

PEERING INTO CHRISTMAS

by Amanda Renée Bishop



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A Dramatic Mystery One Act

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SYNOPSIS: All is well at Community Church. That is, until a mysterious mannequin appears. Who placed the mannequin on the stage and how did it make a sound? Is prankster Frank really to blame, or is there more than meets the eye? A rookie spy has been sent by General T and the HRP Spy Agency to find the true meaning of Christmas and bring the valuable intel back to headquarters.

As Agent Y bumbles his way about the church Christmas program, will his antics compromise the mission, or will he finally discover what Christmas is all about? Join Agent Y as he attempts to crack the case in this clumsy caper.

DURATION: 30 minutes.

TIME: Modern Day.

SETTING: Community Church in rural North Dakota.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 females, 2 males, 2 either; 8+ extras)

- AGENT Y (f) A clumsy, rookie spy that is determined to crack the case and make General T happy. *(47 lines)*
- GENERAL T (f) A retired military general, she now runs the HRP spy agency. *(30 lines)*
- MAX (m) An assistant to Director Tim. He finds out the identity of Agent Y. *(15 lines)*
- CLARA (f) An actor in the “program” and also an assistant to Director Tim. *(23 lines)*
- PASTOR PAULA/PAUL (m/f) Pastor of Community Church. *(10 lines)*
- DIRECTOR TIM/TINA (m/f) Director of the church Christmas program. *(27 lines)*
- JANITOR FRANK (m) Janitor at Community church. *(11 lines)*

EXTRAS:

- MARY (f) Mother of Jesus. *(Non-Speaking)*
- JOSEPH (m) Father of Jesus. *(Non-Speaking)*

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CAESAR AUGUSTUS (m)	Roman leader. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
ASSISTANT TO CAESAR(m).	Man that helps take the census. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
CENSUS CROWD (f/m).....	Crowd reporting to Bethlehem for the census. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
ANGELS (f/m)	Angels that visit the Shepherds. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
SHEPARDS (m).....	Shepherds watching their flocks that later go to visit Jesus. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
SHEEP (f/m).....	Sheep that follow the Shepherds. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)
ANIMALS (f/m).....	Animals surrounding Jesus' manger. (<i>Non-Speaking</i>)

COSTUMES

AGENT Y – He changes several times during the play.

- Off the wall/weird winter clothing—think ugly sweater party
- Watch
- Beach clothing
- Inflatable beach floaties
- Beach hat
- Winter coat
- Beanie hat
- Gloves
- Regular shirt and pants

MAX – Modern day clothing.

CLARA – Modern day clothing.

PASTOR PAULA – Modern day clothing.

DIRECTOR TIM – Modern day clothing.

JANITOR FRANK – Modern day clothing.

MARY – Biblical clothing.

JOSEPH – Biblical clothing.

CAESAR – Biblical clothing.

CAESAR'S ASSISTANT – Biblical clothing.

CENSUS CROWD – Biblical clothing.

SHEPARDS – Biblical clothing and staffs.

SHEEP – Sheep costume.

ANIMALS – Animal costumes.

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SET

- 2 fake trees
- large window
- table
- clothing rack
- hook – to hang the star from the window or above the window
- 4 chairs
- winter scene – to place behind the window

BACKGROUND MUSIC

- spy music

LIGHTING

Near the end of Scene 5, the main stage lights will be lowered and the glow of the star will be shining off the window. Nativity characters will still need to be seen on the stage.

At the end of Scene 6, the main stage lights will be lowered or cut to show the glow of the star shining off of the window.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I hope you enjoy presenting “Peering into Christmas.” This play was written with flexibility in mind. If you have a small group, you could limit the amount of nativity characters. If you have a large group, there is a mix of both speaking and non-speaking roles, and you could add as many extras as you like. Children can easily be involved in the play as Nativity characters, also.

I kept things simple as far as set pieces and props. Feel free to build in different items that you think would add to the fun.

