

TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT

This is a series of excerpted scenes from the full script, which runs to 33 pages--about 30 minutes in performance.

If you purchase the rights to the play, I will send you a full script—as a PDF—from which you can make as many copies as are needed by your cast & crew. There is no per-script-fee.

If you wish to secure the performance rights to this script, pre-recorded music tracks and pre-recorded sound effects, contact Sales@RuyaSonic.com

THE NATIVITY PLAY

(30-minute family version)

by

Anthony E. Palermo

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Billing shall be in the following form:

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presents

THE NATIVITY PLAY

Written by
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Long bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is a radio dramatist, performer, and educator based in Los Angeles. His work is heard on NPR and Satellite Radio as well as in audiobooks and on-stage with L.A. Theatre Works, California Artists Radio Theater, numerous theatre troupes, and on national tours. His holiday-themed plays, *A Christmas Carol*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Auntie Scrooge--a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol*, and *The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow* have seen productions around the world since 1998. Tony's sound effects work on Yuri Rasovsky's *Sherlock Holmes Theatre* contributed to its winning the 2006 *Audie Award*--the Oscar of audiobooks. Tony directed the 60th anniversary production of Norman Corwin's *On a Note of Triumph*--for which he also re-created Bernard Herrmann's orchestral score. Recently, Tony provided live SFX for shows such as Eric Idle's *What About Dick?*, CART's *Ray Bradbury's Leviathan '99*, LATW's *Hamlet* and *Frost/Nixon*, as well as performing 65 solo shows at the California State Fair. Tony's *Sonic Storytelling Studio* at San Francisco's Exploratorium is a permanent exhibit that has seen thousands of visitors since 2006. His *Sparx Audio Adventures* assembly programs and workshops are popular with schools and colleges across California, the U.S. and the world. Tony also hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

Short bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is an Audie Award-winning radio performer, dramatist, composer and educator who has produced dramas and workshops for broadcast, stage, and schools. Tony hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

NOTE: Up-to-date text of the bios is available at www.RuyaSonic.com/tp2bio.htm You can cut & paste the text into your playbill or program and thus not have to worry about typos.

The Nativity Play

(30-minute Family version)

CAST

NARRATOR	The Biblical-style narrator (Male or Female)
MARY	16 year-old farm girl (F)
JOSEPH	20 year-old carpenter (M)
ANGEL #1	Angel messenger (Gabriel) (M/F)
ANGEL #2	Angel messenger (M/F)
ANGEL #3	Angel messenger (M/F)
ANGEL #4	Angel messenger (M/F)
ELISABET	Mary's aged kinswoman (F)
ZAKARIAS	Elisabet's husband (M)
HEROD THE GREAT	Tyrannical "King of the Jews" (M)
MALKIOR	Persian Magi (M/F)
GASPAR	Indian Magi (M/F)
BALTAZAR	Assyrian Magi (M/F)
INN-KEEPER	Crusty inn-keeper (M/F)
SIMEON	Pious old man (M)
ANNA	Old Prophetess (F)
AMBASSADOR LIVIUS	Roman Ambassador (M)
BO'AZ	Old, wizened shepherd (M/F)
EFRAYIM	Cynical shepherd (M/F)
SHEP	Young shepherd (M/F)
RACHAB	Inn-keeper's kindly slave (M/F)
ETAN	Herod's minister (M/F)
QUEEN MALTACE	Herod's wife (F)
LAMBS/INFANTS	Bleating lambs, infants (M/F)

Small cast: 6 actors (2 male, 2 female, 2 male-or-female)

Large cast: 24 actors (5 male, 3 female, 15 male-or-female)

See the appendix for suggestions for doubling roles.

Visit Tony Palermo's Radio Drama Resources website: www.RuyaSonic.com

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

I offer two versions of *The Nativity Play*—a 70-minute and a 30-minute. Both dramatize Mary and Joseph's life, mixing reverence and humor to make for an uplifting and entertaining show. Additionally, I also offer two, simpler “Christmas Pageant” versions: one with narration and dialogue and one with just narration.

The 30-minute version begins B.C. (*Before Christ*) with several shepherds lamenting life after The Fall and wishing for a Redeemer, then shifts to Nazareth where a pious and charitable Mary receives the Annunciation. Then, Mary's visit to Elisabet and Zakarais, Mary's return home, Joseph's dilemma, his angel dream, and a reconciliation between Joseph and Mary. Act 2 includes the Journey to Bethlehem, No Room At The Inn, the Birth of Jesus, the shepherds and the Host of Angels, the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, the Adoration of the Magi, Herod's fury, the Slaughter of the Innocents, The Flight to Egypt and the Return from Egypt. This version has trimmed versions of the canticles from Luke: Mary's "Magnificat" and Simeon's "Nunc Dimittis"--all in English, of course.

The short version is intended for productions with time limitations: worship services, theaters, classrooms or radio stations.

