

MARY AND JOSEPH:
A Christmas Drama

A Short Play in Four Acts

by

C. D. Rooks

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Text Note:

Brackets [] within character dialogue indicate words changed or added for clarity, or indicate an alternate biblical reading of that word or phrase.

Cast of Characters

<u>Joseph:</u>	A Jewish carpenter, about 30.
<u>Mary:</u>	Betrothed to Joseph, about five to ten years younger than he is.
<u>Martha:</u>	Mary's mother.
<u>Gabriel:</u>	An angel of the Lord Most High
<u>Elizabeth:</u>	Mary's cousin, 45 to 50.
<u>Rabbi:</u>	An older, kindly man.
<u>Government Official:</u>	A middle-aged bureaucrat.
<u>Roman Soldier:</u>	A younger man. (non-speaking part)
<u>Other Nazarenes:</u>	People in the crowd. (non-speaking parts)
<u>Proprietor:</u>	A middle-aged man who operates the inn at Bethlehem
<u>Sarah:</u>	The proprietor's wife, middle-aged.
<u>Other Travelers:</u>	(non-speaking parts)
<u>Shepherds:</u>	Three young men. (one speaking part)
<u>Chorus of Heavenly Hosts:</u>	Angelic beings.

Scene

Outside of MARY's and MARTHA's house in Nazareth, a village in Galilee.

Time

Less than a year before the birth of Christ.

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: Outside MARY's and her mother MARTHA's home in ancient Galilee, a simple, small dwelling. A wooden table is in the foreground.

AT RISE: Early evening. The evening meal is being prepared. MARY and MARTHA are outside their small home. They are preparing food on a simple wooden table, going in and out of the house as necessary to get things. After a few moments, JOSEPH enters opposite.

JOSEPH (calling out)

Mary! Mary! Are you here?

MARY

Oh, Mother, it's Joseph.

(She jumps up and runs to meet him, hugs him. MARTHA continues her work of preparing dinner but remains unobtrusively in the background.)

JOSEPH (delighted)

Mary!

MARY (excited)

Oh, Joseph, where have you been? You're late today. I thought I might not see you.

JOSEPH

I had to get wood today. I'm making us a new table, a sturdy, strong table.

MARY

Oh, Joseph, I can't wait until we are married.

JOSEPH (teasing)
We've only been betrothed a short time.

MARY
It's been weeks, months. It's been forever.

JOSEPH (reassuring)
We'll be married soon and I will take you home as my wife.

(Facing each other, he
takes her hands in his
as they are talking.)

The work is almost done, but I still have to finishing
preparing the house; I need to repair the roof. We must
have a proper house.

MARY
(a little reluctant, but
in agreement)
Yes, we will have a proper home. Is there anything else I
can do, Joseph?

JOSEPH (thinking)
We need new mats for bedding.

MARY
I'm working on them now. I'll have another one finished by
tomorrow.

JOSEPH
We should be ready soon, the Lord willing.

(They look into each
other's eyes. Time passes.)

Well I must go, Mary. I'll come by day after tomorrow.

MARTHA
Joseph! Can't you stay to eat with us?

JOSEPH
No, I'm sorry, Martha. I promised the rabbi I would fix the
door in the synagogue today and I haven't been there yet.

MARTHA

You are a good son of David, Joseph. Go with God and may He bless you.

JOSEPH

And you as well.

(He looks down at Mary. She throws her arms around his neck and quickly kisses and releases him.)

MARY

Good night, my beloved. Come back to me soon.

(Joseph gives her a big hug and leaves.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IScene 2

SETTING: Inside MARY's and MARTHA's home. Furnishings are sparse. Only two rooms.

AT RISE: Night. Same day, but it is dark now. Time to retire to bed. MARTHA puts the last things away for the night. MARY is sitting near a moonlit window.

MARTHA (sounding tired)
I'm tired, Mary. I'm going to bed now.

(She kisses MARY on the head.)
Don't stay up too late.

MARY
(a distracted, far off
quality in her voice)
I won't.

(Hearing the tone in her
voice, MARTHA stops.)

MARTHA
What's on your mind, daughter?

MARY
I was thinking about Joseph -
(slight pause)
-- and being a wife.

MARTHA (reassuring)
Ah, Joseph is a good man. He'll be a good husband to you.
It will all happen in God's good time.

MARY (somewhat wistfully)
I know. I thank God for my husband every night.

MARTHA

I know you do. You're a good girl, and you'll make a good wife.

(Kisses her again.)

Good night, Mary.

MARY

Good night, momma.

(After the MARTHA settles down to sleep, MARY moves to go kneel and pray before the moonlit window.)

MARY (praying aloud)

Oh great Lord, God of Abraham and Jacob, look with favor on your handmaiden, for you have blessed me with a fine husband, and I praise you, oh Jehovah.

