

\*\*\*\*\* SCRIPT PREVIEW \*\*\*\*\*

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# *DoveTale*

*How the first Christmas came together*

Written By Ted Swartz, Lee Eshleman, Ingrid De Sanctis

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Ted Swartz, Lee Eshleman, Ingrid De Sanctis

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## THE BACK STORY

I met Ted in 1993 the summer before I was going to graduate school to get my MFA in Acting. I had known Lee since I was a student at Eastern Mennonite College in the 1980's. I liked both of them immediately. They were warm, funny and guys you wanted to call your friends. But when I returned to Eastern Mennonite University as an assistant professor of theater in 1996, I got to know Ted & Lee. Together they were a combination of brothers, friends, Abbott and Costello, Ernie and Bert and no doubt the funniest men I knew.

So when they invited me to write a play with them about the Christmas story I did not hesitate to say "Yes!!! Of course!!!! When? Let's start." Of course I was terrified when I considered creating a concept that had not been done before. I mean, how many times have we experienced a "new" interpretation of the Christmas story and in a million different ways?

Yet I knew that I would learn so much from Ted and Lee and writing with them would be the way to learn from these comic masters. And no doubt as I sit here writing this for you, I will tell you they taught me how to be funny. Lee would say they didn't. Ted would tell you he did. They are both right. I have comic timing but no one does a double take like Ted Swartz and no one finds the details of humor like Lee. Together they were magic and I was invited to join their club.

So in the summer of 1996 we agreed to meet every day for two weeks. Or maybe it was a week. And write a play. We would go off and come back with scenes. We drank a lot of coffee. We drank too much water. We argued. A lot. Well, Ted and I argued a lot and made Lee nervous. But we pushed and prodded and investigated this story we all thought we knew so well to find something new. To find an angle we had never considered before. We wanted to find the heart and the humor in these beautiful people that God surprised with this baby.

No doubt we all connected to the surprise factor. God kept sending this angel to surprise these faithful followers. First he surprised Elizabeth. Then he surprised Mary. Then he surprised Joseph. Each one reacted differently. Each one initially struggled and eventually surrendered to God's crazy and miraculous plan. Each one responded with humanity. They all decided to follow. Each had an encounter with Gabriel.

The character of Gabriel became the through line that framed the dramatic structure of the entire piece. We pushed this out. What if Gabriel keeps showing up? No matter what the characters do, they can't get away from Gabriel. In many ways, we can't get away from God. No matter where we go, or what we do, God finds us. In *DoveTale*, Gabriel shows up as Mary waits for the plumber,

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in the middle of dinner, as Joseph storms off, as Mary and Joseph look for an inn. Gabriel shows up as a waiter, a plumber, and an innkeeper. This is not to say that Gabriel IS God, his presence is a dramatic device that reminds us of the spiritual journey these characters are undergoing.

Then there is this couple. God picked them. We know they were special. He picked the right couple. What is the “right couple”? We hoped they would love each other. And this is a story of love. Love for their God, love for each other and love for this baby.

In so many paintings they look so serene, the halos and pleasant expressions.. I wish I could be that serene after giving birth. I’ve yet to give birth but from what I hear, natural childbirth is uncomfortable. I mean, just a bit. And that halo reminds me of the television show *Touched by an Angel*. But we all want to find ourselves in the stories of the Bible. To find the humanity of the characters. And that is what we tried to do. We started to ask a lot of questions.

What was it like for Mary to be a single woman living an ordinary life and find out she was going to give birth?

How did that news sound to Joseph when he had never touched Mary?

Zechariah and Elizabeth had been married a long time. Suddenly he can’t talk? What was it like to live with a mute husband for nine months?

What happened to Mary after being at Aunt Elizabeth’s house for three months?

What about that first moment she saw Joseph? The man she loved.

How did Mary feel after traveling for days and being nine months pregnant? (*I was with my sister while she was traveling to the hospital at nine months pregnant and I try to forget how many times she screamed at me when I asked her if she was all right.*)

And when these two finally held that baby for the first time, did they look for themselves in him just like any new parents would? And did they find themselves?

*DoveTale* is our response to these questions. I know it will not be the last attempt at retelling the Christmas story, but it is one more look, glance, angle. Our version hopes to make you laugh a bit at God’s sense of humor. How so many of these humans in biblical stories are put in impossible positions and they come through – only hanging on to their faith and believing in the midst of their own disbelief. God never fails. The baby probably surprised this couple every day.

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What was he like as a three year old? Was he a terrible two year old? How about the teenage years? What was it like to raise a perfect child? Did they ever feel inferior raising the Son of God? Oh, that is for another play. Maybe you'll write that one.

For now, we hope that as you explore and act or direct or just enjoy *DoveTale*, that you, too, find yourself somewhere in the story. Maybe at the restaurant or the manger. Or maybe wrestling in your dreams. Or maybe when they hold the baby. Maybe you will find yourself laughing at this God we follow who continues to surprise us. Over and over and over and over...

I have loved this journey and we hope you create your own when performing *DoveTale*... No doubt Ted and I will always miss our dear Lee, but we are immensely grateful for the years we shared on and off the stage.

-Ingrid

\* \* \*

OUR THANKS: to our families, of course.... Sue Swartz, Reagan Eshleman, Kathe and Steven Moyer, Tom Brenneman, Mark Charney, Chip Egan, Bob Small, Steve Gilman (for consultation on text and direction), Jeff Warner (for the door and more), Judy Bomberger, Trent Wagler (for the new life he brings to Gabriel), Travis Harder (who is a friend that goes above and beyond), and Sheri Hartzler, as ever. Special, special thanks to audiences across the country who have mooded, sang, laughed and maybe even cried during our performances. We do it for you.

- Ted and Ingrid

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

*DoveTale* is an updated version of a very old and familiar biblical story. Throughout the script we have sprinkled details from the Bible that may not be known to everyone, but have become inside jokes for those who know their Bible well. We are convinced that a play about believable and engaging characters will draw the audience into the story, regardless of their biblical knowledge. Occasionally we hear people comment, “You have to really know the biblical story to get the humor.” We don’t believe that’s always the case, however, sometimes it is true.

We recommend reading the story in different translations from the King James to *The Message* so that YOU don’t miss the specific references to biblical texts and the inside humor that results. Not all audience members will understand and /or laugh at those specific references. In the context of the entire play, though, it isn’t absolutely crucial, but make sure you know what you’re saying. (We love the “Zechariah doesn’t say much” line – but you do need to know the story to appreciate the humor of that line.)

## CHARACTERS

**GABRIEL:** It’s his biggest job ever! He is earnest, warm and a bit mischievous. The character of Gabriel is a mix of clumsy enthusiasm and gentle confidence. As the play progresses he grows into his role as the “shepherd” of events that brings this story together. In the first scene he is somewhat unsure of himself, but later is more confident, relishing the retelling of the events.

**MARY:** Full of heart and warmth, Mary is a friend to everyone and everyone wants to be her friend. She is kind-hearted and sensitive to the needs around her. Quick to laugh at herself, she is a loyal friend and daughter, devoted to Joseph and faithful to God.

**JOSEPH:** Crazy in love with Mary, Joseph is a hard worker who sometimes struggles with his enthusiasm for woodwork turning into clumsiness. A reasonable and levelheaded guy who is devoted to Mary. Not the “up front” kind of person, but someone you can count on when you need him.

**WAITER:** A French waiter who somehow got a job at Bartholomew’s, a local semi-upscale restaurant. Somewhat smug and pretentious.

**ARNIE:** Arnie Pufkin is a career lounge singer at Bartholomew’s. Has worked at Bartholomew’s for decades, unable to get a job anywhere else. But the local crowd loves him.

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LEO: An overzealous wedding photographer, distant cousin of Joseph's.

NIGEL: An older British gentleman who owns an inn in Bethlehem.  
Talkative to a fault, but with a heart of gold.

ELIZABETH: A sprightly and spirited older aunt of Mary's. Six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Married to Zechariah for a very long time.

ZECHARIAH: A spry and usually talkative older uncle of Mary's with a bit of a temper. Too often speaks his mind without thinking. An expectant father of John the Baptist. Married to Elizabeth for a very long time.

MAGGIE: A charming, simple-minded shepherd who works the fields with her brother Egan. Smarter than she looks.

EGAN: A charming, VERY simple-minded shepherd who works the fields with his sister Maggie. Dumber than he looks.

**NOTE:** *When three actors are portraying all the roles, the following is the breakdown of characters:*

ACTOR ONE (MALE): Gabriel, Waiter at Bartholomew's, Arnie Pufkin, Leo the wedding photographer, Nigel the innkeeper

ACTOR TWO (FEMALE): Mary, Aunt Elizabeth, Maggie the shepherd

ACTOR THREE (MALE): Joseph, Uncle Zechariah, Egan the shepherd

It would also be exciting to use ten different actors playing all the supporting roles. What you gain is a larger cast and extra energy. What you may lose is the magical manner in which Gabriel changes all the scenes and becomes multiple characters, thus always present in Joseph and Mary's journey. Artistically you can figure out how to balance those choices. Please note if you do use multiple actors to play the additional roles, Gabriel must always be Arnie Pufkin because of Joseph's line, "Maybe I'll bump into an angel."

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## LOCATION

The stage is set for Mary's apartment at the beginning of the play: loveseat with a throw, small table with a phone on it, wood crate with a *Bride* magazine on it, two seats (one next to crate, one next to small table), free-standing door with flowers hanging on the hook. There is simplicity to the set pieces so Gabriel can maneuver them on stage with ease.

SET PIECES: two chairs, 2 wood crates, *Bride* magazine sits on the crate, small table, phone, love seat, fabric throw, NIGEL'S INN sign, transom for the door.

*All the set pieces in the opening scene are used in other scenes.*

The free-standing DOOR is used in every scene. The door should have a front side that is designed to be an inside or outside apartment door with a hook on it.

- THE ANNOUNCEMENT: flowers on the hook
- THE DREAM: nothing on the hook
- THE RECONCILIATION: apartment number on the hook
- NO ROOM AT THE INN: Nigel's Inn sign on the top of the door

When the door is turned around it becomes a more rustic door for the manger in the final scene.

## PLACES

Mary's apartment:	An old story present day. End of the workday
Bartholomew's restaurant:	3 days later
Zechariah and Elizabeth's home:	Later that night
Joseph's apartment:	3 months after Gabriel's visit to Mary
Outside door of Joe's apartment:	The next day
Outside the inn:	9 months after Gabriel's announcement
The manger:	Later that night

## COSTUMING

### For Mary

Denim skirt, pink sweater, pink button-up shirt, clogs, blue dress, pregnancy dress, fabric for shawl, brown skirt, t-shirt, blazer

### For Gabriel

Bib overalls, yellow Converse sneakers, bright yellow shirt, angel costume

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**For Joseph**

Khaki pants, corduroy blue shirt, corduroy green shirt, brown shoes, bathrobe

**For Leo**

Necktie, nerdy glasses, jacket

**For Nigel**

Half-glasses, bright-colored cardigan sweater

**For Waiter**

Apron, beret

**For Arnie Pufkin**

Vest, mic, white jacket, Sinatra hat

**For Zechariah**

Old cardigan sweater, glasses, worn plaid shirt buttoned to the top, worn-out hat, khaki's pulled up past waist

**For Elizabeth**

Grey wig, scarf, wire-rimmed glasses, bright-colored skirt, bright-colored apron, small belly

**For Shepherds, Maggie and Egan**

2 wool knit hats, 2 wool sweaters, wool gloves with fingers cut off

**MUSIC**

Music scores for the songs in Act 1, Scene 2 can be found on pages 56-59.