The 70-minute version includes everything in the 30-minute version, but extends most scenes and includes several that were omitted in the shorter version. In Act 1, it adds a Nazareth marketplace scene--with the meeting of Joseph and Mary, a scene after The Annunciation with Mary's mother, Joseph's carpentry work on King Herod's palace, the birth and naming of John The Baptist, Mary's difficulties with her family upon her return home, and Joseph's deciding to “divorce Mary, quietly.” Act 2 adds King Herod's plotting the census with the Romans, Mary and Joseph deciding to journey to Bethlehem, and Herod questioning/tricking the Magi. This long version includes the full canticles from Luke: Mary's "Magnificat", Zakarias' "Benedictus" and Simeon's "Nunc Dimittis.”

The longer version adds 4 more female roles and 7 more male roles--most of which can be handled through doubling. It also greatly expands Joseph as a character as well as King Herod and Roman Ambassador Livius. Plus, it adds two interesting characters who serve as major foils for Mary and Joseph: Mary's stern Aunt Morag and Esdras, Joseph's cantankerous/comical carpentry mentor. In the 70-minute version there are many more Biblical references, more emotion and humor. However, the 30-minute version still holds up as an emotional and spiritual experience.

For information about the stage-play versions of *The Nativity Play*, visit www.ruyasonic.com/stageplay-the-nativity-play-script.html

For a full listing of Anthony E. Palermo's plays, including *Christmas Carol*, *It's a Wonderful Life!* and *Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol*, visit www.ruyasonic.com

SCENE 1 - THE WELCOMING

EXT. THE HOLY LAND - DUSK (JANUARY)
(NARRATOR)

NARRATOR: This is the story of The Nativity; How-- amidst darkness and despair--there came a Light from Heaven; A Light of salvation, of forgiveness... And of joy!...the birth of Jesus Christ. A birth into the world and a birth within our hearts... However, our tale does not begin on Christmas morning. No, it winds through the months before the birth of the Divine Child.

NARRATOR: This world--B.C. Before Christ--was in need of redemption. We begin here--one Winter's night, on a hillside near Bethlehem, amidst "certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay..."

SCENE 2 - THE SHEPHERDS' LAMENT

EXT. BETHLEHEM HILLSIDE - NIGHT (JANUARY)
(EFRAYIM, SHEP, BO'AZ, SHEEP #1)

EFRAYIM: (SHIVERS) Oh! Winter! Such terrible weather!

BO'AZ: (APPROACHING) 'Tis true, Efrayim!
("eff-ray-EEM") So cloudy! I have not seen such weather since... well.... since Noah.

SHEP: (AMAZED) Noah? Of the Ark?

BO'AZ: Yea! It looked like rain then, too!

EFRAYIM: (SKEPTICAL) What...? Noah...?

SHEP: That was thousands of years ago! Tell me, Bo'az? ("BO-ahhz") How old are you?

BO'AZ: Me? Errrr... quite old, Shep! ("SHEP") Hmmm,
Let me recall... (COUNTS ON FINGERS)
Eighty... eighty-one... eight-two... a
thousand! Yes! Yes! I am very old. Very old!

EFRAYIM: (SCOFFS) A thousand? Bah! You are a mere
shepherd--and all that you say is but ill-
spun wool!

ALL THREE SHEPHERDS: (LAUGHTER--AD LIB) oh-oh-oh!

SHEP: Ah, but what a filthy, cold life this is!

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS-INDIGNANTLY) Baaaaa!

SHEP: Is there no hope, Bo'Az? Why?

BO'AZ: Why? Well, I can still recall the story...
(RECALLING) Hmmmm... In the Garden...

EFRAYIM: Yes! Long ago, the Lord created the first
man and woman...

BO'AZ: I said, I can still recall the story, you
jackal! (SWATS EFRAYIM)

SHEP: Oh, but I know that story! Adam and uh...

BO'AZ: ...Eve! At first, they were One with the
Lord, and he did provide all they needed.
There was no want, no toil, no fear...

EFRAYIM: The Garden of Eden.

BO'AZ: But..., they were not satisfied--even in all
they had; even being One with the Lord.

EFRAYIM: They were greedy! Fearful!

BO'AZ: They did betray the Lord...

EFRAYIM: Yes! They ate from a forbidden tree. (PAUSE)
An.... apricot! A juicy, sweet...

SHEP: Apricot? But I heard it was a pomegranate!

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS-SKEPTICALLY) Baaaaah!

BO'AZ: Fools! The fruit and the cause did not matter! Adam and Eve... betrayed the Lord! They separated themselves from the Lord. And so, were cast out of the Garden. As are we.

EFRAYIM: Then came toil, disease, murder. Look upon us today... bereft and despoiled. Where is the Messiah--the "anointed one"--to deliver us from this world of woe? (SIGHS)

BO'AZ: Yes. We are sheep... preyed upon by wolves.

SHEP: That tyrant, King Herod! And the Romans!

BO'AZ: King Herod and the Romans are only the most obvious evil-doers. The wolves are man-kind! Wickedness burns in every heart! For we are separated from the Lord... alas... (SIGHS) for-ever.

SHEP: (SIGHS) Then life is hopeless.

EFRAYIM: That is why we labor here, close to nature. Better the real wilderness--this mountainside--than the wilderness of spirit, amidst the towns and villages.