Also, if needed, the role of Pastor Paula could be changed to Pastor Paul or Director Tim could become Director Tina without really needing to change much with the lines.

PROPS

- extra Biblical animal and star costumes for the clothing rack
- extra Biblical props for the props table
- lighted star
- cell phones (2)
- cordless microphone
- microphone stand
- music stand
- clipboard
- pen
- bible
- tissues
- blue goo—something sticky and blue that Agent Y can apply to his hands
- dust rag or duster
- business card
- walkie talkies (2)
- wrapped empty boxes
- garland
- plastic Christmas ornaments/balls
- coffee mug
- magnifying glass
- scroll
- coins
- stick—to be used like a pen
- piece of cloth—big enough to wrap a baby doll
- baby doll
- manger
- pieces of paper

SCENE 1

AT START: *Lights up. There is a large window with a winter scene placed up-center with fake trees placed on each end. A props table and costume rack is set up at stage left and four chairs are placed on a slant at stage right. There are some modern Christmas decorations placed at the front of the stage and in other areas of your choosing. These decorations will be items that Agent Y can pretend to break, such as garland, empty wrapped boxes and plastic Christmas ornaments/balls. AGENT Y is dressed in beach clothing and is wearing a spy watch. Spy music is played softly in the background and slowly fades as the scene begins.*

AGENT Y: General T, ma'am, c-a-n you hear m-e? (*Shivering as he speaks into his watch.*)

GENERAL T: Yes, Agent Y, go ahead.

AGENT Y: I...I...I've arrived... at the...tar-ge-t location. (*Teeth chattering.*)

GENERAL T: Do we have a bad connection? You keep breaking up.

AGENT Y: No s-i-r... I-I-I m-e-a-n m-a-'-a-m... I mean general ma'am

GENERAL T: Well then, what seems to be the problem, Agent Y? I don't have all day.

AGENT Y: Well, I thought you said... my first assignment was going to be n-e-a-r the beach. (*Teeth chattering.*) I wanted... to blend in... s-o-o-o I wore beach clothing. See... (*Moves watch around as if it contains a camera.*)

GENERAL T: Oh for goodness sake. I knew I should have sent a senior agent with you. Next time, listen closer! That is, if you have a next time... I SAID, your first assignment was near Beach, North Dakota.

AGENT Y: Yes.... I have learned my lesson... It's... negative 20 outside... I'm slowly warming up.

AGENT Y glances down at his fingers, which are blue from blueberries. He shows concern on his face.

AGENT Y: Ahhh! I think I have frostbite on my fingers.

GENERAL T: Agent Y, it's simply...

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AGENT Y decides to inspect his fingers and places them close to his eyes. When doing this, he gets some of the blue goo on his nose.

AGENT Y: Ahh!!! My nose has it too.

GENERAL T: Agent Y, I want you to smell your hands...

AGENT Y: (*Panicked.*) What do I do, what do I do?! I'm going to die of frostbite. I'm too young to die! (*Dramatically falls to his knees.*)

GENERAL T: Agent Y, I order you to SMELL YOUR HANDS!

AGENT Y: Well yes ma'am, but I don't really see how smelling them is going to help. I'm dying here. (*Smells hands.*) Oh, that's right. I had blueberry cheesecake for dessert at lunch. I guess I missed cleaning some. (*Stands.*) Frostbite officially avoided, ma'am.

AGENT Y wipes his nose and cleans up with a tissue he pulls out from his pocket.

GENERAL T: Agent Y, I am not impressed. Get this mission going before someone comes. Your job is to find the meaning of Christmas and to bring that intel back to headquarters. We can't risk another agency solving the case before we do. Do whatever it takes to find that information.

AGENT Y: (*Whispering.*) Someone's coming!

AGENT Y looks around the stage frantically, searching for a place to hide. He stands behind a tree at up-center. AGENT Y sticks his head out from the tree periodically to watch and listen to the others on the stage. DIRECTOR TIM/TINA, JANITOR FRANK and PASTOR PAUL/PAULA enter the stage. They move about the stage as if setting up for a practice. JANITOR FRANK is wearing a mixture of costumes and props.