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## **PROPERTIES**

### **THE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Print shop box with napkins inside  
Sealed envelope with letter inside  
Post-it note from Mom  
Two scrolls to be put in pockets of overalls  
Paper for pocket of overalls ("hand wash")  
3 napkins in pocket of overalls  
Bugle backstage  
Inside of Gabriel's backpack: notes for Joe, map, wrench, Raggedy Ann doll, sheep sweater, bugle, angel costume

### **AT BARTHOLOMEWS**

Bandages  
Tablecloth  
Black apron  
Wine goblet  
Water glass  
Crackers in a basket  
Microphone  
Two menus, number  
Gift in bag  
Wooden box for Mary

### **THE PHONE CALL**

Phone  
Checkers and checkerboard  
Pregnant belly for Aunt Elizabeth

### **THE DREAM**

Pizza box  
Old pizza crust  
Black shawl for Mary  
Baby wrapped in blanket

### **THE RECONCILIATION**

Number "5" to hang on the door  
Sling for Joseph's arm  
Hammer with bow  
Bouquet of flowers  
Camera/camera bag

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Bridal veil

Top hat for Joseph

**NO ROOM AT THE INN**

2 hard suitcases

Duffel bag

Pregnancy belly

**SHEPHERDS WATCH THEIR FLOCK**

Knitting that has been started (same color as sheep sweater)

Knitting needles

Wool blanket

2 wooden crates

**YOUR EYES**

Baby wrapped in a blanket

2 wooden crates

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# DoveTale: The Complete Script

By Ted Swartz, Lee Eshleman and Ingrid De Sanctis

## SCENE ONE: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

**Set:** *Simple home. Couch with a throw. A few chairs, small end table and small table holding the phone stage right. Bride magazine on end table.*

*GABRIEL enters the back of the house, looking about with a rumpled map in one hand and some sort of backpack/duffle in the other. His hair is rather wild, spiked up in the air somewhat. He is a warm and engaging character and speaks directly to the audience.*

**GABRIEL:** Do any of you live around here? You see, I'm looking for this one house and I know what it looks like of course, but only from one angle: straight overhead. From down here on the planet everything looks different and I ... her name is Mary. And she's really ... well, she's GONNA be really ... (*Gestures a round tummy*) ... well, that's my job to tell her that she's gonna really ... and this is one of the biggest jobs that I ... I mean I just wanna—do I look okay? (*Sees interior of Mary's apartment, walks on*) Well, this must be it. Yes, this looks right. But what if I'm wrong? It would be very embarrassing to give this announcement to the wrong person. (*Sees magazine*) Hello, what's this? *Bride magazine!* Yep, this must be the place. (*A new thought*) Well, I should practice.

(*Very flat*)  
Behold. No.

(*Deep, dramatic voice*)  
Behold. No. I'll scare her to death.

(*Suave with finger click*)  
Behold.

(*With some dramatic movement*)  
BEHOOOOOOOLD! YES!

(*GABRIEL leaps over couch.*)  
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Okay! Greetings! You who are highly... highly ... (*Looks at his mini- scroll*)  
 favored! Greetings, you who are highly favored. I am Gabriel. I stand in the  
 presence of God"

(*To the sky; sheepish*)

Hey guys? I found the place. Listen. I think there should be some kind of a  
 majestic trumpet fanfare when I say my name, to give her that full sense of  
 grandeur. Work on it. When I say, "I am Gabriel. Greetings you who are highly  
 ... (*Looks at scroll*) favored!"

(*Hears MARY coming; GABRIEL heads into audience.*)

Here she comes.

(*MARY blusters in through the door dressed as an everyday woman in a denim skirt and  
 pink sweater. She's carrying her purse and mail stacked on top of a carton. MARY sets  
 the carton down. She is excited about the letter that she has found and opens it  
 immediately and sits on the couch to read it.*)

**MARY:** (*Reading the letter*) "Dearest Mary, I miss you so much. The Third  
 Annual Conference of Woodcrafters and Pipe-fitters of Jerusalem and Palestine is  
 going great, though. We studied dovetail joints and it made me think of you.  
 This morning we had a forum on cabinets, banisters, and trim work. It made me  
 think of you." He is so sweet. "The city is big and beautiful. Just like you." What?  
 (*She is a bit surprised by this line. Goes to second page.*) "The beautiful part, not the  
 big part of course ..." (*Relieved*) Oh. "All my love, your Joseph. P.S. You are my  
 sweetheart. P.S.S. You are my sugar dumpling." (*She puts the letter away and  
 looks at her other mail still smiling to herself.*) He is so silly.

(*MARY picks up post-it note off the carton. GABRIEL reenters the scene and stands  
 behind the loveseat as she reads the post-it note. MARY cannot see GABRIEL.*)

**MARY:** "Mary, my dear. Here are the napkins straight from the shop. Nice  
 color choice. Did you remember to invite the Levitt's? Remember, two t's! They  
 always get two t's!" (*To herself*) Okay, Mom. (*Back to reading the post- it*) "Call me  
 when you get these; I have big news from your Aunt Elizabeth. Love, Mom."  
 (*MARY opens box, examines a napkin, places it on the table to admire it.*) Mary and  
 Joseph. June 22. Forever On. (*She walks away from the napkin. Then stops. Turns  
 back. Looks at it again.*) Wait a minute. Mary and Joseph. June 22. Forever On. It  
 should say ONE. Mary and Joseph. Forever ONE! Nine hundred cocktail

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napkins. (*GABRIEL approaches the door.*) Forever On. What are we, a porch light?  
(*MARY puts the napkin away. GABRIEL knocks.*)

**MARY:** Just a minute.

(*Goes to the door. Opens it and sees GABRIEL in his white overalls. He really looks like a plumber.*)

Oh the plumber! Come on in. I've been calling you guys for two days. (*Dashes over to the kitchen*) It's right over here. See? It's been leaking like a grapefruit.

(*GABRIEL strikes an angelic pose and begins his speech.*)

**GABRIEL:** Greetings, you who are highly flavored. Favored!

**MARY:** (*Not sure how to respond*) Highly frustrated is more like it. I tried using duct tape on it, but that didn't work.

**GABRIEL:** I am Gabriel.

(*A sad- sounding bugle blast. They are both embarrassed. To MARY that sounded like a stomach problem. To GABRIEL the angels were not taking this seriously.*)

I stand in the presence of God.

**MARY:** Good. (*Trying to think of something to say*) Because when duct tape fails, who else can you turn to? (*She backs away from the sink area*) Well, let me get out of your way.

**GABRIEL:** Blessed one, you have found favor with God.

**MARY:** (*Backs behind the table. She is trying her best to be kind but this is a bit strange.*) If you need some tea or anything just let me know.

**GABRIEL:** (*Advancing toward her; MARY begins to freak out a bit. GABRIEL is working hard now.*) No, no, I mean it. And you will be overshadowed by the holy spigot. Spirit! But be not afraid and fear not. Though there is great trembling in

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you ... seeds of peace but seeds of ... many seeds. You are very seedy. (*Realizes he's scaring her; tries to reassure.*) But fear not—

**MARY:** (*He's too close; she crosses to the chair, stage left.*) You know actually, I think the sink is fine. And I can't even afford a plumber anyway.

**GABRIEL:** No, no. I'm an angel. (*Crossing to center*)

**MARY:** (*Trying to be as polite as possible. Smiling.*) Yes, you are Mr. Gabriel. I'm sorry to waste your time.

**GABRIEL:** I am the angel Gabriel (*Trumpet blast*) ... and I can fix your plumbing. (*Produces wrench and sets to work*) I just want to tell you that he's coming! And a crushed reed he will not smolder (*Confusing himself*) —no, no, a smoldering reed he will not smolder --he will be nice to reeds...

**MARY:** (*Crossing to phone*) You know, I really need to call my florist.

**GABRIEL:** Please! There's something I must tell you! (*He stands and backs away so as not to threaten her.*) You are the beginning of something new and without end. It will go on and on forever. On and on like a river. On and on like the wind—

**MARY:** (*Trying to get to the table behind him and use the phone*) I really need to go on and—

**GABRIEL:** On and on. Like cocktail napkins. Forever on.

**MARY:** (*MARY looks at the cocktail napkins then at GABRIEL.*) Who are you?

**GABRIEL:** I told you. I am (*Looks heavenward to squelch the bugle*) I am Gabriel. I'm an angel.

**MARY:** An angel.

**GABRIEL:** Yes. An angel. (*Puts away the wrench*) And I'm here with big news, not that I've been quite as--quite as--that my words—articulate, as I hoped to be but surely you sense that the air is full of --fullness --and kind of pregnant.

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**MARY:** Actually, you know my neighbor Levi can fix that pipe. (*Crosses to door*) He's right next door. He's very strong. So I think you should go now.

**GABRIEL:** Mary, please.

**MARY:** (*This stops her in her tracks. She catches her breath and really looks at him.*) How do you know my name?

**GABRIEL:** Oh please don't throw me out. I want to do this right. Of course I know your name. I know everything about you. We spent a long time deciding on you.

**MARY:** Who?

**GABRIEL:** Me and the boss and some lesser cherubim. (*She crosses down left*) Don't you see how right you are for this, from the very beginning, even as a girl, your fairness ... playing hopscotch and kickball ... the Raggedy Ann doll!

**MARY:** (*Smiling to herself remembering her doll*) My Raggedy Ann doll! My favorite. (*She sits on chair.*) Oh, I loved that doll.

**GABRIEL:** Exactly. Yes, you did, didn't you, Mary. (*He sits on the loveseat; sets bag right of couch.*) You loved that doll so much. But you gave it away. To...

**MARY /**

**GABRIEL:** Rebekah Goldman.

**MARY:** Rebekah Goldman! But that was in third grade! (*She starts to connect all this. Looks at GABRIEL and crosses to him where he is sitting on the couch.*) How could you possibly--wait a minute, were you in my third grade class? I'm sorry, I don't recognize you...

**GABRIEL:** No, I never actually went to school. But I know about your classmates; I know how cruel they were. They taunted Rebekah about her lazy eye and because she was poor. But not you. Mary, you walked with her. On her side of the street. Back and forth to school. And she always had that doll. She called it her "Happy Mary" doll...