SHEP: Oh, what a dismal world! A night-mare! How shall I ever sleep again?

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS--INNOCENTLY) Baaaahh.

BO'AZ: (CHIDING) Um... Well... have you tried...
have you tried... counting... sheep?

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS-DERISIVELY) Baaaah.

ALL THREE SHEPHERDS: (LAUGHTER--AD LIB) oh-oh-oh!

SCENE 3 - THE ANNUNCIATION
EXT. OLIVE GROVE - NIGHT (LATE MARCH)
(NARRATOR, MARY, ANGEL #1)

NARRATOR: But far north, near the village of Nazareth,
a pious young woman named Mary came unto a
verdant olive grove--a place of great peace
and contemplation...

LAMB #2: (BLEATING) Baaaaaaah.

MARY: Ah! There you are, my little one! (PICKING
UP THE LAMB) We were all searching for
you... But I have found you! Father shall...

LAMB #2: (BLEATING) Baaaaaaah.

MARY: Hush! (WHISPERS) It has become so quiet...
Look! (PUZZLED) Oh! The moon grows bright!
What... what be this? This... light?

ANGEL #1: Rejoice, Mary! Hail thou--that art highly
favored! The Lord is with thee! Bless-ed art
thou among women!

MARY: (FEARFUL) Bless-ed...? Me...? Oh, sir. What
manner of salutation is this? Who...?
Wha...?

ANGEL #1: Fear not, Mary. Rejoice! For thou hast found
favor with The Lord.

MARY: (PUZZLED) Favor...? But...

ANGEL #1: Behold! Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son!--the anointed one--the Christ! And thou shalt call his name... Jesus.

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SCENE 4 - THE VISITATION TO ELISABET
EXT. ELISABET'S COURTYARD - DAY (EARLY APRIL)
(NARRATOR, MARY, ELISABET, ZAKARIAS)

NARRATOR: Despite being old and stricken in age, Elisabet would--in three months time--bear the future John The Baptist. It was to this house that Mary did arrive...

MARY: Ahh! (EXCHANGING KISSES) Elisabet! Zakarias! Peace be unto you and your household. Oh, Elisabet! My mother told me you were with child. What a blessing!

ELISABET: But, Mary! Blessed art thou! And blessed is the fruit of thy womb!

MARY: (STARTLED) My...? Then... you know of the miracle? How could the...

ELISABET: (JOYFULLY) Miracles abound, my dear! When you spoke--just now--the babe within me leaped for joy!

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS IN ASSENT) Hmm-mmmm!

MARY: Oh, Zakarias, you must be so proud.

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Yes but...") Mmm-mmmmmmm.

MARY: (TO ELISABET) Elisabet, what has happened?
Why joy admixed with sorrow ..from Zakarias?
Can he not speak?

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "No") Mmm.

ELISABET: Oh, but Mary, that is part of how I came to
be with child! Six months ago, Zakarias was
chosen to offer incense in the Temple
Sanctuary. But once within, he had a vision!
An... (AMAZED) an angel of the Lord...
appeared unto him.

MARY: (PUZZLED) To Zakarias? (AMAZED) As with me!
An angel of the Lord? I saw--

ELISABET: Wait! The angel promised that I--after
twenty years of being barren--would conceive
a son! But, Zakarias doubted the prophecy!
He did! And--in rebuke for his lack of
faith...

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Hey!") Hmm!

ELISABET: (INSISTING) ...his lack of faith, Zakarias
was rendered mute!

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS a troubled "yes") Mmmm!

MARY: And so he cannot speak?

ELISABET: He cannot. But I have come to realize...
(SMILES) that--in a husband, silence... is a
virtue!

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Hey!") Hmm!

ELISABET: (CHUCKLES) Heaven-sent!

MARY: (LAUGHINGLY) Oh, Elisabet!

ELISABET: But, come... Mary... tell us of your life. Your mother and father--are they well?

MARY: They are. And they send their blessings. As for me? Umm... I am... betrothed.

ELISABET: Betrothed? Oh! To whom? A kinsman?

MARY: No! To a young man named Joseph. He is from Bethlehem... a carpenter's apprentice, who has been...

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Yes but...") Mmm-mmmmmmm.

MARY: A... What? Zakarias is writing. But I cannot read.

ELISABET: Since he was made mute by the angel, Zakarias marks on a slate. Let me read it... (READS) "Speak of angel!" Yes. Zakarias is very respectful of angels... now.

MARY: Angels... Well... just over a week ago... I was in an olive grove. Suddenly, a magnificent angel appeared unto me and--as with you--prophesized that I would conceive a child... (WHISPERS) the Son of God! (AMAZED) Then, I came to be filled with the most rapturous, wonderful...

ELISABET: Radiance? Yes! The Holy Spirit! It dwells within us too, here. (HUMBLY) Oh... how the mother of my lord should come to me! This is all so...

ELISABET: Wait! Zakarias writes... (READS) "Let us give thanks." Oh, yes. Pray, my dear.

MARY: I... I-I.. Yes! The Spirit! Uplifting me...

