

Drama – On That Night

Scene 1A – Inn Keeper’s Family

Grandma enters first and sits down. Remains on stage until end of last scene.

Mother: How are we ever going to be ready? Have you ever seen such a crowd in this small town?

Father: They have been having these censuses long before we were born and I imagine they will continue long after we are gone. It is wonderful to see and meet everyone. It is especially great that our families are coming home! It is time to celebrate!

Mother: Celebrate? Spoken like a man who doesn’t have to get the house ready for company! Yes, it is great, but so much to do! Food to prepare, beds to be made. You know your mother will check every nook and cranny to make sure I have done my cleaning!

Father: I have been busy at the Inn too, don’t forget. So many guests to accommodate! Even with all the hustle and bustle, I feel something special is in the air! I can’t quite put my finger on it.....

Son: My cousins are never going to get here! I have so much to tell them. I really want to show them where all the secret hiding places are around the inn! I can’t wait, I can’t wait, until we can taste some of mother’s special baking.

Mother: With all your dreaming about your cousins have you finished cleaning out the barn? I need help to get ready for our guests. We might have so much company that someone will have to sleep in the barn.

Son: Ahhhh, mother..... I am almost done! I just need to spread fresh straw and sweep a little dirt. I can hardly think of anything else, but of all the fun we are going to have.

Grandmother: Time moves for no one. Everything in its time and season. The good book says, good things come to those who wait!

Son: Oh Grandmother, I know you too are excited to see everyone! You have been busy sewing new clothes for us to wear to greet our visitors. Can you sew me a secret pocket? It would be a great place to hide some of mother’s tasty candy! Oh, and can you buy me an abacus so I can keep track of visitors we have at our house?

Grandmother: An abba what?

Son: An abacus. It is new. I just saw them selling them in the market place yesterday. It is something that you count with. You know you move the beads over and count them. It is really nifty!

Dad: That is what your fingers are for – for counting. And you need more digits you can use your toes!

Son: Oh dad you are so old fashioned!

Mother: What we need is a list. Everyone gather around! (all but Grandma exits)

Scene 1B - Today's Family

Grandpa enters first and sits down. Remains on stage until end of last scene.

Mother and Father come in to Kitchen. Mother looks frantic.

Father: I can't believe it is Christmas Eve morning already! Didn't we just finish Halloween?

Mother: Ach! You are so dense. Of course it's Christmas. That's all we've been doing for weeks - getting ready. There's so much more to get done yet before church tonight.

Father: We have the tree up don't we? I even got the lights working!

Mother: Sure, but what about wrapping the presents, sending off the Christmas letter, hanging the decorations in the windows, cleaning the house, peeling the potatoes, getting everyone through their showers, and I don't think the kids have bought gifts for each other yet...

Daughter comes running in.

Daughter: What's that about gifts? What are you getting me this year? I want to know!

Mother: Oh... nothing... but do you have a gift for your brother yet?

Daughter: Don't worry Mom! Got it covered. Grandpa, what are you getting me?

Grandpa: What do you want?

Daughter: Well, I want a DS or maybe an I-pod touch. (yelling back to kitchen) Dad, am I old enough for a I-phone? I want to be able to text all my friends all the time, any time!

Grandpa: A what? Some sort of 'pod' – as in a pea-pod?

Daughter: No – an I-pod – you know, to download music, text my friends, check the weather, use all sorts of apps.

Grandpa: Apps??? It's beyond me. If I wanted music when I was your age, I was 'apt' to join the choir.

Dad: Forget about the phone – you see all your friends at school – just use that thing called your voice – talk to them directly. Or do what I did – pass notes.

Daughter: You're so old-fashioned Dad!

Mother: Hurry up everyone. Enough talk. We need to get ready!

Grandpa: It's all moving too quick for me. Just let me sit! (all but Grandpa exit)

Scene 2A – The Inn Keeper's Family

Son: Don't you love having company Grandma? Today is the day when everyone should be arriving! I can't stop looking out the window! They should be coming over the hill any moment!

Grandmother: Yes, I will be happy to see them! But, at my age time moves quick enough.

Mother and Father enter

Mother: This is it! The day everything happens! Are we ready? (*to son*) Did you finish all of your chores? (*to husband*) Is everything ready in the inn?

Father: Yes, everything is ready and people have been arriving all day. We are already full to the rafters. We are so full that I had one young couple stop by looking for shelter that I had to turn away. They looked so sad and when she looked me in the eye there

was something about her that I can't explain... but, I offered them the barn for the night.

Mother: They are in the barn right now? In our dirty barn with the animals! How could you? If you keep this up you might be joining them.