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**MARY:** Okay, well what do you want with me? (*Goes and sits back down on the chair stage left.*)

**GABRIEL:** Mary, you're a good woman.

**MARY:** Okay.

**GABRIEL:** You're full of mercy.

**MARY:** All right.

**GABRIEL:** And you're going to have a baby.

**MARY:** (*MARY is distracted by the idea of a baby and has no clue as to what GABRIEL is really saying.*) I hope so. We've planned the first one seven years after we're married.

**GABRIEL:** No. I mean much sooner than that. (*Stands.*)

**MARY:** And then two to three more, spaced 24 to 30 months apart.

**GABRIEL:** (*Grabbing chair and moving it to center to stand on. This makes MARY a bit nervous.*) No soon! It's upon us! Listen! (*Gets scroll from pocket.*) After lo these 60 years, your prayers have been heard. You'll bear a son! Do not let him have wine or fermented drink. He will be a man of locusts and wild honey...

**MARY:** You are making no sense. What do locusts have to do with me?

**GABRIEL:** Did I say locusts? Oh, that's the wrong scroll -- here we are-- Hand wash in cold water. No! It's gotta be here somewhere ... (*GABRIEL gets down from the chair, crosses to MARY and speaks more honestly.*) The way I understand it, you will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be called the Son of the Most High.

(*MARY stands, crosses to GABRIEL and tries to explain.*)

**MARY:** Gabriel, I am an engaged woman, which means I've kept myself for Joseph. Gabriel, have you heard of the honeymoon, where ... Gabriel. Oh no, no, no. This is impossible.

*(MARY goes back and sits down, trying to laugh this off.)*

**GABRIEL:** Impossible? That's what your Aunt Elizabeth said. *(He sits on the loveseat. Phone rings several times. MARY finally answers.)*

**MARY:** Hello? Aunt Elizabeth? How are you? You're ... you're pregnant. *(MARY is clearly thrown off by AUNT ELIZABETH'S pregnancy.)* Can I call you back?

**MARY:** That's impossible. Aunt Elizabeth is--

**MARY /**

**GABRIEL:** --eighty-three years old!

*(MARY is distressed by this news and sits down in the chair stage right next to the telephone table.)*

**GABRIEL:** Yes! Amazing! Impossible! She is so happy. Zechariah doesn't say much ... but Elizabeth is positively glowing.

**MARY:** *(MARY thinks she can explain this away.)* But, see, at least they're a couple. They've been married for--what--65 years. Of course they're ready for a child. Sometimes it takes that long. Who knows how long it'll take Joseph and me until we're ready? We're not even a family yet. I'm not even married yet.

**GABRIEL:** But you will be. You'll be God's first family.

**MARY:** *(Comes to loveseat, sits on the arm)* And Joseph, he's just getting started in the business and he cuts himself all the time in the shop. He's--to be honest, he's kind of a klutz, an adorable klutz, but we're hardly organized enough to handle a child.

*(Moves back to the chair stage left, deeply moved and overwhelmed by all this because she can feel the truth of it all and her humanity.)*

This is a mistake. You're here by mistake. I'm not the one.

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**GABRIEL:** *(Stands, picks up his shoulder bag, moves to MARY)* Mary, God is coming. He's needs a safe place to start.

**MARY:** *(Full of heart and question)* Don't you see what you're asking? I'll be totally humiliated and disgraced. My God would have prepared me. He would have sent some kind of sign or something.

**GABRIEL:** *(Steps forward and extends his arms out to the sides)* I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God. Who has chosen you, Mary.

**MARY:** But Gabriel...

**GABRIEL:** *(Fishes in his shoulder bag and gives her the Raggedy Ann doll)* You won't be alone. I promise. God will be with you, on your side of the street. Always.

*(GABRIEL exits and leaves MARY alone while she takes all this in. Suddenly the phone rings and she crosses to answer it. During the following phone call, MARY keeps trying to find the words but her mind is elsewhere. She says the wrong thing then tries to cover it up over and over and over...)*

**MARY:** Hello? Joseph? *(Completely perplexed)* Joseph who? *(Realizing)* Oh! Joseph! My fiancé! No, no, this isn't Mary--I mean *(Trying to cover up and explain this)* Yes! This is Mary--I mean what I meant to say was that the plumber was just here. Yeah, he was an angel. No, he didn't fix a thing ... well, actually it's not leaking ... Oh, you cut your finger. I'm sorry, I hope it hurts. I mean, no, no ... you think I don't sound like myself? Well, I'm just in shock ... that you called; you know ... you're coming back on Friday? That's a little bit early. Oh, and you wanna have dinner--at my place? No, no, no, no you never know who might pop up ... At Bartholomew's? Friday at 6. Yeah, that's fine. Bye, Mary. No! Uh ... what was your name again? Joseph. Joseph! No, I'm just kidding. I'm joking. See you Friday at 6. Bye. *(MARY starts to hang up and then speaks into the phone. More herself now)* Joseph? Oh, I thought that you'd hung up. *(Full of heart)* I just wanted to tell you that I love you. I really love you. Thanks. Okay--I'll see you Friday. Bye.

*(MARY hangs up the phone and exits as the next scene begins.)*

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*(Music comes up and GABRIEL creates the new scene by bringing out the set pieces one by one: table, two chairs. JOSEPH enters and freezes into a position sitting down at the table. GABRIEL puts a menu in one hand and a goblet in the other. He claps and the music stops. He exits and JOSEPH wakes up. MARY enters from upstage. We watch her notice JOSEPH. She takes a deep breath. JOSEPH is dressed in khakis and a simple button up corduroy shirt. MARY has changed clothes and is wearing a simple blazer and brown shirt.)*

**MARY:** I'm sorry I'm late.

**JOSEPH:** No problem. Oh, it's good to see you. *(They hug and he pulls out the chair for her.)* You look great.

**MARY:** Thanks.

*(GABRIEL enters as the waiter with a heavy French dialect wearing a red beret, places menu on table. Throughout the piece, GABRIEL becomes a variety of characters and adds simple costume pieces such as a hat or jacket.)*

**WAITER:** Good evening miss, and welcome to Bartholomew's. Can I get you something to drink?

**JOSEPH:** Bring her a glass of your best wine.

**MARY:** *(MARY stops him)* No, I'll just have some water. *(And as the waiter exits, MARY has an afterthought)* And can you bring me some of those crackers?

*(WAITER exits stage left.)*

**JOSEPH:** How was your day?

**MARY:** Fine, I was a little tired this morning, but I feel okay now. *(She is trying to get his attention to talk about what has just happened to her)* Joseph ... *(WAITER returns with water, crackers; exits right.)*

**JOSEPH:** No. No wedding talk yet. First... *(Brings out a gift bag and sets it in front of her.)*

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**MARY:**       *(Looking at the bag)* Oh, Joseph, it's beautiful.

**JOSEPH:**     Look inside.

**MARY:**       *(MARY looks inside the gift bag and pulls out a small wooden box.)* Oh, it's beautiful.

**JOSEPH:**     Open it.

**MARY:**       *(Reading the inscription, on the inside lid)* Forever one. Oh, it really is beautiful.

**JOSEPH:**     We learned engraving the last day. You really like it?

**MARY:**       Yes. Yes, I love it.

**JOSEPH:**     Those are dovetail joints there, very stable.

**MARY:**       You're so sweet. I love surprises. *(Pause. MARY is starting to consider how she is going to broach the subject of her pregnancy.)* You like surprises too, don't you?

**JOSEPH:**     From you. *(He points at her with a bandaged finger.)*

*(She finally has his attention, but just can't bring it up. So decides to talk about something else.)*

**MARY:**       How did you do this? *(Points to his bandaged finger)*

**JOSEPH:**     Oh man, this was a doozy. You remember Levi? He was sawing boards for the cabinet we were working on together. And he was real nervous about getting the measurements right. Well so was I. Anyway, just about the time he was bringing the saw forward he hollers. "Are you sure?" And like an idiot I pointed out the mark again. *(Holds up the finger. Clearly MARY'S mind is elsewhere.)*

**MARY:**       That's wonderful. Joseph, can we talk...

**JOSEPH:**     Corner cupboards! Mary, there are nine corners in that apartment. If we put a corner cupboard in every corner, think of the space we could save.

**MARY:** Yea?

**JOSEPH:** Except maybe the back room. That'll be my work space. At least until we have kids. (*MARY starts to perk up now*) Hey, it can still be work space. I'll just put in a real low work bench, with some small hammers and stuff---no saws though. (*Holds up his bandaged finger*) Might run in the family.

(*Singer ARNIE PUFFKIN enters from stage right with a blazer, tie and a Frank Sinatra type hat. Totally cheesy lounge singer who works the crowd.*)

**ARNIE:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Bartholomew's. Of course, I'm Arnie Puffkin. You know, it's a wonderful and special night tonight, here at Bartholomew's. My first song goes out (*Piano introduction to "Extraordinary Love" begins*) as a dedication, from this guy, Joseph, to his Mary, his bride-to-be, in just 67 days.

"Extraordinary Love"

(*Singing*) Beside a cup of Joe  
the more the merry, (Mary)  
These two go hand in glove  
As far as I can see;  
it's an extra-or-di-nary,  
story of love in love.

(*Sings the first few lines then fades out and only hums*)

**MARY:** You've been thinking about our family?

**JOSEPH:** I will need a couple of apprentices.

(*MARY sees an opportunity to get to the issue but she treads lightly knowing this is hard to understand.*)

**MARY:** Little babies popping up when you least expect them?

**JOSEPH:** Sure.

**MARY:** Joseph, you are such a beautiful man. One of the things that attracted me to you was ... ah ... I always thought of you as an understanding

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person ... well it was the way you ... I thought to myself ... Joseph would make a good father.

**JOSEPH:** I always thought I could be. *(The singer fades in again for a measure, as JOSEPH and MARY get up to dance.)*

**MARY:** I'm feeling so good about us.

**JOSEPH:** Only 67 days away.

*(They keep dancing. Something starts to happen to MARY in the following. Each description of marriage builds with intensity and physicality.)*

**MARY:** You know, marriage can be difficult. There are obstacles.

**JOSEPH:** Forever one, Mary.

*(MARY steps out of the dance and starts to use her hands to explain. She becomes more and more animated as she speaks, building to the breathing lines.)*

**MARY:** It's going to be a lot of work, a lot of effort, and sometimes it'll feel like you are being kicked from the inside.

**JOSEPH:** It's you and me, Mary.

**MARY:** You don't always have everything you need. You don't have enough ice cream, you don't have enough pickles. You just don't have enough.

**JOSEPH:** But we'll have each other.

**MARY:** *(At the breaking point now. Using her hands, breathing hard. Giving birth to the lines.)* You push, you breathe, you push, the pain passes, things come out all right and you never know what you have. Joseph! *(Very calmly after she has just exploded)* I love you!