MARY:

(JOYFULLY)

Ohhh! My soul doth magnify the Lord!
And my spirit rejoices in God--my Savior.
For he has regarded the meekness of his
handmaiden. And from henceforth, all ages
shall call me... blessed.
The Mighty One hath done to me great things,
and Holy is his name;
And his mercy is upon them that honor him--
from generation to generation. (HUMBLY)
Amen.

NARRATOR:

After three months' time, Elisabet gave
birth to a son--naming him John. And
immediately, Zakarias regained his power to
speak. But now Mary did return home unto
Nazareth. However, her family was much vexed
to find her "with child." Alas, good news is
not always greeted as such...

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SCENE 6 - JOSEPH'S ANGEL DREAM

INT. ESDRAS WORKSHOP - NIGHT (JULY)

(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, ANGEL #2)

NARRATOR:

Trouble came upon Joseph. His grief was very
great. Esdras, his mentor, quoted
Deuteronomy about "wives who betray" and
called upon Joseph to divorce Mary, quietly.

NARRATOR: But Joseph still felt kindly towards her.
And it came to pass--at evening-tide--that
Joseph's sleep provided no rest.

JOSEPH: (MUMBLING) No! No! Mary! (AD-LIB) Mother!

NARRATOR: His mind was awash with stirred feelings and
great dread. And--at this dark moment--lo!,
an angel of the Lord spoke to him in a
dream...

ANGEL #2: Joseph--of the House of David! Hearken now
unto my voice! Fear not to take unto thee
Mary as thy wife, for the child conceived
within her is of the Holy Spirit!

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SCENE 7 - THE RECONCILIATION
EXT. OLIVE GROVE - NIGHT (JULY)
(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, MARY)

NARRATOR: And Joseph did walk until he came to find
himself in a grove of olive trees. And
there--under the stars--did he ponder she
who had died while giving birth to him...

JOSEPH: (HEAD BOWED) Mother, I wonder about you,
down in the pit of death. You did name me
Joseph--which means "God give increase"--but
all I see... is loss. I am betrothed to a
woman... who bears not my child. Why,
Mother...? Why?
Did you not love me? Does the Lord not love
me?

MARY: (DISTANT) I love you, Joseph. I always have.

JOSEPH: (STARTLED) Mary! How do you come to be here?

MARY: (APPROACHING) I, too, could not sleep, Joseph. My life at home is troubled. I came here to pray. It is special--this grove.

JOSEPH: I came here because I saw this place in a dream--one that I do not understand.

MARY: This is where the angel of the Lord appeared unto me--just after we were betrothed. You had left for Caesarea. The angel promised that the Holy Spirit would infuse me with God's grace.

JOSEPH: (STUNNED) An angel! Appeared unto you?

MARY: I was also puzzled--at first. He proclaimed that the Lord had chosen me to bear his Son--a redeemer. And that... his name shall...

JOSEPH: ...his name shall be... Jesus.

MARY: (GASPS) Ahh! (STUNNED) Yes! Jesus. Jesus! How can you have known such...?

JOSEPH: Then my dream was true! In it, a voice said you had conceived of the Holy Spirit and that this child shall be named Jesus!

MARY: An angel in your dream, my husband?

JOSEPH: Yes! And that this son would "save his people from their sins."

MARY: Then... do you... forgive me, Joseph?

JOSEPH: (STUNNED) Forgive... you? (REALIZING) Oh, Mary. Please forgive me! For I did doubt you. Esdras, my mentor pressed me to divorce, yet... I cannot but love you. (THEY EMBRACE)

MARY: See how the stars shine? God's grace is painted across the sky.

JOSEPH: Beautiful!

MARY: And the stars are there all day! We cannot see them, but we know they are there. That is how I love you, Joseph... And that is how the Lord loves his people. Always there.

JOSEPH: (HUMBLY) May I prove worthy of your love, Mary.

MARY: As we vowed at our betrothal, Joseph:
"We shall be happy together, drink deep and lose ourselves in love."

JOSEPH: "My lover is mine... and I... am hers."
(THEY KISS)

NARRATOR: And so... Mary and Joseph were reconciled under the light of Heaven. They found themselves--through faith and surrender. And it would come to pass that together, they should carry forward the Lord's purpose of the reconciliation of God and Man!

--END OF ACT 1--

--START OF ACT 2--

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MARY: This well-water is bitter, Joseph, but welcome nonetheless. It will do--for now. There is sweet water ahead. And better days in our future...

JOSEPH: (SIGHS) You think of the future, my wife... I merely feel this moment. (QUIETLY) But if you do carry the Son of God--within your womb, what thence shall come?

MARY: Trust the Lord, Joseph. Share my faith!

JOSEPH: I do! But to be parents of... (WHISPERS) the Messiah...? Are we worthy of such a task? Will he be a prophet? A priestly-king?

MARY: It is puzzling, yes...

JOSEPH: I am a mere carpenter! You, a farmer's daughter! How can we foster... a king? Raise... a king? What do we know of ruling over people?

MARY: Rule? (SIGHS) We only know how to serve others.

JOSEPH: And what could we possibly teach the Messiah?--He that shall bring justice to all.