DIRECTOR TIM: Thank you for helping me get ready for tomorrow's practice.

PASTOR PAULA: No problem. I'm glad to help out.

JANITOR FRANK: Yeah, this is fun. Can I keep these? I think they're just my style... what do you think?

DIRECTOR TIM: Oh my, that is quite the style you have there! But sorry, no. I need each of these pieces for the program. You can wear them again in a few days when it's all over if you like.

JANITOR FRANK: On second thought, I think my wife might kick me out of the house if I came home dressed like this.

DIRECTOR TIM, PASTOR PAULA, and JANITOR FRANK laugh. JANITOR FRANK takes the props and costumes off and places them on the table and clothes rack.

PASTOR PAULA: Well, I have an appointment to get to, but I look forward to seeing the program on Sunday. *(Exits.)*

DIRECTOR TIM: I better get going too. I'll see you tomorrow, Frank. *(Exits.)*

JANITOR FRANK: You bet. Have a good evening.

JANITOR FRANK looks around for items to straighten. He walks over to the tree that AGENT Y is hiding behind. JANITOR FRANK pulls out a rag and dusts the tree.

JANITOR FRANK: Wow, this tree is really dirty. I better dust it before I go. *(Dusts.)*

AGENT Y looks out from behind the tree with a scared expression. JANITOR FRANK examines the tree closely and continues to dust. AGENT Y is then seen holding onto his nose.

JANITOR FRANK: There, that's much better. *(Exits.)*

AGENT Y: Aaahhhhhhchoooooo!!!

AGENT Y comes out from behind the tree, rubbing his eyes.

AGENT Y: He just had to dust THIS tree!

AGENT Y gathers his wits about him and then calls General T.

AGENT Y: Mr T, uh, I mean General T, they're gone now. I can search the church.

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GENERAL T: Watch each person closely. One of them may hold the key to the meaning of Christmas. See what you can find and report back to me each day until you solve the case. Do you think you can handle that? Or do I have to come there myself?

AGENT Y: Yes general, I mean no general, ma'am, you don't have to come here. I will do it right away. *(Starts to walk away.)*

GENERAL T: Oh and Agent Y... Get some pants and winter wear, would you? You stand out and that's exactly what we DON'T want. Also, remember that they DO have frostbite there. Don't let the real thing get you. Trust me, it won't be blueberry flavored or easy to get rid of. If you value your extremities, you will want winter wear.

AGENT Y: Yes sir, I mean ma'am. I will keep my eyes peeled for frostbite.

AGENT Y walks around the stage, inspecting items. GENERAL T talks to herself in the background.

GENERAL T: Oh for goodness sake. This is what I have to deal with now?

AGENT Y: General, did you need me for anything else?

GENERAL T realizes she forgot to shut off communication.

GENERAL T: No! I mean... no, nothing more at this time. Dismissed. *(Whispers.)* I think I should just retire. I'm getting too old for this.

Lights out.

SCENE 2

AT START: *Lights up. AGENT Y has on weird looking winter wear and poses as a mannequin next to the costume rack. A microphone, microphone stand, music stand and sheets of music placed on the music stand have been added to the set at center-stage. The set remains otherwise the same. CLARA and MAX enter the stage.*

CLARA: Wow, director Tim is going all out this year. He even has a mannequin to display the costumes. I can't help but wonder, though, which actor has to wear that hideous costume?

CLARA and MAX laugh.

MAX: Maybe it's for a comedy act to entertain the crowd before the program starts?

CLARA: Maybe. I can't think of any other reason for such a crazy costume. I guess we'll just have to wait and see. Well, it looks like everything is here except for the nativity star. I'll go grab it from the storage room.

MAX: Sounds good, I'm going to go and get a drink of water. I'll meet you back here.

CLARA and MAX exit the stage.