**ARNIE:** *(Singing)* Extraordinary love...

**MARY:** I'm pregnant!

*(SINGER drops his mike on the metal chair. JOSEPH is amused initially.)*

**JOSEPH:** What?!

**MARY:** Joseph. I am going to have a baby.

**SINGER:** Thank you, and good night. *(Exits, embarrassed to overhear such an intimate conversation.)*

**JOSEPH:** What?

**MARY:** I'm pregnant.

**JOSEPH:** *(Laughing it off)* You can't be. Is this a joke? You really had me going...

**MARY:** *(Trying to get him to understand. They both head back to the table.)*  
No, I'm really pregnant.

**JOSEPH:** *(Beginning of the turn for JOSEPH to feel the hurt and betrayal.)* No, Mary, you're not telling me this. Not after, I love you forever, and I'm a beautiful man ... Mary, we're getting married in 67 days.

**MARY:** I know and I can't wait.

**JOSEPH:** You can't be pregnant. I mean, I should know right?

**MARY:** Joseph.

*(He's just rolling. MARY is trying to get him to understand.)*

**JOSEPH:** I mean there has to be ... *(Waving his hands around)* If you're ... then there has to be ... and I know that we never ... *(Waving of the hands. Suddenly he stops. This is where things change. Turns to her. Says softly:)* I know I never...

**MARY:** Joseph. Neither have I. You need to know I've been faithful to you.

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**JOSEPH:** Mary. If this (*Gestures to an area*) is a mamma frog, and this (*Gestures to another area*) is a ... (*This one is hard to say*) tadpole ... there has to be (*Gestures to area in between*) a ... bullfrog.

**MARY:** Joseph, there was no bullfrog.

**JOSEPH:** There had to be a bullfrog.

**WAITER:** (*Enters and goes upstage of the table*) Are we ready to order? (*They just look at him.*) A couple of minutes? (*Exits*)

**MARY:** Joseph...

**JOSEPH:** Mary, this isn't like winking at somebody else or laughing at his jokes. This is a lot more than that. Mary ... We said we'd wait ... We made a promise to wait...

**MARY:** Joseph, I have. If you'll...

**JOSEPH:** (*Changing the subject*) What did you tell your folks?

**MARY:** (*Trying to make this sound like a great idea*) I haven't told them yet. I was hoping we could do that together.

**JOSEPH:** Together? You want me to stand next to a pregnant you and face your father?

**MARY:** He wouldn't blame you.

**JOSEPH:** Why not? Who else is he going to blame? Mary...

**MARY:** Joseph, listen to me. (*Starting with confidence that he just may understand*) There was this angel...

**JOSEPH:** The guy. (*Clearly he doesn't understand*)

**MARY:** No. It was an angel. And he came to me and ... he told me I was going to have a son ... and I was supposed to name him Jesus, and we're supposed to raise him as our own... (*She realizes that she is not being believed.*)

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**JOSEPH:**       *(Pause)* Mary, you have broken something precious.

*(JOSEPH gets up and starts to leave. MARY tries to stop him with her voice. He turns around.)*

**MARY:**       Where are you going?

**JOSEPH:**       I don't know.

**MARY:**       But we have to talk about this.

*(WAITER enters.)*

**WAITER:**      What may I bring you?

**MARY:**       I have completely lost my appetite.

**JOSEPH:**       I don't think we'll be having dinner.

**WAITER:**      Very well. I will bring you the check. For the crackers. *(WAITER clears off the table and exits. MARY tries again to engage JOSEPH in a conversation.)*

**MARY:**       Joseph, wait. This Friday we have a luncheon with the bridesmaids and groomsmen.

**JOSEPH:**       I won't be there.

**MARY:**       We're getting married in 67 days.

**JOSEPH:**       How can there be a wedding now?

**MARY:**       Joseph, I have my wedding dress.

*(JOSEPH begins to walk away. MARY changes her tune and speaks more firmly.)*

**MARY:**       I mean, if you can't deal with my pregnancy how're you gonna deal with the really tough things?

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**JOSEPH:** That's really funny, Mary. *(Starts to leave for real now)*

**MARY:** Joseph, where are you going?

**JOSEPH:** I don't know. Out. Maybe I'll bump into an angel.

*(At that moment as JOSEPH exits ARNIE enters and they bump into each other. ARNIE launches into his routine. Music comes up.)*

**ARNIE:** Hey, it's an old favorite now, The Bullfrog Song.

*(MARY gets up and exits. ARNIE keeps on.)*

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**ARNIE:** (*Singing "The Bullfrog Song"*)

Hey, pretty princess,  
the daughter of the queen.  
You got my heart a-jumpin'  
like a trampoline.

I'm just a bachelor bullfrog  
in the castle moat,  
but I'm a candidate for loving  
and I want your vote...

How 'bout it baby,  
you and me,  
amphibian and royalty.  
How 'bout it baby,  
you and me,  
k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

I know what you're thinking,  
It's a crazy scene.  
You're a blue blood,  
and I'm a green ...

But pucker up, mama,  
you can never tell.  
Maybe I'm a prince,  
trapped under a spell.

How 'bout it, baby,  
you and me.  
I'm your date with destiny.  
How 'bout it, baby,  
you and me,  
k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

(*ARNIE goes into the audience and talks with them.*)

**ARNIE:** Thank you. No matter who you are or where you're from, there  
sure are some things that hold us all together, and there's one thing that really  
does make the world go round. Of course, I'm talking about love. Love is the

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glue. You know, if life is a sandal, then love is that funny little thing that sticks down between your big toe and the one right next to it. (*Piano music*) I guess what I'm trying to say can best be summed up in a song.

(*Arnie starts singing again*) A parting word for you, to all remember ... when you're at the end of your rope ... tie the knot again with your own heart strings, seal it in love's envelope. (*Speaking*) I'm Arnie Puffkin, you've been fabulous. Good night, everybody, thank you. Good night. Goodbye.

(*ARNIE exits. As the music continues ZECHARIAH enters.*)

### SCENE THREE: THE PHONE CALL

(*ZECHARIAH enters, with checkers and board. Sets up and begins to play against himself. After a few rounds, the phone begins to ring. ZECHARIAH reacts. Looks back like he is waiting for someone to enter. Keeps playing. We hear a voice from offstage before we see ELIZABETH, an adorable older lady. She has to do all the talking and ZECH does his best to communicate without words. It is exhausting.*)

**ELIZABETH:** (*From offstage*) Zechariah, would you get that please?  
(*ZECHARIAH looks at phone; can do nothing.*) Zechariah, for heaven's sake would you get the... (*Enters wiping hands on her apron, sees him looking at the phone and she smiles at him, teasing him.*) Oh, you can't get the phone, can you? You can't talk. I forgot.

(*Answers the phone*) Hello? Mary! It's Mary, Zechariah. (*He rolls his eyes. During the phone call, ELIZABETH goes back and forth between talking to MARY and talking to ZECHARIAH.*) How are you child? ... What? ... You know about bullfrogs? She knows about bullfrogs. ... The plumber ... Who? Who was the plumber? ... Mary, slow down. Breathe child, breathe. She's not breathing. Start again ... uh, huh ... they were at Bartholomew's ... uh huh ... corner cupboards ... they were dancing ... a singer ... I see ... I see...

(*ZECHARIAH wants to know what's going on. To him.*) Joseph's gone. Where? Oh ... gone. Oh dear. .... She's pregnant, it's not Joseph! Are you sure? She's sure. Mary, start at the beginning. It was an angel. (*To ZECHARIAH*) It was an angel.

(*ZECHARIAH'S now very interested. He begins charades. ELIZABETH is not very good at his game of charades. He indicates angel by flapping his arms...*) Your uncle wants to know about this angel. (*He is now on to another charade. ELIZABETH*

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*guesses a number of times before getting it.)* Oh, Gotcha, dear. Your uncle Zech has been doing his morning calisthenics. *(ZECHARIAH looks at her.)* I'm wrong. Aunt Elizabeth is wrong. *(ZECHARIAH climbs on his chair and this takes a while.)* What are you doing, dear? You are scaring me to death. You are tall as a sky scraper. *(ZECHARIAH points. ELIZABETH talks to MARY.)* Was the angel tall, dear? *(To ZECHARIAH)* Yes, it was tall.

*(ZECHARIAH climbs down and starts to motion with his hand. Elizabeth guesses)* Did the angel have hand puppets? *(To ZECHARIAH)* No puppets. *(She tries again. Very confident now.)* I got you, dear. Mary, did the angel have bad breath? *(ZECHARIAH looks at her. Then tries again.)* Did the angel talk a lot? Yes, Mary says the angel talked up a blue streak.

*(ZECHARIAH starts to make gestures with his hair)* Okay, dear. I got you. Mary, did the angel have things coming out of his hair. Did the angel have dandruff? *(ZECHARIAH alerts her again)* Okay, okay, dear. I'll try again. But look ... Your hair is such a mess. *(ZECHARIAH reacts with a big smile)* Okay, I gotcha. *(To MARY)* Mary, did the angel have bad hair? *(To ZECHARIAH)* He wore too much gel.

*(They look at each other with the realization.)* Mary, dear, we think it's a good idea to listen to this particular angel. *(Another expression from ZECHARIAH)* And don't get him upset. *(He nods vigorously.)* Tell her, Zechariah ... oh, that's right. *(To MARY)* Dear, Zechariah can't talk right now--he's become such a good listener. Mary, now this angel, he said what ... Oh, I see ... a baby. Oiy!!!

*(The baby jumps. A hand to her stomach.)* Mary. Mary. Who do you think sent that angel? Mary, if this is going to happen to you, it's for a reason. There's no one else who's a better choice. It's you.

*(ZECHARIAH taps at her.)* Hang on, dear; Uncle Zack's trying to tell me something... *(He starts with charades again. And she guesses, again and again.)* Your uncle has been learning the monkey dance. No, that not it. The hokey pokey. I'm wrong. Aunt Elizabeth is wrong. *(ZECHARIAH tries again to indicate something.)* Oh, that's a good idea. I gotcha, dear. Mary dear, why don't you come here for a little while? No it's no trouble. Pack your bags and come down and see us. Love ya, girl.

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*(She hangs up the phone and as she leaves, Elizabeth pats her belly and thinks of her baby.)* I hope he's a quiet boy. You've become such a good listener, Zach. I might just send up a little prayer that you never get your voice back.

*(ZECHARIAH gets up and follows her out as GABRIEL enters and talks directly to the audience.)*

### **GABRIEL'S TRANSITION: JOSEPH'S STATE**

**GABRIEL:** Do I wear too much gel? Well, Mary accepted that invitation, and she went off and spent some time with her Uncle Zech and Aunt Elizabeth. She had some time to let this news, this bizarre news, soak into her body and bones. In fact, she was there for three months. That's a trimester. Now, during that time, she and Joseph had no contact at all. In fact, Joseph was burying himself in his work, putting in lots of overtime at the woodshop and making some very strange things. For example, he made this five-legged chair, and he looked at it and he knew that something was wrong, so he lopped off two legs. Well, that didn't seem right, so he lopped again and again and again, and well, it's a cutting board now. Back in his apartment, things were no better. He was letting the place go, and he was letting himself go. He wasn't sleeping right, he wasn't eating right, he just wasn't taking care of himself, and he was walking around like a kind of a zombie, and I decided it was time for somebody to step in and see if they couldn't snap him out of it.