MARY: Justice? I know only mercy.

JOSEPH: I worry. How can we--poor people--be the ones to...

MARY: The Lord has called upon me--upon us--to serve him. I surrendered myself to God. And though his ways are beyond our knowing, I shall not waver from the path he set me upon.

JOSEPH: Indeed... I shall serve you--and The Lord--as well as I am able. Let us continue now...

SCENE 3 - NO ROOM AT THE INN

EXT. BETHLEHEM INN - NIGHT (DECEMBER 24TH)

(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, INN-KEEPER, MARY, RACHAB)

NARRATOR: And--at the end of nine days travel they did arrive at the tiny village of Bethlehem. But it was crowded with other pilgrims, seeking to enroll. Joseph and Mary came unto the only inn to be found in the village.

JOSEPH: (APPROACHING) Excuse me, inn-keeper, sir. Do you have lodging available for my wife and myself? We have traveled--many days--from Galilee and are weary.

INN-KEEPER: (WEARY) No! There is no room. No room! Every straw pallet is full! People are sleeping in the courtyard--even on such a windy night. There is no room for any-more travelers!

JOSEPH: But, you see, my wife is expecting a child.

INN-KEEPER: Sleep in the fields below. Or the road!

JOSEPH: She is due to bear the child... soon.
Perhaps to-night.

INN-KEEPER: (TAKEN ABACK) Uhh.. I am sorry. (EXITING)
But... I cannot help you. Go!

JOSEPH: (TO HIMSELF) Oh... What shall I do? (CALLS
OUT) Mary?

MARY: (DISTANT) Yes, Joseph.

JOSEPH: They have no room. We shall have to look
elsewhere.

MARY: (DISTANT) There is not much time...

RACHAB: (APPROACHING) Wait! Sir! Ahaz ("AY-hez")--
the inn-keeper--is my master, but I think
you could lodge in the stable.

JOSEPH: The stable? But my wife...

RACHAB: The stable is dirty, yes. But it is dry--and
out of the cold. Go down that path, there!

JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you for your generosity...

RACHAB: Rachab ("raw-CHOB") is my name. Ahaz may
beat me for my "generosity", but you need
some-where to stay. I was homeless once,
myself.

JOSEPH: Thank you, Rachab.

RACHAB: If you should require anything, come 'round
the kitchen. (WHISPERS) But avoid Ahaz. He
angers easily. Now, go!

JOSEPH: (EXITING) Mary! We have found respite...

RACHAB: (TO HERSELF) Ohh! What a life they must lead, the poor wretches. And bringing a child into such a world! (SIGHS) Fools...

SCENE 7 - THE BIRTH OF JESUS

INT. CAVE/STABLE - AFTER MIDNIGHT (DECEMBER 25)

(NARRATOR, INFANT JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH)

NARRATOR: While a rustic stable was hardly where one imagined the Savior of man-kind to come into the world, this was all the poor couple could provide. (PAUSE) Yet... just after midnight, it came to pass that Mary gave birth to her child...

INFANT JESUS: (NEWBORN CRY) Waaaah!

MARY: (HOLDING HIM UP) There, there, now... my beautiful boy...

NARRATOR: And she named her son, Jesus--thereby fulfilling the prophecy of the angel of the Lord.

MARY: (TO JOSEPH) Joseph! Come see!

JOSEPH: (APPROACHING) Ohhhh! How wonder-ful!

NARRATOR: Then Mary washed the Holy Child. And did take a small vial of olive oil, and dabbed some upon his head, and kissed him. A new light had come unto a weary world. And it was good...

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ANGEL #3: Behold, shepherds!

SHEEP #1: (BLEATING--FRIGHTENED) "Baaahhh!"

BO'AZ" Shep! Wake! Wake up! We must flee!

SHEP: (WAKING) ZZZZZ--Wha...? (SCREAMS) Ahhh!

ANGEL #3: Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy!

EFRAYIM: (FRIGHTENED) J-J-Joy?

ANGEL #3: Unto you is born this day--in the city of David--a Savior!

SHEP: City of David? That is here! Bethlehem!

BO'AZ: (TO SHEP) Hush! (TO ANGEL) A... a savior?

ANGEL #3: A redeemer! Christ, the Lord!

EFRAYIM: (STUNNED) The... the... Messiah! He has come!

ANGEL #3: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

SHEEP #1: (BLEATING) "Baaahhh!"

SHEP: A... a manger? A trough to feed animals?

BO'AZ: (SHUSHES SHEP) Shhh! The... the stars! Look! Angels! (AMAZED) ...Angels!

ANGELS: "Glory to God in the highest! And--on Earth--peace and good will toward men."

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SHEP: (APPROACHING) Oh! How small! How helpless he is!

BO'AZ: (TO MARY) Thank you, both of you. (STUNNED)
How amazing! I recall... from the book of Isaiah:
"For unto us, a child is born,
And his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince... of Peace."
(TO EFRAYIM) Come, Efrayim. Gaze upon... the Savior!

EFRAYIM: (TIMIDLY) I... I... (TO MARY, WHISPERS)
Thank you.