AGENT Y: Hideous?? I thought this was in style for this area. I asked Foogle what people wear in North Dakota and this outfit was the first to display on my screen. Surely Foogle couldn't be wrong? (*Looks at watch.*) Oh, I guess I should have looked closer. The caption says "Ugly costume party in North Dakota." (*Embarrassment.*)

GENERAL T: Having another fashion fail, are we?

AGENT Y is so surprised he falls backwards. He stands back up and addresses GENERAL T.

AGENT Y: Good afternoon, sir... err, ma'am. I'm here at the target location trying to blend in.

GENERAL T: Well, you're going to have to try harder, Agent Y. It doesn't take much to know that's not normal winter wear. How about going to a local store and finding something there?

AGENT Y: What a great idea, general. That would probably be cheaper than what I paid to overnight ship these pieces.

GENERAL T: Just exactly how much did you cost our agency?

AGENT Y: (*Nervous.*) Ahh.. Sorry ma'am. I think I heard someone coming. Got to go. (*Attempts to shut off phone.*)

GENERAL T: I'm not finished, Agent Y.

AGENT Y quickly shuts off his watch. He examines items on the stage. MAX enters the stage and watches AGENT Y snoop around the stage.

AGENT Y: Phew, that was a close one. Now, to find the meaning of Christmas.

MAX: Just what exactly do you think you are doing?

AGENT Y: (*Nervously.*) Where did you come from, and how long have you been here?

MAX: Long enough to know that you're up to something. I think I better call the police. (*Grabs his phone.*)

AGENT Y: No, please. I'm here on official business with the HRP spy agency. I've been sent here to find the meaning of Christmas. Here, (*Hands MAX his business card.*) you can call this number and they will validate my legitimacy.

MAX pretends to type numbers into his phone and talks to someone. MAX doesn't speak out loud, but rather mimes a conversation. He then pretends to hang up.

MAX: Alright, your story checks out, but if I see any funny business, you're out of here.

AGENT Y: Someone's coming. Please play along. No one else can know I'm here.

AGENT Y runs over to the microphone stand and poses, as if singing. MAX turns his attention to CLARA as she enters the stage. CLARA enters with a large star and places it on the props table at stage left.

CLARA: I found it. Now we should have everything we need.

DIRECTOR TIM enters. He carries a clipboard and pen.

DIRECTOR TIM: Are we all ready for practice?

CLARA: Yes! We have all the props and costumes ready to go.

DIRECTOR TIM: Great! I'd like for us to do a sound check before the actors get here. (*Notices AGENT Y.*) What is this goofy thing? (*Points at AGENT Y.*) Are you playing a trick on me?

CLARA: No, it wasn't us. We thought you had that for a comedy act. Wait a minute... I thought the mannequin was over there. (*Points.*)

MAX: (*Frustrated.*) You're right, it WAS standing beside the clothing rack earlier.

DIRECTOR TIM: I bet it's janitor Frank that's trying to play a trick on us. He loves that sort of thing.

CLARA: (*Nod.*) Oh, of course!

MAX shows a sense of relief on his face.

DIRECTOR TIM: Well, let's go ahead and run through your scripture reading a couple times, Clara.

DIRECTOR TIM and MAX go and sit in chairs at stage right. CLARA walks toward the microphone at center stage.

CLARA: Sooo, what should I do with this guy? (*Points.*)

DIRECTOR TIM: Oh, right. You can just move it over by the props table for now.

CLARA: Ok. (*Attempts to move mannequin.*) Wow, this thing is really heavy. (*Attempts again.*)

DIRECTOR TIM: Are you sure you didn't just forget to eat your protein this morning? (*Chuckles.*)

CLARA and DIRECTOR TIM attempt to lift AGENT Y. However, they can only move him a few inches past the microphone. AGENT Y is now facing stage right. He will be facing CLARA as she prepares to speak.

DIRECTOR TIM: On the count of three. 1-2-3, lift. Well, that will have to be good enough for now. Frank got us good on this prank.