### **SCENE FOUR: THE DREAM**

*(JOSEPH enters in a bathrobe, checks the pizza box, yawns, lies down on the couch. Soon he's asleep. GABRIEL steps in like an announcer at a huge wrestling match, pretending he is holding a microphone coming down from the ceiling and taking on a new persona.)*

**GABRIEL:** Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to center ring for the main event: The Worldwide Wrestling Association championship match. In this corner, weighing in at 387 pounds, from parts known and unknown, since before time as we know it—it's the angel of the opera—please welcome ... Gabriel!!!!. In this other corner weighing in at 185 pounds, from Nazareth on the Galilee, please welcome ... Joseph, son of Jacob. Let's get ready to rumble!!!!!!

**JOSEPH:** *(GABRIEL takes a "karate kid" pose.)* Wait a minute. This is a dream isn't it? You're not real; you can't do anything to me. *(To audience)* It's a dream, he can't hurt me.

*(GABRIEL winks at audience then kicks JOSEPH. Slaps him over the back of his head. JOSEPH turns to GABRIEL and begins to swing as GABRIEL puts him arm-length away with his hand on his forehead.)*

**GABRIEL:** How's Mary?

**JOSEPH:** Mary who?

**GABRIEL:** Your fiancé.

**JOSEPH:** I don't have a fiancé

*(GABRIEL lets JOSEPH fall forward on his face.)*

**GABRIEL:** She dump you?

**JOSEPH:** No!

**GABRIEL:** Not man enough for her?

**JOSEPH:** No ... yes! I mean, no ... that doesn't have anything to do with it.

*(He points at GABRIEL. GABRIEL takes his index finger in hand and leads him over to the couch. Drops him. Sits on couch.)*

**GABRIEL:** No?

**JOSEPH:** No.

**GABRIEL:** Miss her? *(Tickles him)*

**JOSEPH:** No.

**GABRIEL:** Really?

**JOSEPH:** Hey, that's old history. I'm doing fine.

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**GABRIEL:** *(Pinching his face)* You look like you lost weight.

**JOSEPH:** I've been working out.

**GABRIEL:** Right. *(Lifts JOSEPH by his hair.)* Where is she?

*(Lets him go ... does the up the chest to under the chin school-kid thing, then slaps his face back and forth with both hands.)*

**JOSEPH:** How should I know?

**GABRIEL:** Where is she?

**JOSEPH:** She's at Zechariah and Elizabeth's.

**GABRIEL:** Now we're getting somewhere. HAAAAAAIIIIII! *(Strikes the arms ready pose, which causes JOSEPH to do it, too.)* Dating around?

**JOSEPH:** Well, I've been—*Gabriel swings him around by the arm and throws him over the couch. Runs to audience for a high five.)*

**JOSEPH:** *(Appearing from behind couch)* I'm doing okay.

**GABRIEL:** Don't measure up do they?

*(No answer)*

**GABRIEL:** That must have hurt. Here, take a seat. It's okay. Tell me about work. How are things at work?

**JOSEPH:** Work is work.

**GABRIEL:** Trouble concentrating?

**JOSEPH:** I'm on probation.

**GABRIEL:** More five-legged chairs. *(JOSEPH goes to sit, as GABRIEL pulls the chair from under him.)* Why did you let her go?

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**JOSEPH:** What do you mean, why? She was pregnant. It wasn't mine. What was I supposed to do—marry her anyway?

**GABRIEL:** *(Pulls JOSEPH to him by the ear.)* Whose baby do you think it is—anyway?

*(GABRIEL "lifts" JOSEPH and hurls him down center without touching him. GABRIEL induces the audience to applaud. They quiet down in expectation of the speech they are about to hear. JOSEPH becomes aware that he is hopelessly unprepared.)*

**JOSEPH:** Ah ... this evening ... I ... ah ... am so glad to be here ... It's a profound honor of course ... to be asked ... ah ... to address such a distinguished ... ah audience ... This evening, it's ... the lasting impression that one will take from this gathering will be ... I'm sure that you were all, in fact ... here. ... In conclusion ... I'm sorry, I don't seem to have my notes... *(GABRIEL hands him a note.)* I've just been handed a note. It appears that my wife has gone into labor, I need to get over to the hospital ... Wait a minute, this can't be for me, I'm not married. *(He hands the note to GABRIEL. Addresses audience.)* You see, this can't be for me. I'm not married.

*(MARY enters carrying a bundle. She wears a black fabric over her head and looks into JOSEPH'S eyes when she hands him the baby...)*

**JOSEPH:** Mary? What's the matter? *(She is shrouded as if in disgrace, hands the bundle to Joseph, looks at JOSEPH, then exits.)*

Mary. This isn't my child ... This isn't my child ... *(He is looking for anyone to give the bundle to.)* Please, this isn't mine. Please. *(He glances down at the bundle, sees something there. Is stilled. GABRIEL enters, gently takes the bundle and leads JOSEPH back to the bed/chair.)*

**GABRIEL:** Marry her, Joseph; it's the right thing to do. *(Tucks an item in his shirt. Exits with the baby. When door shuts, JOSEPH wakes up with a start. Realizes it was all a dream, notices what's in his shirt, pulls out a napkin, reads it.)*

**JOSEPH:** Forever on.

*(JOSEPH gets up and as he exits he realizes his arm hurts.)*

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**JOSEPH:** Ow!

**GABRIEL TRANSITION: "DREAMS"**

*(GABRIEL enters, stands inside the doorframe, leaning on top of cutaway door.)*

**GABRIEL:** Did you ever have a dream like that? A dream that was so intense and vivid that when you woke up, you could swear that it had actually happened to you? Well now, sometimes a dream like that is simply the result of worry. It's the last thing you were thinking about right before you went to sleep. And sometimes a dream like that is the result of diet. It's the last thing you ate right before you went to sleep. But sometimes, in the middle of all that crazy jigsaw imagery, there is something else, there's a hint toward an idea. There's a nudge toward a new way to see things. And if you listen closely enough, you can hear the voice of God.

**INTERMISSION CAN HAPPEN HERE. OR YOU CAN CONTINUE...**

**SCENE FIVE: THE RECONCILIATION**

*(MARY arrives at JOSEPH'S door with a pile of flowers and a hammer. She knocks several times. JOSEPH comes to the door dressed, with his arm in a sling. It has been three months since they have seen each other. The love is still there but they don't know what to say to each other. MARY rambles a bit.)*

**MARY:** Hi, Joseph. *(He says nothing so she just keeps talking.)* I just came by to talk to you for a minute and to see how you were. But I completely understand if you don't want to talk at all, you know, after everything. But I just wanted to come by and tell you that I understand how you feel. Yeah, I understand. And I brought you these. I wanted to buy you a stool, I mean, a tool. I wanted to buy you a tool, but the man at the hardware store wasn't much help. So I went to pick out a hammer and I thought this one was really cute. *(She hands him a hammer with a bow on it.)* And then I wanted to get you some flowers because I know a lot about flowers. So I got you these. *(She gives him flowers.)*

**JOSEPH:** Thanks.

**MARY:** *(Happy to hear the sound of his voice)* It's nice to hear your voice.

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*(The following is awkward as they both try to figure out how to handle this moment.)*

**JOSEPH:** Three months is a long time.

**MARY:** I know. I'm sorry about that.

**JOSEPH:** You look great.

**MARY:** *(MARY crosses away and laughs)* Oh no. I've gained some weight. Too many zonker bagels. *(She looks at JOSEPH)* You look tired.

**JOSEPH:** Well, I haven't been sleeping too well lately.

**MARY:** *(Crosses back to him)* I'm sorry.

**JOSEPH:** No, please. Don't be.

**MARY:** What happened to your arm?

**JOSEPH:** Oh, this. Well, I woke up and it really hurt. I figured it was—I have no idea what happened. It really hurts.

**MARY:** A bad dream? Did you fall off the bed?

**JOSEPH:** Something like that.

*(SILENCE ... .then at the same time)*

**MARY:** Joseph...

**JOSEPH:** Mary... *(Beat)* Mary, I don't know what to say.

**MARY:** I don't blame you for leaving.

**JOSEPH:** Your parents told me you were at your Aunt Elizabeth's.

**MARY:** *(MARY crosses downstage as she remembers her time at her aunt and uncle's. She is looking out towards the audience as she speaks.)* Yes. Aunt Elizabeth's

and duplication rights.

... she had that baby, you know. His name is John. He came out screaming and yelling. He loves bugs. And he likes to play in the water, too. Uncle Zech is talking again. I finally understand what's happening to me.

**JOSEPH:** I don't, Mary.

**MARY:** (*Crosses back to Joseph.*) Joseph, it is a miracle. If you could just see Aunt Elizabeth and the baby. I know I'm asking you to understand by faith and just believe and that isn't fair...

**JOSEPH:** But I don't need to understand...

**MARY:** (*MARY keeps talking*) One minute I'm ordering artichoke hearts and we're dancing and the next minute...

**JOSEPH:** Mary...

**MARY:** Of course you just left.

**JOSEPH:** (*Finally getting her attention*) Mary. (*She looks at him*) Please let me finish. I'm not sure I need to understand everything now. What was I supposed to say? What was I supposed to do? We're dancing and then: "I'm pregnant." But I know I should have listened to you better. And trusted you. But I left. There were so many things I wanted to say. But I left you there. Mary... I am so sorry that I didn't believe you and trust you. You are still the best person I know.

**MARY:** What are you saying?

**JOSEPH:** I'm saying that there's no one I want to spend the rest of my life with but you. (*Silence. MARY steps downstage and is thinking to herself. A long pause.*) I mean, help me out here, Mary.

**MARY:** I'm pondering. (*Beat. MARY turns around now and crosses back to JOSEPH.*) You know, I came here thinking that you never wanted to see me again.

**JOSEPH:** Mary, that is so far from the truth.

**MARY:** (*Speaking from the heart*) Joseph, what is happening to me, to us, is important. God is trusting us with this baby. Joseph, you know I love you more

than anything else in the world. Except this baby. If you marry me, you marry us.

**JOSEPH:** How about Saturday?

**MARY:** *(Totally surprised and delighted)* What?

**JOSEPH:** *(Totally serious)* Today's what? Tuesday? That's plenty of time. You have a dress, right?

**MARY:** I doubt it will fit.

**JOSEPH:** Wear anything. I'm sure you'll be beautiful.

**MARY:** *(She is laughing and unsure if this is all for real.)* Joseph ... no, this isn't possible.

**JOSEPH:** Oh, I'm sorry. Let me try this again. *(On his knee, handing her flowers. MARY is all smiles at this.)* Mary, will you and this baby...