BO'AZ: (TO JOSEPH & MARY) Forgive my friend here.
This is not the... "conquering" Messiah he expected.

ALL: (GENTLE LAUGHTER) Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha...

MARY: (TO EFRAYIM) Here, then! Hold him.

SHEP: Go, Efrayim! Hold the child!

EFRAYIM: (TAKING THE CHILD) I... I...

INFANT JESUS: (NEWBORN CRY) Waaa-aaaa!

EFRAYIM: (GASPS) Ohhh! (PANICKED, GIVES CHILD BACK TO MARY) Here...!

ALL: (HEARTY LAUGHTER) Ha-ha-ha-ha!

BO'AZ: If this humble... infant can be the Messiah, then, surely, any of us may enter... the Kingdom of Heaven.

SHEP: (TO JOSEPH) I regret.... we have no gifts...
other than our praise.

JOSEPH: Thank you! Your joy is our reward.

BO'AZ" Our joy comes from full hearts. Bless you!

NARRATOR: And the shepherds returned unto their
flocks, glorifying and praising the Lord for
all they had heard and seen....

SCENE 9 - PRESENTATION AT THE TEMPLE

EXT. JERUSALEM TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY (EARLY FEBRUARY)

(NARRATOR, SIMEON, JOSEPH, MARY, INFANT JESUS, ANNA)

NARRATOR: And--after waiting the days prescribed by
the Law of Moses--Mary and Joseph did
journey, up to Jerusalem. There, to present
the child at the Temple. But upon leaving
the Temple, an old and pious man approached
them. The Holy Spirit was upon him...

SIMEON: (TO JOSEPH) Peace be unto you, kind sir.

JOSEPH: And to you...

SIMEON: I am Simeon. And I have long awaited the
Savior. May I see the child?

MARY: (STUNNED) Errr... Yes. (HANDING HIM THE
CHILD) His name is... Jesus.

SIMEON: (TO THE CHILD) Ahh... Jesus. How suitable a
name!
(LOOKING UP) Bless the Lord!
Now may I depart this life in peace,
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
which thou hast prepared for all to see!

A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles,
and the glory of thy people, Israel.

MARY: Praise be to the Lord, good sir.

SIMEON: Yea! Yet a sword... shall pierce through thy
own soul also...

MARY: (STUNNED) I...

JOSEPH: Mary! Do not fret! I shall protect you.

SIMEON: The sword whereof I speak is not of metal,
but of sorrow. Lo, thank you for the service
you do the Lord. (EXITING) Farewell. Peace
be unto you...

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: (APPROACHING) Pardon me, but I am Anna. I,
too, have long awaited the Messiah. May I
regard the child?

JOSEPH: Yes. Umm... He is called Jesus.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: Ahh! Thanks be to the Lord! A fine, strong
lad! You, and all the peoples of the world,
are blessed by the presence of this divine
child.

JOSEPH: How can you have perceived...?

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: Be not afraid! The Lord watches over you.
Listen with your hearts. Feel for others. Be
ever-willing to give of yourself. This
child--fragile as he is--shall, one day, do
so! And he shall transform the world!

MARY: Thank you for your blessing, madam.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: But depart thee from Jerusalem with haste!
Some would postpone the redemption of the
world... for their own needs... Go!

NARRATOR: The age-d prophetess spoke truth! For, that
very day--at the jealous King Herod's palace
nearby--there arrived three Magi ("MADGE-
eye")--skilled in the science of astrology
and ancient lore. They had come seeking the
new Messiah, but Herod lied to them, saying
he would welcome a successor to his throne.
He made them promise to return with news of
the Messiah, but secretly plotted to kill
the Divine child.

NARRATOR: Later that evening in Bethlehem, the Holy
Family were at rest. In exchange for
carpentry chores, the inn-keeper offered a
small room--for Joseph, Mary and their
infant. The family planned to return unto
Nazareth once the winter rains had abated...

SCENE 11 - THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

INT. INN-KEEPER'S SHED - DAY (FEBRUARY)

(MARY, JOSEPH, INFANT JESUS, GASPAR, MALKIOR, BALTAZAR,
NARRATOR)

MARY: Joseph, I am troubled by that prediction
today: That a sword shall pierce my soul.

JOSEPH: Mary... the Lord called upon you to bear
this child. He will not let you suffer. As
the old woman said, "the Lord watches over
you."

MARY: Yes. (CHEERING UP) As we watch over the Lord--this... "little lord." (TO CHILD) Ahh, my child?

INFANT JESUS: (COOS, GURGLES) Ooooooh!

JOSEPH: There are many years ahead. Once we have returned unto Nazareth, I shall build a proper home and...

JOSEPH: Yes? (TAKEN ABACK) Oh, pardon me...

MALKIOR: Peace be unto you, sir. Are you Joseph, the carpenter? The kitchen slave said we could find Joseph--and his family--in this tool shed.

JOSEPH: I am Joseph. This is my wife, Mary. And our infant son... Jesus. He is but a few weeks old.

MALKIOR: Newborn! Just a few weeks? (TO OTHER MAGI) We are correct, my colleagues. He is here! (TO JOSEPH) May I--and my companions--enter?