DIRECTOR TIM: Let's try it again from the top.

CLARA: It's going to be hard to focus with this thing staring at me.

DIRECTOR TIM: I'm sorry, Clara, but you're just going to have to ignore it.

DIRECTOR TIM sits at stage right. CLARA moves the stand and adjusts the stand's height. While doing so, she accidentally elbows AGENT Y.

AGENT Y: Ouch!!!

AGENT Y is in pain, but quickly tries to control himself. CLARA is startled and stumbles backwards. She then sits down on a chair at stage right as if in shock.

DIRECTOR TIM: Wow! Frank has outdone himself with this prank. I wonder how he was able to add sound to the mannequin?

MAX leaps from his seat and heads quickly towards AGENT Y. He pays no attention to what DIRECTOR TIM is saying.

MAX: You know, this guy really is in the way. *(Points.)* Why don't I give it a try moving him real quickly.

DIRECTOR TIM: Well, I guess, if you really want to, but don't hurt your back trying. I can call for Frank to help us out. *(Pulls out a walkie-talkie.)* Frank, could you please come to the auditorium?

MAX: *(Whispers.)* I'm going to pretend to move you. Work with me, please.

MAX stands in front of AGENT Y. He then places AGENT Y's arms over his shoulders and pretends to lift him. They move together and he stands AGENT Y beside the props table, out of the way. MAX quickly returns to his seat.

DIRECTOR TIM: Wow! Well, I guess we all know who ate the best breakfast this morning. *(Laughs.)*

JANITOR FRANK enters the stage.

JANITOR FRANK: How can I be of assistance?

DIRECTOR TIM: *(Still in shock.)* What? Oh, ah, we were going to have you help us move the mannequin, but... Well, it's already been done. *(Points.)*

JANITOR FRANK: Mannequin? I didn't know you had a mannequin for the program.

DIRECTOR TIM: Oh, sure you didn't. *(Laughs.)*

JANITOR FRANK: *(Looks confused.)* Did I miss something?

DIRECTOR TIM: Never seen this mannequin before... right.

JANITOR FRANK: Did you have it yesterday during setup? I don't remember seeing it.

DIRECTOR TIM: Sure you don't. The jig is up, Frank. *(Smirk.)*

JANITOR FRANK: I really don't know what you mean, Tim. *(Confused.)*

DIRECTOR TIM: *(To others.)* I guess he's just not ready to admit he's the prankster.

JANITOR FRANK: Um, ok. I'm still not sure what you mean. *(Shrugs shoulders.)* I think I'll go and get a cup of coffee and let you practice. Give me a holler on the walkie-talkie if you need anything more.

JANITOR FRANK shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head in confusion as he exits.

DIRECTOR TIM: *(Points at eyes.)* Keep your eyes peeled, crew. He might have more tricks up his sleeves. Well, the actors should be arriving any minute now, so we better go to the entry to welcome them.

DIRECTOR TIM and CLARA exit.

MAX: *(Whispers.)* Someone sure has something up their sleeves, but it's not Frank. *(Glares at AGENT Y.)*

Lights out.

SCENE 3

AT START: *Lights up. The set is the same. The scene begins with AGENT Y standing at center stage; he has changed into a coat, hat and gloves. He will be holding a microphone as if he is inspecting it, when he is interrupted by GENERAL T.*

GENERAL T: Agent Y, can you hear me?

AGENT Y lets out a shout. He then grabs his chest and drops the mic. After taking a few deep breaths, he responds to GENERAL T.

AGENT Y: Ahhh! Oh, yes General T, what can I do for you, ma'am?

AGENT Y places the microphone back in its holder.

GENERAL T: First of all, you can be quiet before you blow your cover yet again! I'm really thinking I better send in another agent to help you.

AGENT Y: No, please, just let me have another chance. I promise I will find the meaning of Christmas, and soon, sir... Err, I mean, ma'am.