**MARY:** *(Interrupting)* His name is Jesus.

**JOSEPH:** Okay. *(Back to what he was going to ask)* Will you and this baby Jesus let me be husband to you and father to him?

**MARY:** *(MARY is clearly moved by this question)* Yes Joseph, that will be nice. Really nice.

**JOSEPH:** Good.

*(JOSEPH gets up off his knee and they start to make plans.)*

So we have some flowers, we have napkins...

**MARY:** Nine hundred with the wrong slogan.

**JOSEPH:** We can just mark that out... We have each other.

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*(They are looking into each others' eyes by now. The mood is sweet and honest.)*

**MARY:** Yes. *(Beat)* Yes, we do. *(Smiles)* We do.

*(LEO the photographer enters. A quirky and too happy kind of fellow. Delighted by the sight of MARY and JOSEPH. He hands them a hat and veil. While LEO comes downstage and talks to the audience, JOSEPH puts on the top hat, MARY the veil. They get in position with MARY holding the flowers and JOSEPH holding the hammer.)*

**LEO:** Oh, this is so adorable. It positively screams "Kodak moment!" Dearly beloved, my name is Leo, and I'm the official wedding photographer. I also happen to be Joseph's first cousin, twice removed, once against my will and Joseph and Mary have asked me to capture these precious moments on celluloid. So as soon as they're ready, we'll make the old magic happen. Oh, *(Looks at MARY and JOSEPH)* they look positively gothic, don't you think? All right, you two, looking good! Now, on three, we want some nice big smiles. One, two three! *(Camera click)* Very nice. OK. Good, good. Let's do another one now. This will be a little bit different, Mary and Joe. I'm gonna come at you from kind of a more rakish angle, and I want something in your face that seems to tell a story: love, hope, dreams, betrayal, anger, missing it, getting it, and then bringing it all back home. That's it, you got it, you're done. Bye bye! Whoa! So long!

*(MARY and JOSEPH run off and LEO focuses on the audience.)*

Oh, my goodness. Now, Joseph and Mary asked me, on their behalf, to thank all of you wedding guests for coming here today. It meant a very lot to them, especially because they know that you came from long distances, some of you, and all of you on rather short notice, and they're just glad you're here. So they said, Leo, make sure you take a group portrait. So we're gonna see here. I think it would be best if I switched over to tele-wide for this one. *(Starts to take the photo and then asks everyone)* Could everyone just lean toward the middle a little bit, please? Okay. On three, say your favorite dairy product. One, two, three! *(Yells)* Yogurt?? Now, Joseph and Mary also said, Leo, make sure that you take some candids, because we want those unguarded moments with our dear friends that ... whoa...

*(Snaps a photo)*

I learned something very interesting at the community college. I took a photography course and I learned a fascinating fact. Evidently, the most

common mistake that amateur photographers make is to put their subject right smack in the middle, all framed, all nice and neat, cut and dried. It makes for a boring photograph, and furthermore, it's not the way life is, is it? Is life all centered and nice and neat, the way we think we'd like it? Of course not! It's a crazy knuckle ball that comes down the middle and then veers off to the side, and somehow it all works out. But that's life, and that's how your photos ought to be, that's what your art should say. So we're gonna try something a little bit experimental here with you folks. I think you're gonna enjoy this.

*(Snaps another photo)*

Okay! I think I'll frame that one and give it to Joe and Mary. Listen, I've gotta go. My daughter has a soccer game, so I'm gonna have to head out here. But make sure that you get over to the refreshment table. I understand that it's been catered by Bartholomew's. But make sure that you go over and get some wedding cake and just have a great, grand day. Thanks for coming. It's just wonderful to have all of you here.

*(LEO makes a physical adjustment, dropping the camera and hat behind the door, and becomes GABRIEL again.)*

**GABRIEL:** Well, it certainly was a beautiful wedding. I was there, too. And when nobody was watching, I went over and got myself a little piece of wedding cake. It was angel food. Well, the next thing you know, Joseph and Mary have dusted the rice out of their hair and six months have passed. Six months of getting to know each other all over again. Six months of dreaming about becoming a true family. It was really a remarkable time in their lives. Just then, big government stepped in, double time. Listen to this proposal, would you? Say, why don't you take a long, torturous journey to a distant land, on a donkey, while you're pregnant, so we can tax you?

*(Voices from offstage interrupt him.)*

**MARY:** Turn left up there, Joseph.

**JOSEPH:** I'm pretty sure he said right.

**MARY:** He said LEFT!

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**GABRIEL:** Let's join the happy couple.

*(GABRIEL exits)*

## SCENE SIX: NO ROOM AT THE INN

*(JOSEPH enters first carrying a number of suitcases. MARY follows. Very pregnant and they are not happy. Clearly they have been on the road for some time.)*

**MARY:** Reservations, I said! We should be sure we have a reservation. But NO, you said, we don't NEED reservations. Reservations are for people who don't trust in God. There will be room.

**JOSEPH:** Okay, okay. I should have made reservations.

**MARY:** A map, I said. Couldn't we bring a map? But, no, you'd rather wander around half of Judea than depend upon something as insulting as a map.

**JOSEPH:** Okay, you're right. We should have made reservations and we should have had a map!

**MARY:** And that donkey ... where did you get that donkey? Gave out halfway here...

**JOSEPH:** I'm surprised you didn't eat it.

*(MARY is clearly hurt by this comment. JOSEPH feels badly about this.)*

**MARY:** You try carrying around two people for nine months—see how much you eat, buddy boy. Put those suitcases down. I want to sit down.

*(JOSEPH sets up the suitcases and arranges a seat for her. She sits on the suitcases but slides off. Finally she gets situated.)*

My feet hurt. You know they used to be a size six. Now it's size 10, at least.

**JOSEPH:** Here, let me massage them. *(JOSEPH starts to massage MARY'S feet.)* Listen, I know how you feel. *(She looks at him.)* Well, not exactly how you feel. I can just ... I can imagine that it's ... I don't have no idea how you feel.

**MARY:** It feels like it's close. I'm not sure how much more I can take. I thought you said this trip would be three days. Tops.

**JOSEPH:** Usually it is, however we took rest stops every camel length.

**MARY:** (*Almost about to cry*) I can't help it if I'm retaining fluid.

**JOSEPH:** I'm sorry Mary. Don't cry.

**MARY:** (*MARY is shocked.*) Are you telling me what to do!? I'll cry if I want to.

**JOSEPH:** Okay. Cry. Cry, don't cry. Whatever you want.

**MARY:** (*MARY is at the end of her rope. She is between crying and exploding, like any other woman who is about to give birth.*) Let me say this. You want to keep this marriage together? You want to keep this unit together? It's three things. It's "Yes, Mary. Right away, Mary. Anything you say, Mary."

**JOSEPH:** All right.

**MARY:** Say it!

**JOSEPH:** Yes, Mary. Right away, Mary. Anything you say, Mary

(*MARY completely softens.*)

**MARY:** Give me a hug.

**JOSEPH:** Yes, Mary. (*He does.*)

**MARY:** A kiss.

**JOSEPH:** Right away, Mary. (*JOSEPH is amused by his wife and kisses her.*)

**MARY:** Now, go knock on that door.

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**JOSEPH:** Anything you say, Mary. *(He knocks.)*

*(NIGEL opens the door and starts to talk. Oh, how NIGEL likes to talk. It is almost impossible to stop him.)*

**NIGEL:** Good evening and welcome. Ordinarily it would be welcome, I mean, but of course there are no vacancies. There appears to be a huge Parcheesi convention going on across town. Lots of shake, rattle and roll going on, don't you know, from the deck to the vestibule. I'm reminded of a story. It seems that I and a few of the old cronies from the war were tenting in Bethesda...

**JOSEPH:** *(Interrupting)* Excuse me. Sir, do you have anything? This is the ninth inn we've been to.

**MARY:** *(Yelling from down right)* Do you have a room yet?!

**JOSEPH:** We've been on the road for what seems like a year.

*(MARY keeps interrupting and yelling to JOSEPH while he is talking with NIGEL at the door.)*

**MARY:** Ask him if they provide breakfast.

**JOSEPH:** Do you have anything at all?

**MARY:** And if the kitchen's still open.

**JOSEPH:** My wife is tired; she's pregnant.

**NIGEL:** *(NIGEL looks over at MARY.)* That's true; she seems to be absolutely fabulous with child. But as I've said there just isn't room in the inn.

*(MARY screams. The others freeze. MARY screams again and is clearly going into labor.)*

**JOSEPH:** We're gonna need some hot water! *(JOSEPH crosses to MARY)*

**NIGEL:** Ah! Hot water, excellent idea, tea. Tea is a calming influence ... a nice herbal blend ... *(Another scream. By now MARY is hanging on to JOSEPH.)*

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**JOSEPH:** We're gonna need a PLACE here—right now!

**NIGEL:** Well, there is a barn out back, but this is highly irregular, we do pride ourselves—

**JOSEPH:** (*JOSEPH takes control of the moment.*) Excuse me. Here's how we'll get along. Show us the barn!

**NIGEL:** Yes, sir.

**JOSEPH:** Bring our things around.

**NIGEL:** Right away, sir.

**JOSEPH:** And stop talking!

**NIGEL:** Anything you say, sir. Just keep going around to the back...

(*MARY and JOSEPH exit to stage right and NIGEL grabs the suitcases.*)

Cedric! Cedric will be there to help you. Cedric, could you fix something up for these folks in the barn. They're coming your way... oh, you'll recognize them ... very large woman ... anger management issues.

(*NIGEL hands the suitcases to offstage hands and then goes on talking to the audience.*)

**NIGEL:** You know, in all my 26 years as keeper of this inn nothing like this has ever happened. Good heavens. Birthing in our barn. Most irregular. Given just a tad of advance notice, I could have cobbled together a fine maternity suite, but ah well, in some cases time swings a particular way and you simply...

(*NIGEL gets a look at the sky and it changes his mood. He slows down.*)

My, but the stars are bright this evening. Glittering like a crystal goblet. There's a rightness in the air. Rather like that feeling you get when the Parcheesi dice fall just so. Well, I must check on my guests...