(She begins to recite Psalm 103 from heart.)

"Praise the Lord, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits -
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires for good things..."

(As she was speaking, a bright light has come into the room and in the light stands the angel GABRIEL, all in white. Aware of the light she stops praying. There is silence. Then she turns slowly as he speaks to her.)

GABRIEL

(a strong, bold voice)

Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you.

(MARY is obviously troubled by this greeting and slightly frightened.)

GABRIEL (Cont.)

(clearly, without rushing)

Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will [conceive a] child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.

MARY

How will this be since I am a virgin?

GABRIEL

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will [perform a miracle in] you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative has conceived a son in her old age, and she is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.

MARY

(humble, but with quiet conviction)

I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.

(All the light fades and the angel GABRIEL departs. It is difficult to see anything in the darkness. For a while there is total silence, then MARY speaks.)

MARY

Yes, my Lord.

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IScene 3

SETTING: Outside MARY's and MARTHA's home.
Two days later.

AT RISE: Morning. JOSEPH enters, calling,
as before.

JOSEPH

Mary! Mary!

(MARTHA comes out of the house.)

MARTHA

She's not here, Joseph.

JOSEPH (somewhat surprised)

Not here? Where has she gone?

MARTHA

She left early this morning to visit her cousin Elizabeth.
She is with child and Mary went to see her.

JOSEPH

(a little disappointed)

How long will she be away?

MARTHA

I'm not sure, Joseph. She left rather quickly.

(Pause.)

Elizabeth lives in Judea.

JOSEPH

(somewhat surprised again)

She went to Judea?

MARTHA

Elizabeth is in her sixth month. She was past childbearing
and childless. It's a miracle from God that she is
pregnant.

(A short pause as she notices how sad and dejected JOSEPH appears.)

MARTHA (Cont.)

But what does a man understand of such things? Don't look so sad and dejected, Joseph. Mary will return in the Lord's good time. Besides, you're busy. You still have to make the new table and fix the roof. There's time.

JOSEPH (reluctantly)

You're right. Still, it's an odd thing for a betrothed woman to go off without telling her husband.

MARTHA

Don't worry. Mary's a good girl. When she returns you'll be ready to take her home as your wife.

(Still reluctant, JOSEPH nods, smiles, and then leaves. The MARTHA watches him go, then looks off in the other direction, the direction MARY went. Her face shows concern but she is not greatly troubled.)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT

Act IIScene 1

SETTING: Inside the Judean hill country
home of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
In the main room; a table, chairs.

AT RISE: Daytime. MARY enters the main room
of the house.

MARY

Elizabeth, hello? It's me, Mary.

ELIZABETH

(feeling her baby leap in
her womb, coming in from
another room.)

Oh! Mary!

(then in a loud voice,
coming towards her)

Blessed are you among woman, and blessed is the child you
will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my
Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your
greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for
joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has
said to her will be accomplished!

MARY (arms outstretched)

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his
servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One had done great things for me -- holy is
his name.

(slight pause)

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to
generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he
has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has
lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good
things but has sent the rich away empty.

(slight pause)

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be
merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he
said to our fathers.

ELIZABETH

Oh, Mary, praise God. I'm overjoyed to see you. My soul soars within me, and my baby will not be still.

MARY

I'm so happy to be here. I have so much to tell you my heart is filled to overflowing.

ELIZABETH

Come sit with me. Let us talk. Tell me what the Lord has done.

(They sit together, eager
to talk and share stories,
women, heart to heart.)

MARY

An angel of the Lord came to me. He told me you were with child - a miracle from God. I had to come and see you.

ELIZABETH

I'm so glad you've come. You will stay with me now?

MARY

As long as the Lord allows.

ELIZABETH (delighted)

Wonderful. So tell me everything.

MARY

And you tell me.

(They laugh delightedly
together.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IIScene 2

SETTING: Outside MARY's and MARTHA's house.

AT RISE: Evening, several weeks later.
JOSEPH approaching.

JOSEPH (calling out)

Hello, anyone home?

MARTHA

(Coming out of the house.)

Oh hello, Joseph. How are you this week?

JOSEPH

I'm fine. Please tell me that Mary's home from Judea.

MARTHA

Soon, Joseph, soon.

JOSEPH

It's been almost three months. That baby must have been born by now.

MARTHA

You must not be impatient when it comes to babies being born. They come in their own time, and not before.

JOSEPH

I don't mean to be impatient, but the table is built and the roof is repaired --

MARTHA (nodding)

All is in readiness. Mary will be delighted to hear it.

(She pats him on the arm,
offering comfort.)

Go on about your business, Joseph. I'll send word as soon as she returns. It won't be long now.

(He nods in agreement,
reluctantly, then leaves.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IIScene 3

SETTING: Approximately three months later
inside ELIZABETH's house.