GENERAL T: Alright. I will give you one more shot at it. But I'm warning you, this is the last chance, or else Agent L will be there pronto to take over. We need to get this case wrapped up before one of our counter spy agencies wins... Hold on. This just in. Our sources are saying that the meaning of Christmas can be found by peering.

AGENT Y: *(Thinking.)* Peering, huh.

GENERAL T: That will be all for now.

AGENT Y jumps up to salute the general and in the process, knocks over the music stand and microphone stand.

GENERAL T: What was that?

AGENT Y: Umm... I need to get going. Don't worry, if it's broken, I will replace it before they notice.

GENERAL T: (*Thinking that communication is off.*) I don't know how much more of this I can take. He's going to cost our organization millions.

AGENT Y: General T, ma'am, did you have something more you were wanting from me?

GENERAL T: What! (*Realizes communication wasn't cut.*) What! No! That will be all for now, Agent Y. Dismissed.

AGENT Y quickly picks up the microphone, music and stands, as well as the sheets of paper. Being absent minded, AGENT Y does not pay attention to where he places the items back on the stage. They end up at random spots on the stage rather than at center stage. He then walks around the stage inspecting other items. He goes over to the window and takes a closer look at it.

AGENT Y: The answer has got to be in this window. How else can I peer into Christmas?

Lights out.

SCENE 4

AT START: *Lights up. AGENT Y is inspecting the window with a magnifying glass when MAX enters the stage. AGENT Y has taken off his coat, hat and gloves and is wearing a normal shirt and pants. The props table and costume rack have been taken from the stage. The lighted nativity star is now hanging in front of the window. The four chairs remain at stage right. A table is positioned at stage left. On the table rests a scroll and a reed pen/stick. Placed down-center is a manger with a doll and piece of cloth hidden behind it. The microphone, microphone stand, music stand and sheets of paper are all placed at center stage. The added modern decorations remain the same.*

MAX: What are you doing over there?

AGENT Y: I'm inspecting this window for the meaning of Christmas.

MAX: The window? Why would the meaning of Christmas be in a window?

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AGENT Y: I don't know, but our intelligence said if I peered into Christmas, that I would find the meaning. Well, this window is the best way to peer at anything around here.

MAX: I don't think they meant to peer through a window, but rather to watch the Christmas program closely and look for the meaning. Really though, I could just read the meaning to you, if you give me a minute to grab my Bible.

AGENT Y: *(Hearing someone.)* I don't have time for that now.

AGENT Y runs to a seat in the audience and sits down as DIRECTOR TIM enters.

MAX: It will only take a...

DIRECTOR TIM: Max, how is everything looking?

As he talks, MAX hurriedly places the two stands, microphone and sheets of paper, back at center stage and glares at AGENT Y.

MAX: What? Oh, ah, FINE... just FINE, EVERYTHING is in ITS place.

DIRECTOR TIM: No need for nerves, Max. Everything will be alright. *(Looks at phone.)* We still have an hour before we start. Why don't you go take a breather?

MAX begrudgingly leaves AGENT Y and exits the stage. Shortly thereafter, DIRECTOR TIM notices AGENT Y sitting in the audience.

DIRECTOR TIM: Oh, well, hello there, sir. You're a little early, but thank you for coming. Do I know you from somewhere?

AGENT Y: Oh, I don't think so. I probably just have one of those familiar faces. *(Looks down, sheepishly.)*

Lights out.

SCENE 5

AT START: *Lights up. The program is about to begin. The stage remains the same as Scene 4. AGENT Y stays in the same seat and still wears the same shirt and pants. MAX and PASTOR PAULA sit at stage right. CLARA stands behind the microphone stand at center stage.*

**Scripture verses read are Luke 2:1-20, 1 John 4:14 and Romans 10:9 from the NLT translation.*

DIRECTOR TIM enters the stage with a clipboard and pencil in hand. DIRECTOR TIM will pretend to check items on the stage and then turn and give a thumbs up towards the audience as if he is giving someone a cue. DIRECTOR TIM then sits at stage right and the program begins.