(*NIGEL exits. SHEPHERDS enter from right.*)

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## SCENE EIGHT: SHEPHERDS WITH THEIR FLOCKS

*MAGGIE and EGAN enter wearing wool sweaters, wool hats, carrying two crates which they put down center and make themselves comfortable. A pile of sweaters are beside them. They speak with Irish dialects and are rough and simple folk, a bit dim-witted but quite charming. MAGGIE is draped with a wool blanket and trying to spool some wool with EGAN'S assistance.).*

**MAGGIE:** Will ya hold still, Egan, so I can wind up this wool?

**EGAN:** Why do I always have to hold it and you have all the fun? *(EGAN speaks directly into her face.)*

**MAGGIE:** Quit your whining. *(MAGGIE smells the air and is a bit grossed out.)*  
What is that stench?

**EGAN:** What stench do ya mean?

**MAGGIE:** That goaty odor. Don't ya smell it man?

*(He looks at her and answers her, talking directly in her face.)*

**EGAN:** No. I don't. Not a bit.

**MAGGIE:** It's yer breath man. *(Scolding him)* Don't ya ever clean yer teeth?  
They'll rot out of yer mouth.

**EGAN:** And I'll be toothless.

*(MAGGIE and EGAN have a huge laugh together and GABRIEL approaches very casually.)*

**GABRIEL:** Is this the shepherding firm of O'Donnell and Ferguson?

**EGAN:** That's us. We're also the Egan and Maggie Knitting Company.  
We've got loads of sweaters for your warmth and comfort. You look  
underdressed, man.

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**GABRIEL:** Thanks for your concern. I'm fine. I just want to be sure you are shepherds.

**MAGGIE:** We are.

*(GABRIEL steps away and crosses up left to put on his angel outfit.)*

What a fine lad.

**EGAN:** I was thinking the same thing.

**MAGGIE:** So with the sheep in the lower field that can't stand up and keep falling over, it is foot rot, then?

**EGAN:** Ay, foot rot. Better than the mange. It's what me Da said, better foot rot than mange.

**MAGGIE:** Ah, a wise man.

**EGAN:** A wise man. Dead though.

*(MAGGIE and EGAN laugh hysterically and then GABRIEL reappears, opens his majestic and terrifying cloak and with lots of enthusiasm makes his announcement.)*

**GABRIEL:** BEHOLD!! I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY!!

*(MAGGIE is full of trembling and shock at the sight of the angel.)*

**MAGGIE:** Great sheep scab and lamb livers, it's an ANGEL!! I am sore afraid!!

*(EGAN is without the fear and trembling and quite confused by her.)*

**EGAN:** What did you say?

**MAGGIE:** I said I am sore afraid.

**GABRIEL:** For unto you...

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**EGAN:** What do ya mean you are “sore afraid”? Ya don’t know what you’re saying. You can be sore and you can be afraid but you CAN’T be sore afraid.

**MAGGIE:** *(Deeply offended)* Well, I can, too and I *am* sore afraid.

**EGAN:** You’re making no sense at all.

**GABRIEL:** *(In majestic voice)* For unto you is born this day in the city of David.

**MAGGIE:** David? I’ve never heard of the city of David. Have you ever been there Egan?

**EGAN:** Noooo.

**GABRIEL:** I said unto you is born this day —

**MAGGIE:** Unto me?

**EGAN:** Ya certainly have the wrong lad and lass, Mr. Angel.

*(MAGGIE and EGAN laugh uncontrollably once again. EGAN falls off his crate.)*

**GABRIEL:** *(Gets horn and gives it a good blast. This frightens the shepherds and they finally pay attention.)* Thank you. If I may continue, whether you are sore or afraid. There is a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe...

**MAGGIE:** Well, congratulations. A baby!

**GABRIEL:** *(A bit frustrated)* I’m not done yet!

**EGAN:** *(Hurt by GABRIEL’S tone)* Well, ya needn’t get irritable.

**MAGGIE:** We’ve just lonely ole shepherds.

**EGAN:** We never get visitors.

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**GABRIEL:** *(Trying to explain)* I'm sorry about that. I'm just having trouble getting any momentum. You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

**MAGGIE:** A manger is no place for a baby. *(Looks at GABRIEL.)* What kind of angel are ya?

**EGAN:** Swaddling clothes? What about some of our fine wool garments? Fresh off the sheep.

**GABRIEL:** *(Giving up now on the majesty of it all)* Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

**MAGGIE:** *(Deeply offended)* Men? What about the women?

**EGAN:** Cant' ya talk in plain English, man? I can't understand a word yer saying.

**GABRIEL:** *(A bit of "river dance" stepping and then he stands behind the shepherds and speaks in an Irish dialect.)* A baby is born. In Bethlehem. To save ya. Go see him.

*(As GABRIEL speaks, the SHEPHERDS' faces light up. They finally understand what he is saying.)*

**MAGGIE:** Why didn't ya just say so? *(To EGAN)* Oh, Egan, it's a baby.

**EGAN:** A wee one.

**GABRIEL:** *(GABRIEL makes the story very clear to them now.)* Ay, a wee one. I just saw him meself. He's beautiful. It seemed like he'd never come. He's here. Ya should go see him. Ya should.

**MAGGIE:** I'd like to see that, wouldn't you?

**EGAN:** Oh, I would.

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**MAGGIE:** (*MAGGIE jumps up very concerned about how this is going to work.*)  
But who's gonna stay here and watch the sheep?

**EGAN:** I'm going.

**MAGGIE:** If ya think I'm staying yer outta yer noggin.

(*Suddenly EGAN has a great idea and talks to the ANGEL. MAGGIE gets distracted considering what to bring the baby.*)

**EGAN:** Hey there, Mister Fancy Talker, why don't ya stay with the lambs?  
We'll be back after awhile.

**MAGGIE:** I'd like to bring the baby a nice wool garment. Maybe a blanket or some mittens or a sweater...

**EGAN:** Just pick one, Maggie. We must be on our way. (*Suddenly realizing*)  
Ya do know how to care for sheep?

**GABRIEL:** Well, I'm not exactly...

**MAGGIE:** Ya'll be fine. (*Hands over all knitting supplies*) We'll be back after a while. (*Stopping before she goes one step forward*) Do ya have the map, Egan? I don't want to get lost.

**EGAN:** Don't ya worry. (*Discovers star in the sky*) We'll just follow that star. Who needs a map?

**MAGGIE:** You do.

**EGAN:** Don't ya start with me, Maggie.

**MAGGIE:** Fine. (*Eager for the adventure*) Why don't' we do a jig as we head on down to Bethlehem?

**EGAN:** Always a good reason for a jig!

(*SHEPHERDS exit doing a silly exaggerated kind of Irish jig, leaving GABRIEL alone with the audience, somewhat perplexed at the encounter with the shepherds.*)

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## SCENE NINE: THE BARNYARD CHORUS

*(GABRIEL speaks directly to the audience as he works hard to create the barnyard scene. He wants them to understand the miracle of the night and is enthusiastic as he builds the scene with their help. Very important for the actor to be in control of the chaos in this scene.)*

**GABRIEL:** You know, I anticipated that moment with the shepherds, the behold moment, for a very long time, but I have to say I didn't picture it unspooling quite the way that it did. But you know, I think it was better than I pictured it. I don't know if you noticed this, but those two, Maggie and Egan, I think they must be about the most kind-hearted, generous souls that I've ever met. Now, they're up here, just kind of eking out a living on the hillside, you know, making catch as catch can or what have you. And yet when they got the news, they ran straightaway and took the one gift they had to bring to lay before the king. Pa rumpa pum pum. *(Singing)* Oh, little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie. Silent night, holy night, all is calm...

You know, let me see if I can't paint a slightly more accurate picture of how things were that night in the barn. It was anything but silent, calm, and still in the barn, 'cause it was a barn, filled with creatures that had no idea that this was an unusual night. And when they threw their voices into that starry, starry night, it was anything but calm. It was more like, well, perhaps we could re-create it. You people right over here in this section, you know how the cattle are lowing. Do you think on three, could you low for me? Here we go, one, two, three. *(The audience begins their lowing)*

That certainly was low! What we'd really like to hear is together a nice, big unison mooo. Okay, on three, here we go. One, two, three ... *(Mooing)* All right, not bad, but see if you can beef it up a little. One, two, three... *(They begin their mooing)*

That's what I'm talking about. You folks over here are pigs. Sorry, what I mean to say is, I'd like you to mimic pigs. Okay, on three, here we go. One, two, three... *(The audience begins to oink, oink.)*

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Somebody threw their sinus out of joint, I'm sure of it. (*GABRIEL focuses on another section.*) You folks over in this section, I would like you to be chickens. Okay, are you ready? One, two, three, hit it!  
(*The audience begins their squawking.*)

Very nice. I can just see the eggs rolling down the aisle over there. You folks on the far left here, I would like you to be lambs, that's maaaaa ... okay, one, two, three, go! (*The audience begins their Maaaa.*)

All right, now I don't think I covered the people right down the center here. You ... the center and then the center back there, I would like you folks to be horses, neigh. Okay, one, two, three, go!  
(*The audience begins their Neighing.*)

We have one professional horse over here. Someone in the equestrian arts has joined us this evening. Okay, you folks in the far corners and you folks in the balcony, bless you there, I'd like you to be stray, oh, also anybody who's dissatisfied with your animal, you can be stray cats and dogs. Hit it, here you go, now.  
(*Barking and meows from the audience.*)

Wonderful. All right. Thank you. Oh, oh, one more thing. We do, of course, need a bullfrog. Now, if you're capable of making a bullfrog noise, don't do it now, but put your hand up and let me know that you'd be willing to do that. Don't be shy. Right there, okay, wonderful. (*GABRIEL finds one person in the audience and speaks directly to him/her.*)

Listen, when your moment comes, I'm gonna point right at you, and then I want your best bullfrog, okay. All right, now folks, oh, there goes that bad view again. Here's how it's gonna work. I'm gonna point to your section and I want you to make your animal noise, with a great deal of fervor, and continue to make it until we've brought all the animals in. Get louder and louder, until with one big swooping motion I will cut all of you off. And if we do it crisply and cleanly and silently, it'll be an amazing effect. So, but make the animal noises nice and loud and then we'll have our little coda there at the end. Wait 'til I point to your section. Moo, baaaaaa, squawk, etc.

(*GABRIEL leads this orchestra of animals with the knitting needles as if a conductor of a fabulous orchestra. There is lots of noise. Then he stops the noise. Silence. He points to the audience member who volunteered to be the bullfrog. During the audience reaction to*

*the bullfrog noise, GABRIEL turns the door around to show the manger side. GABRIEL changes the mood of the moment and MARY and JOSEPH enter, carrying the baby and sit on the two crates in front of the door.)*

I nearly forgot. There was one other voice there that night, one singular voice. It was the voice of a little boy, who had just been born, and he had little tiny fists and he was wrinkled up and writhing around and let me tell you, the kid could cry. He cried like his lungs were forever. He cried like a spurned lover who'd just been kicked off the back porch, onto very hard earth. But, it was a beautiful night and a holy night. All nights in God's universe are.

### SCENE TEN: YOUR EYES?

*MARY and JOSEPH are sitting together and looking at the baby. MARY is holding the baby and rarely looks up at JOSEPH during the following. They are both relaxed and amazed at the baby in their arms.*

**MARY:** I think he has your eyes.

**JOSEPH:** I don't think so.

**MARY:** Guess not.

**JOSEPH:** It kinda looks like your nose.

**MARY:** That's not my nose.

**JOSEPH:** Guess not. *(Looks again at the baby)* Your eyes?

**MARY:** Nope. He doesn't look like me. *(Beat)* He doesn't look a bit like you either. *(Beat)* He's beautiful.

**JOSEPH:** He's perfect.

**MARY:** He's our baby.

**JOSEPH:** Yes. He is. Let me hold him.

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*(MARY hesitates for a moment, then hands the baby to JOSEPH.)*

**MARY:** There you go.

**JOSEPH:** He sure feels...

**MARY:** *(Interrupting)* I think so too. *(Starts to get distracted thinking about what is next)* Hey, Joseph, do we have enough diapers at home?