MARY: (TO MALKIOR) Yes, but..? Such finely dressed men as yourself... seek to visit us? How...?

BALTAZAR: We are Magi ("MADGE-eye")--astrologers from the lands of Persia, India and Assyria.

GASPAR: We have followed a star in the heavens, that has led us here--to the Messiah.

INFANT JESUS: (COOS, GURGLES) ooh--ooooh!

MALKIOR: Although we--ourselves--are not Jews, we come... to pay homage to the great Messiah of all nations.

MARY: We thank you. Thank you for these gifts--and that you... believe so. (SIGHS) May the Lord's blessing be upon you and all your people.

NARRATOR: And the Magi--having bestowed their gifts, and feeling great joy--did depart. (PAUSE) But, while they had promised to bring the wicked King Herod news of the Messiah, they were warned--each--in a dream, not to return to the palace. And so, they traveled--by another route--to the East. (PAUSE) And thus, Herod's anger was greatly kindled against them...

SCENE 12 - HEROD'S FURY

INT. HEROD'S JERUSALEM PALACE - THAT NIGHT (FEBRUARY)
(HEROD, AMBASSADOR LIVIUS, ETAN, QUEEN MALTACE)

HEROD THE GREAT: (SEETHING) They lied! (COUGHS) They betrayed my trust, Livius!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: (MOCK OUTRAGE) As the Roman ambassador, I am appalled! Can it be? Visiting Magi deceived... Herod the Great--King of the Jews?

HEROD THE GREAT: You mock me, Livius! As did they, (COUGHS) who promised to return. How could those astrologers know...?

QUEEN MALTACE: We have lost our chance to find this new Messiah--and kill him! And his destiny is to overthrow you--and the Romans! Are we doomed, Herod?

HEROD THE GREAT: Oh, hardly, my queen. (CLAPS HANDS 2X)
(TO ETAN) Etan! Go! Dispatch troops to Bethlehem. Have them kill all newborn sons. This "Messiah" will surely be among them.

ETAN: Newborns, sire?

HEROD THE GREAT: Yes... ..wait! One of those Magi (COUGHS) told me the star may have risen two years ago! Have... (COUGHS) Have the troops kill all male children up to two years of age! ...And anyone who resists! Go!
(CLAPS HANDS 2X) Herod so commands!

ETAN: (EXITING) Yes, sire. All males up to two years...

QUEEN MALTACE: Herod! Butchering peasant children? No!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: Herod! Why such worry? You are age-d and ill! You shall be dead before this child could ever threaten your rule!

HEROD THE GREAT: (BITTERLY) The Jews have always despised me--(COUGHS)--throughout my reign. No matter what I did--were it bringing peace, (COUGHS) prosperity, even rebuilding the Temple of Solomon! They reviled me. Hated me! (COUGHS)

QUEEN MALTACE: But many rulers are hated!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: Yes--even Caesar.

HEROD THE GREAT: However... since they detest me so... if this Messiah of theirs has come, I shall put him to the sword! ...Just to spite the Jews! And extinguish their hope!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: (IRONICALLY) Such is Herod's "justice"?

HEROD THE GREAT: Yes! I may be dead soon, but Herod The Great shall outlive their Messiah! History... shall remember... Herod! (COUGHS)

SCENE 13 - THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

INT. INN-KEEPER'S SHED - NIGHT, MINUTES LATER (FEBRUARY)
(NARRATOR, ANGEL #4)

NARRATOR: Yet, before King Herod's troops could depart on their wicked assignment, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph--in a dream... saying...

ANGEL #4: Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt! And be thou there until I bring thee word--for Herod will seek the child, to destroy him.

NARRATOR: Immediately, Joseph arose. And he, Mary, and the child did flee that night. And departed into Egypt--as the angel of the Lord had instructed.

NARRATOR: Then went King Herod's soldiers unto Bethlehem... And there, did slaughter the innocents... sparing none! Evils were multiplied in the earth. And much mourning and lamenting was heard among the Bethlehem-ites.

SCENE 14 - THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

EXT. ROAD TO EGYPT - NIGHT, HOURS LATER (FEBRUARY)
(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, MARY, ANGEL #4, INFANT JESUS)

NARRATOR: But Mary and Joseph did join a caravan south... and so, escaped the violence. Later, Joseph did explain to Mary, once safely away...

SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

JOSEPH, MARY (holding INFANT JESUS) stand--CENTER STAGE--facing the audience.

NARRATOR:

And, so, Joseph, Mary and Jesus did return unto the land of Israel. And came and dwelt once more in Nazareth.

(PAUSE) And as the prophet Isaiah foretold: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: And they that dwell in the shadow of death..., upon them hath the light shined.” (PAUSE) Thus... did a new chapter in the life of Man-kind open; One with endless promise, divine mercy and eternal gain! (PAUSE) Rejoice, all people! The Savior had come--for now and ever-more!

==THE END==

The full script runs 33 pages, about 30 minutes long.