CAESAR enters the stage along with ASSISTANT TO CAESAR. They both walk to the table placed at stage left. CAESAR takes the scroll, opens it, signs it and shows it to the audience. CAESAR then exits the stage. The ASSISTANT TO CAESAR continues to stand behind the table. CENSUS PEOPLE enter the stage and form a line up to the table as if they are registering. They pretend to sign the scroll and give a coin to ASSISTANT TO CAESAR. All CENSUS PEOPLE exit the stage after they have “registered.”

CLARA: Luke 2:1-20, “In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.”

MARY and JOSEPH enter. They make their way to the table and register. MARY and JOSEPH will then make their way to down-center. The ASSISTANT TO CAESAR will exit the stage. Once down-center, JOSEPH and MARY sit behind the manger. The ANIMALS enter and surround MARY, JOSEPH and the manger.

CLARA: “And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.”

MARY lifts the piece of cloth, places the doll in the cloth material and wraps it. MARY then pretends to hold a baby in her arms.

CLARA: “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born.”

MARY places the baby in the manger.

CLARA: “And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”

MARY and JOSEPH then freeze. The SHEPHERDS and SHEEP enter the stage and stand down-left. The SHEPHERDS will sit in a semicircle with their SHEEP.

CLARA: “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.”

An ANGEL will then enter and stand beside the SHEPHERDS.

CLARA: “An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”

The SHEPHERDS will be very afraid. Some will stand and others will fall backwards from their seated position due to shock. The ANGEL will pretend to speak to the SHEPHERDS.

CLARA: “But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah,

the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

More ANGELS will enter the stage and stand near the other angel already on stage.

CLARA: “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’”

The ANGELS will turn and exit the stage. The SHEPHERDS will slowly gather their wits about them and then pick up their staff and move as if heading towards the star. The SHEEP will follow the SHEPHERDS.

CLARA: “When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’”

The SHEPHERDS and SHEEP arrive at the nativity scene and sit near the manger. THEY smile and admire the baby Jesus. MARY reacts in delight, while picking up and holding the baby.

CLARA: “They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.”

The SHEPHERDS stand up, bow their heads, gather their SHEEP and then return to down- left. Once they are back in position, sitting with their sheep, SHEPHERDS will freeze. MARY will hold the baby, and JOSEPH will sit beside her. They will both gaze at the baby and freeze.

CLARA: “The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.” *(Pause.)*

ALL freeze.

CLARA: I John 4:14 reads, “Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.” *(Returns to seat.)*

Lights are turned down as the nativity star shines in front of the window. MARY, JOSEPH, SHEPARDS, SHEEP and ANIMALS all remain frozen. Lights up.

PASTOR PAULA, DIRECTOR TIM, and MAX clap and applause for program participants.

DIRECTOR TIM, MAX and CLARA will direct the nativity characters off the stage. MAX and CLARA will exit the stage with the nativity characters. DIRECTOR TIM and PASTOR PAULA will walk to center-stage. PASTOR PAULA is carrying a Bible.

DIRECTOR TIM: Before we go and enjoy some refreshments, I would just like to ask Pastor Paula to...

AGENT Y starts jumping up and down, runs onto the stage and interrupts DIRECTOR TIM.

AGENT Y: I get it, I get it! I finally get it! I understand the true meaning of Christmas.

PASTOR PAULA: That’s great. Was this your first time hearing about Jesus?

AGENT Y: I’ve heard his name before, but I just thought he was a mysterious character. I didn’t realize that He is the savior of the world. That is, until today.

PASTOR PAULA: Would you like to ask Jesus to forgive your sins and come into your life?

AGENT Y: Yes, I would, I really would.

PASTOR PAULA: Well then, how about we go over there and I can share some things. *(Points to the chairs.)*



Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

PEERING INTO CHRISTMAS

by Amanda Renee Bishop.

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