAN: Something like that.

JOSEPH: Run along with your grandmother, David. I'll stay here with your friend.

DAVID: OK. Only don't take too long, 'cause I'm going to show my lizard to the baby as soon as I get there, and I wouldn't want you to miss it.

BRIAN: We'll be there, kid. You better get going. You don't want to get lost again.

DAVID: All right. I'll see you there.

DAVID rushes off Upstage Left after the others. BRIAN slumps down again at the edge of the stage.

JOSEPH: Have you had a long journey?

BRIAN: You could say that. Not as long as yours, I'm sure.

JOSEPH sits down next to BRIAN at the edge of the stage.

JOSEPH: You must come from a long ways away.

BRIAN: What makes you say that?

JOSEPH: Your name. Brian. It's not something you hear every day in Judea. I take it you're not Jewish?

BRIAN: Me? Oh, no. Not religious at all, really. My wife is. I mean, she's not Jewish, but she—well, you wouldn't know about it. Needless to say, she takes her religion very seriously.

JOSEPH: That must be difficult for you.

BRIAN: Well, see, she wasn't always like that. When she and I met, neither one of us had much to do with God. Then, after our daughter Emily was born, things changed.

JOSEPH: I've heard children can do that. My parents tell me that they can change the course of your life. I know this one has changed mine already.

BRIAN: Well, I guess your case is special.

JOSEPH: How do you know that?



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