CASTING EVALUATION: *The Nativity Play*

Date: _____

Small cast: 6 actors (2 male, 2 female, 2 male-or-female)

Large cast: 24 actors (5 male, 3 female, 15 male-or-female)

The plus symbol (+) indicates a role that can be doubled with the role listed above it.

_____	NARRATOR	The narrator (Male or Female)
_____	+ EFRAYIM	Cynical shepherd (M/F)
_____	MARY	16 year-old farm girl (F)
_____	JOSEPH	20 year-old carpenter (M)
_____	+ LIVIUS	Roman Ambassador (M)
_____	HEROD THE GREAT	Tyrant "King of the Jews" (M)
_____	+ ZAKARIAS	Elisabet's husband (M)
_____	+ BO'AZ	Old, wizened shepherd (M/F)
_____	+ GASPAR	Indian Magi (M/F)
_____	+ SIMEON	Pious old man (M)
_____	ELISABET	Mary's aged kinswoman (F)
_____	+ QUEEN MALTACE	Herod's wife (F)
_____	+ ANNA	Old Prophetess (F)
_____	+ RACHAB	Inn-keeper's kindly slave (M/F)
_____	+ BALTAZAR	Assyrian Magi (M/F)
_____	+ SHEP	Young shepherd (M/F)
_____	+ LAMBS/INFANTS	Bleating lambs, infants (M/F)
_____	ANGEL #1	Angel messenger(Gabriel) (M/F)
_____	+ ANGEL #2	Angel messenger(M/F)
_____	+ ANGEL #3	Angel messenger (M/F)
_____	+ ANGEL #4	Angel messenger (M/F)
_____	+ INN-KEEPER	Crusty inn-keeper (M/F)
_____	+ ETAN	Herod's minister (M/F)
_____	+ MALKIOR	Persian Magi (M/F)

CASTING MONOLOGUES: *The Nativity Play*

All actors are asked to read some lines, called “sides,” aloud, to audition. The director will cast the roles in our production based upon these readings. Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues can also provide some “back story,” giving an idea of who the characters are and what kind of story we are producing. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents when auditioning for the different roles.

NARRATOR:

I am the Narrator and I speak in a measured style, often using a biblical syntax. For example: But--on the shore of the Great Sea-- Joseph did now labor on Herod's palace at Caesarea. He served the old carpenter of Nazareth, Esdras (“EHZ-druhs”), who, while he had lost the sharpness of his sight, had lost not the sharpness of his tongue...

MARY:

Scripture says, “Despise not a thief, if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.” It is not stealing if I give this man the pomegranates, is it? A little less for us shall suffice! I am not a simpleton, Aunt Morag! But that man welcomed the flogging! Why did he do that?

JOSEPH:

He said, “no Galilean carpenter would work terebinth.” Well, I am not of Galilee. I am a Bethlehem-ite! I shall gladly work this terebinth lumber. But Wait, Mary! All Spring I did work in Caesarea and learned much about carpentry. And... today... (JOKING) I have invented... the wheel! (HOLDS UP SQUARISH WHEEL) Look!

- ANGEL #1: Rejoice, Mary! Hail thou--that art highly favored! The Lord is with thee! Bless-ed art thou among women! Behold! Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son!--the anointed one--the Christ! And thou shalt call His name... Jesus.
- HEROD THE GREAT: (COUGHS) Livius! (SARCASTICALLY) The court of Herod The Great is always eager to lick the (COUGH) boot of Rome. But, you have not come to merely warn me of the latest rumors of these "zealots" with their false-messiahs. (COUGHS) I smell... gold!
- BO'AZ: (OLD SHEPHERD) Yea! David--the great King David--was once a mere shepherd boy. But the Lord favored him, and David did great deeds... (SIGHS) So long ago... Herod and the Romans are only the most obvious of evil-doers. The wolves are man-kind! Wickedness burns in every heart! For we are separated from the Lord... alas... (SIGHS) for-ever.
- BALTAZAR: From the East, we saw a new star rise--a brilliant light in the Heavens--and we have followed it here. You see, the stars portend, "As above, so below"--therefore the Messiah shall come from Bethlehem. But you are wise, great Herod... for a king.
- ANNA THE PROPHETESS: Be not afraid! The Lord watches over you. Listen with your hearts. Feel for others. Be ever-willing to give of yourself. This child--fragile as he is--shall do so! And he shall transform the world!

ELISABET: Oh, but Mary, that is part of how I came to be with child! Six months ago, Zakarias was chosen to offer incense in the Temple Sanctuary. But once within, he had a vision! An... (AMAZED) an angel of the Lord... appeared unto him. And the angel promised that I would--after twenty years of being barren--conceive a son!

RACHAB: Wait! Sir! Ahaz ("AY-hez"), the inn-keeper--is my master, but I think you could stay in the stable. Ahaz may beat me for doing this, but you need some-where to stay. I was homeless once, myself. If you should require anything, come 'round the kitchen. (WHISPERS) But avoid Ahaz. He angers easily.

SHEEP #1: (BLEATING) "BAAHHH!"
(BLEATING--FRIGHTENED) "BAAHHH!"
(BLEATS-DERISIVELY) BAAAAH.