AT RISE: Daytime. ELIZABETH is very large
with child. MARY is packing her
traveling items.

ELIZABETH

I am so glad and so thankful that you came to be with me
these past weeks, Mary.

MARY

The Lord has been so good to both of us. We are blessed
among all women.

ELIZABETH

I would wish that you could stay until the baby is born for
it won't be long now.

(They exchange glances.)

But I know you cannot.

MARY

(Goes to hug her, to hold her)

This is your time, Elizabeth. I must go; I must return to
my husband.

(ELIZABETH lays her hand on
MARY's stomach.)

I'm a little afraid of what he'll say when I tell him I'm
pregnant.

ELIZABETH (lovingly)

The Lord is with you, Mary.

(She hugs her.)

Do what the Lord tells you to do and He will take care of
you.

MARY

I know -- and I believe. The Lord has favored me
gloriously. I praise Him from the depth of my soul.

MARY (Cont.)

(Slight pause.)

But how do I tell Joseph.

ELIZABETH

Tell him as you told me, as the angel of the Lord told you.

MARY

(smiles, hugs ELIZABETH)

You're right. I will. I'll leave for Nazareth tomorrow.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT

Act IIIScene 1

SETTING: Outside MARY's and MARTHA's house in Nazareth.

AT RISE: Early evening. MARY and JOSEPH are outside, sitting alone, talking in earnest. There is some tension in the atmosphere.

MARY

(holding JOSEPH's hand as she is talking)

The night before I left, when I was praying and praising the Lord, a bright light lit up the room and a voice said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." And when I turned there was one with the figure of a man, but he was all in brilliant white, like his garment was made of light. At first I was greatly troubled by his greeting, but then he said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God."

JOSEPH (skeptical)

He called you by name?

MARY (nodding)

Yes. Then he said, "You will conceive a child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."

JOSEPH

Jesus? Son of the Most High?

MARY (nods)

Yes. Then he said, "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

JOSEPH

(dubious)

The throne of David. His kingdom will never end. Mary, do you know what you are saying?

MARY

Oh yes, Joseph, I do. And I said to him, "How can this be since I am a virgin?"

JOSEPH

Oh Mary.

(He jumps to his feet.)

MARY

(urgent)

No, Joseph, listen. Please, listen. He said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you --"

JOSEPH (in unbelief)

Mary? The Spirit of God?

MARY

Yes, yes. So that the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

(JOSEPH is now incredulous at what he's heard and speechless. He stares at her for a long minute, then shakes his head and leaves her.)

MARY (Cont.)

(crying out after him)

Joseph! Joseph!

(MARTHA comes to comfort her.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IIIScene 2

SETTING: JOSEPH's house, his bedroom.

AT RISE: The same night. He is alone, and
pacing the floor.

JOSEPH

(distressed)

Oh Lord, God of Abraham, God of Jacob, what am I to think of this? Mary, my betrothed, returns to tell me that she is pregnant, that a messenger of the Lord came to her and proclaimed she will bear God's son. How can a virgin be pregnant? How can a woman bear a child without having known a man?

(pause)

I have not touched her, Lord. You know I have not. I have honored our vows and your laws, oh Lord. I am blameless. I have not sinned, my God, against you or against her.

(Moans to himself, pacing about.)

How can I take Mary as my wife now? The sanctity of our betrothal is ruined. Our house would be impure, our marriage would be an affront before your eyes, oh Lord.

(He cries out in his anguish.)

My heart breaks within me. My soul hurts with grieving. What am I to do, Lord? What can I do that I not offend your righteousness, oh God? Please, Lord, have mercy on your servant. I will not depart from following your law. I will do what your righteousness demands, but deliver me from this sorrow, oh Lord. I am desolate and desperate for a word from your mouth, oh God.

(He continues pacing and
muttering, etc.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IIIScene 3

SETTING: Outside the RABBI's house.

AT RISE: Morning. JOSEPH has come to consult with the local RABBI, who is busy at some activity as they are talking.

RABBI

I can see that you haven't slept, Joseph. Are you sure you don't want to tell me the reason why you want to do this?

JOSEPH

I really don't want to say, Rabbi. I want to do this quietly.

RABBI

(emphatically, but without
accusing)

People will find out, Joseph. A certificate of divorce is a serious matter.

(JOSEPH nods; he
understands this.)

RABBI (Cont.)

I can't imagine what Mary could have done to bring you to this point. She's always been a sweet girl, with a sweet spirit. Perhaps a bit -- different than the others, but completely upright.

(JOSEPH is unmoved in his
resolve.)

RABBI (Cont.)

Well, I've known you even longer. I know you are a righteous man, Joseph, and that you fear God, and wouldn't purposely break his law - so I respect your reason, whatever it is.