**JOSEPH:** Yes, we do.

**MARY:** And the crib is built, I mean, you sanded it down and there won't be any splinters for the baby...

**JOSEPH:** Uh huh.

*(As the couple sits together, GABRIEL enters, watching and waiting quietly for the right moment to interrupt.)*

**MARY:** I forgot to tell Mom and Dad when we'd be home.

**JOSEPH:** I called them last night.

**MARY:** *(Finally being completely honest)* Do you think we can do this?

**JOSEPH:** *(JOSEPH looks at her.)* Yes, Mary, we can.

**GABRIEL:** *(Enters)* Yes, you can.

*(MARY is thrilled to see GABRIEL there. She reaches out her hand to him. He takes it.)*

**MARY:** Gabriel.

**GABRIEL:** You did it.

*(MARY keeps looking at GABRIEL as she asks JOSEPH if he knows GABRIEL, so she does not notice his expression.)*

**MARY:** Joseph, do you know Gabriel?

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**JOSEPH:** Yes, we've met.

**GABRIEL:** But, we haven't. (*Indicating the baby*) I made a little something for him. (*Pulls out a full-size wool sweater from his suitcase.*) It's a little big. He'll have to grow into it. May I hold him?

(*JOSEPH hands the baby to GABRIEL.*)

**GABRIEL:** Wow.

**JOSEPH:** Be careful with his head. Just put your hand right under his head. Yeah. That's good. Be careful or he'll spit up on you. Yeah, that's better. Nice.

**JOSEPH:** He's something, isn't he?

**GABRIEL:** Oh, yes he is. (*GABRIEL can sense the holiness of the moment.*) Yes, he is.

**GABRIEL:** Am I doing something? He's waking up. He's a bit restless ... whoa; he's got a lot of energy. Oh. His face is ... (*Makes a face*) ... He's not happy.

**JOSEPH:** Mary?

**MARY:** It's okay. Go ahead, Joseph.

**JOSEPH:** (*Takes the baby, who promptly spits up.*) Oh, that was a good one.

**GABRIEL:** Maybe this will help. (*Produces a napkin - the "forever on" napkin.*)

**JOSEPH:** Forever on.

**GABRIEL:** Can I get you anything else?

**JOSEPH:** No, I think we'll be fine.

**GABRIEL:** Well, I guess I should be going.

(*MARY turns to him and looks into his eyes. She is full of gratitude.*)  
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**MARY:** Thank you, Gabriel.

**GABRIEL:** *(Speaking to audience)* It's as easy as flying. What do they need me for? They have all they need right there. Someday he's gonna grow up, grow into that sweater. If something comes up, they'll be fine. We'll all be just fine. *(GABRIEL walks a bit downstage; looks back at the family.)* Well, Jesus is asleep right now. If you'd like, you could sing him a lullaby. I'll give you the first note, then you're on your own.

*(Begins to sing "Silent Night" and walks off into the audience. The audience starts to sing. After the full first verse, GABRIEL comes back on stage and stands behind MARY and JOSEPH.)*

**END**

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## Extraordinary Love

Words by  
Jeff Raught and  
Lee Eshleman

Music by  
Jeff Raught

Be - side a cup o' joe, the  
A part - ing word for you to  
more the Ma - ry; these two go hand in glove. As  
all re - mem - ber when you're at the end of your rope:  
far as I can see, it's an ex - tra - or - di - na - ry  
Tie the knot a - gain with your own heart strings:  
sto - ry of love in love. seal it in love's en - ve - lope.

⊕ CODA (optional)  
G E7 Am7 D7 G E7  
Am7 D7 G G/B Bb° Am7 G

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Music copyright © 2006 Jeff Raught

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## Extraordinary Love Waltz

Jeff Raught

Music notation for 'Extraordinary Love Waltz' by Jeff Raught. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a G chord, followed by a C chord, and ends with a G chord. The second staff starts with a D7 chord, followed by a G chord, a G/B chord, a C chord, and a C#° chord. The third staff begins with a G chord, followed by a D7 chord, a G chord, a D chord, and a G chord. The fourth staff starts with a C chord, followed by a G chord, a D7 chord, and a C chord. The fifth staff begins with a G chord, followed by a G/B chord, a C chord, a C#° chord, a G chord, and a D chord. The sixth staff starts with a G chord, followed by a G/B chord, a Bb° chord, an Am7 chord, a G chord, and ends with a G chord. The score is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent 'SCRIPT PREVIEW' watermark.

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# Bullfrog

Words by  
Lee Eshleman

Music by  
Jeff Raught

Hey pret-ty prin-cess, the daugh-ter of the queen, you got my heart a-jump-in' like a tram-po-line. I'm just a bach-'lor bull-frog in the cas-tle moat, but I'm a can-di-date for lov-in', and I want your vote. How 'bout it ba-by, you and me, am-phib-i-an and roy-al-ty. How 'bout it ba-by, you and me, K I S S I N G. I know what you're think-in', it's a cra-zy scene:

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Music copyright © 2006 Jeff Raught

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# Bullfrog

you're a blue - blood and I'm a green. But puck - er up, ma - ma, you can

nev - er tell: may - be I'm a prince trapped un - der a spell. How 'bout it

ba - by, you and me. I'm your date with

des - ti - ny. How 'bout it ba - by, you and me,

K I S S I N G.

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DOVETALE  
PROPS AND COSTUME LIST  
LOCATION BACKSTAGE

STAGE LEFT

**MARY**

**The Announcement**

- \_\_Denim skirt
- \_\_Pink sweater
- \_\_Pink button-up shirt
- \_\_Clogs
- \_\_Box, napkins inside
- \_\_Letter, sealed
- \_\_Note from Mom

**The Reconciliation**

- \_\_Hammer
- \_\_Flowers
- \_\_Blue dress

**GABRIEL**

**The Announcement**

- \_\_Bib overalls
- \_\_Yellow Converse sneakers
- \_\_Bright yellow shirt
- \_\_Mousse! Hairspray to “mess” hair
- \_\_Two scrolls to be put in pockets of overalls
- \_\_Paper for pocket of overalls (“hand wash”)
- \_\_Napkins in pocket of overalls
- \_\_Notes for Joe
- \_\_Backpack
- \_\_Map inside backpack
- \_\_Wrench inside backpack
- \_\_Raggedy Ann doll inside backpack

**At Bartholomew’s**

- \_\_Water glass
- \_\_Crackers in a basket
- \_\_One menu

**The Reconciliation**

- \_\_Number “5” to hang on the door

- \_\_Leo's necktie
- \_\_Camera/camera bag
- \_\_Leo's nerd glasses
- \_\_Top hat for Joseph
- \_\_Bridal veil inside top hat for Mary

**No Room at the Inn**

- \_\_Nigel's half-glasses
- \_\_Nigel's cardigan sweater

**STAGE RIGHT**

**JOSEPH:**

**The Announcement**

- \_\_Bugle (to be played backstage during Scene One)

**At Bartholomew's**

- \_\_Khaki pants
- \_\_Corduroy blue
- \_\_Brown shoes
- \_\_Gift in bag
- \_\_Bandages

**The Phone Call**

- \_\_Zech sweater
- \_\_Zech glasses
- \_\_Zech shirt
- \_\_Zech hat
- \_\_Checkers/board

**The Dream**

- \_\_Sling
- \_\_Bathrobe

**Shepherds Watch Their Flock**

- \_\_Shepherd hat
- \_\_Shepherd sweater
- \_\_Shepherd gloves

**No Room at the Inn**

- \_\_Corduroy green shirt
- \_\_Suitcase
- \_\_Duffle bag

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**GABRIEL**

**At Bartholomew's**

- \_\_Tablecloth
- \_\_Wine goblet
- \_\_One menu
- \_\_Black apron
- \_\_Check holder/pen
- \_\_Vest for Arnie Pufkin
- \_\_Beret for waiter
- \_\_Mic for Arnie
- \_\_White jacket for Arnie
- \_\_Sinatra hat for Arnie

**Shepherds Watch Their Flock**

- \_\_Gabriel angel robe
- \_\_Trumpet

**Your Eyes**

- \_\_Sheep sweater

**MARY**

**The Phone Call**

- \_\_Elizabeth wig
- \_\_Elizabeth scarf
- \_\_Elizabeth glasses
- \_\_Elizabeth dress

**Dream Scene**

- \_\_Baby bundle
- \_\_Black scarf

**Shepherds Watch Their Flock**

- \_\_Shepherd wool hat
- \_\_Shepherd wool sweater
- \_\_Shepherd wool gloves
- \_\_Knitting that has been started
- \_\_Knitting needles
- \_\_Wool blanket
- \_\_Crates to be carried out for shepherd scene

**No Room at the Inn**

- \_\_Pregnancy belly
- \_\_Pregnant dress

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**\*\*PURCHASE REQUIRED FOR PERFORMANCE AND DUPLICATION\*\***

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_Scarf to be tied around Mary's head

**SOUND**

(We highly recommend NOT controlling sound from backstage, but if you must)

\_\_CD Player - plugged/ tested

\_\_Sound effects CD - cued

\_\_Restaurant change music CD - cued

**ONSTAGE**

\_\_Door. The door should have a front side that could be an inside or outside apartment door with a hook on it. When turned around it becomes a more rustic door for the manger scene at the end.

- Scene one: flowers on the hook
- Wrestling scene: nothing on the hook
- Reconciliation scene: apartment number on the hook
- No room at the inn scene: Nigel's Inn sign on the top of the door.

\_\_2 Chairs

\_\_Wood crate onstage

\_\_"Bride" magazine sits on the crate

\_\_Small table

\_\_Phone

\_\_Love seat

\_\_Fabric throw with a plaid side for Josephs' apartment, flower side for Mary's apartment

\_\_Pizza box stuffed inside the love seat cushions

\_\_Joe's shirt stuffed inside the cushions

Please note: Props get moved from side to side during performance, so keep track of their location. (Example: Gabriel's backpack gets moved around a lot so make sure you know where it is so he has it when he needs it.)

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# DoveTale

## ....the Complete Script

What would it be like to have an angel knock on your door and announce that you're going to have a baby: the Son of God?

*DoveTale* is the story of Joseph and Mary's journey from this announcement to the birth of Jesus. From Bethlehem to Nazareth, they encounter some interesting characters along the way: some Irish shepherds, an over-earnest wedding photographer, a lounge singer and the angel Gabriel.

A Christmas play with humor and heart

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