Son: Cool! I wish I could sleep in the barn. Can I do that sometime mother, please?

Father: They needed shelter and they said they weren't fussy. I couldn't deny them. I offered them the barn before I could really think – it was like someone else had control of my mouth....

Mother: *(to the son)* run out and see if they need any fresh water or clean blankets. Just one more thing I need to add to my list of things to do. Someone in the barn – what were you thinking?

Grandma: The Good Book says: do unto others what you would have them do unto you. Surely we can extend mercy on these young strangers by offering them a roof over the heads, on what is going to be a cold night.

Mother: Let's go see the barn and see how our guests are doing. *(all but Grandma exit)*

Scene 2B – Today's Family

Daughter: Don't you just love Christmas Grandpa! I just can't wait any longer!

Grandpa: Good things come to those who wait.

Daughter: But time is just moving so slowly today. I don't know if I'll be able to sleep tonight!

Mother and Father enter Kitchen

Mother: *(to daughter)* Did you bring up the carrots and the pickles from the basement?
(daughter runs off) Hurry up. There just isn't enough time for everything! *(to father)* Set the table. Remember big fork, then little fork.

Father: Does it really matter? I always forget which one to use anyways!

Mother: Everything has to look perfect. The Hors d'ouvres. The centre pieces. You remember that the Jones' are coming over afterwards, don't you? You know what they're like?

Father: Yeah, yeah – keep up with the Jones! Is that really what Christmas is all about?

Mother: And tomorrow it's the whole family again. You have those special gifts ready, right?

Father: I thought we were going to do homemade gifts for family this year?

Mother: If the Wisemen can bring gold and frankincense, surely we can give something nice to Great Aunt Betty.

Grandpa: I remember when we were just thankful to have an orange and a few peanuts on Christmas Eve... and family and friends simply gathered and enjoyed sitting around together.

Scene 3A – The Innkeeper's Family

All 3 enter. Grandmother still in her rocking chair.

Father: Well, the celebration is close at hand! I say we get all of the food on the table so it is ready when our guests arrive!

Mother: You want the food on the table so that you can sample the goods. Instead of having your mind on food, why don't you help me with the final dusting of the house? They will be walking in the door any moment!

Father: I just came from checking on the young couple in the barn. She looks like she could give birth at any moment.

Mother: Birth?!

Father: Yet they looked so happy and content.

Mother: In a barn?

Father: To be happy in a barn – of all places.

Son: It is my dream to live in a barn. That way I am right there with my animals and can talk to them all night long!

Grandma: The Good Book says, a child of hope will be born – a gift to humankind, when we least expect it.

Son: Tell us more Grandma!

Grandma: Let me tell you the story: (from Isaiah 9:6-7)

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Father: Thanks mom for reminding us about what we are really waiting for: the Prince of peace. Let's all go out and check on the little family in the stable. *(all 4 exit)*

Scene 3B – Today's Family

All 3 enter. Grandpa still sitting down.

Father: Hurry Up everyone. We have to get to church in the next hour. Why isn't everyone ready yet? Why am I always the one ready to go to church first?

Mother: Maybe because you have less to do?

Father: Seriously, are we going to get ready in time? I wouldn't mind getting there in time for the pre-service caroling this year.

Mother: Then come help me cut up these last veggies. *(Mother and Father cut veggies in the kitchen)*

Father: (to daughter) Hey, do you have all your lines memorized yet? An angel can't forget ...

Daughter: Yes Dad! "Glory to God in the highest" yada, yada, yada. I don't even get it. I think I've been an Angel for 5 years, and we simply sing to the Shepherds and then fly off stage. What's the point?

Grandpa: Haven't you ever heard the whole story?

Daughter: No, we're so busy back stage... I guess I never paid attention.

Grandpa: Come sit down for a minute. You have time. We always have time... to listen. Come gather round. (*opens Bible*) Listen to the whole story as Luke told it.

Grandpa: (*Reads Luke 2:1-20*) (*As he reads, the Father and then the Mother slowly stop what they are doing and come over and sit and listen.*)

Daughter: So the Shepherds were the first on the scene. Cool! What does it mean that Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart?

Mother: I think it means that she slowed down enough to appreciate the full significance of his birth. I sure could learn lots from Mary!

Father: Me, too. Why don't we take our time this year and walk to church – in the fresh crisp air. Just take it in!

Daughter: I like that idea. Let's go!

Grandpa: Let us go to... to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.

Everyone exits and heads towards church.

Sue Brubacher, Mark Diller Harder (Canada), 2010. St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.
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