(JOSEPH remains silent.)

RABBI (Cont.)

The law is clear, Joseph. If you wish to end your betrothal and stop the marriage process, you must present Mary with a certificate of divorce in presence of two witnesses.

JOSEPH

Must there be witnesses?

RABBI

(pause)

You wish to protect her from shame, from public humiliation, is that it?

JOSEPH

Yes.

RABBI

It can be done privately, but you still must have two witnesses present. This is what the law says.

JOSEPH (nods)

I understand.

RABBI

(fatherly)

Joseph. Be very sure of what you're doing. Seek the Lord's will. Woman seem strange and their ways are mysterious to men, but they are also among God's most beautiful and cherished creations. You will learn in time that it is best if you don't try to figure them out, but love them the way God made them. There is sorrow with women but also great joy.

(Pause.)

Be sure of what you're doing.

JOSEPH

(briefly considers, then)

Thank you, Rabbi.

RABBI

(places his hand on
JOSEPH's head)

Go with God, Joseph. May he bless you, son of David.

(Joseph accepts the
blessing and leaves.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IIIScene 4

SETTING: JOSEPH's bedroom.

AT RISE: Midnight. Joseph at home asleep at night. He is sleeping, but dreaming restlessly. A bright light appears in the room, in the light is the angel GABRIEL. As JOSEPH is lightly tossing and turning, GABRIEL approaches and stands beside where he is sleeping. JOSEPH doesn't wake as GABRIEL speaks to him, but he stops moving about; his spirit is listening.

GABRIEL (clearly, boldly)

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, for what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

(The light fades and GABRIEL is gone. JOSEPH awakes briefly and sits up. He looks heavenward.)

JOSEPH

Yes, Lord, I will do as you say.

(Then he returns to sleep, much more peacefully now.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IIIScene 5

SETTING: Outside MARY's and MARTHA's house.

AT RISE: Morning. JOSEPH approaches.

JOSEPH

Hello? Mary? Mary, where are you?

(MARY comes out from the house.)

MARY

(hesitantly, but hopefully)

Joseph?

JOSEPH

(holding his arms out, tenderly)

Mary.

MARY

Joseph!

(She runs to him.)

JOSEPH

Mary! Mary, the Lord's messenger came to me in a dream last night. I know the truth. He spoke it to me. I want you to come home with me and be my wife.

MARY

Yes, Joseph, I will. I will.

(She hugs him, lovingly.

After a moment, JOSEPH
holds her at arm's length,
looking at her, lovingly.)

JOSEPH

We should marry as soon as possible.

MARY (happy)

Yes, we should.

(She hugs him again.)

MARY (Cont.)

Oh, Joseph, I'm so happy. The Lord is so good to us.

JOSEPH

Yes, he is, and his son will bless all people.

(He kisses her on the head.)

Come, let's tell your mother and make arrangements.

(They walk into the house together.)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT

Act IVScene 1

SETTING: Outside MARY's and JOSEPH's house in Nazareth.

AT RISE: Daytime. Approximately six months later near JOSEPH's and MARY's house in Nazareth. JOSEPH is working on some carpentry project. MARY is doing some outdoor chore. She is very pregnant now. A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL and a ROMAN SOLDIER, his guard/escort arrive. The GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL is carrying a scroll that he unrolls and begins to read aloud. A few OTHER NEIGHBORS gather as he reads the decree. JOSEPH moves to where MARY is standing and places a protective hand on her shoulder.

OFFICIAL

(very official)

Hear ye, hear ye, all assembled hear the proclamation of mighty Caesar Augustus, emperor of all Rome and her provinces.

(He pauses briefly as a few people gather.)

It is decreed that a census should be taken of all people in the Roman Empire. You are hereby required forthwith to be registered in your town of origin. Long live Caesar.

(He rolls scroll up and moves on with the ROMAN SOLDIER following.)

MARY

Joseph, did you hear that?

(She places her hand over his on her shoulder.)

JOSEPH

(nods)

Yes. We'll have to go to Bethlehem.

(She looks up at him as he looks down, concerned that she's nine months pregnant and they must now travel.)

MARY

(hands on her stomach)

All the way to Bethlehem.

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IVScene 2

SETTING: Inside the walls at the inn in Bethlehem. TRAVELERS and baggage are here and there.

AT RISE: Late evening. MARY and JOSEPH in traveling clothes, obviously very tired, arriving at the inn in Bethlehem. Other TRAVELERS are mulling about getting ready to settle down for the evening before nightfall. MARY sits off to one side to rest. JOSEPH goes to talk to the PROPRIETOR, who is checking people in and collecting money.

PROPRIETOR

(yelling, pointing toward
the back of the audience)

You, you with the camels. Take the stall at the end.

JOSEPH

(approaches the man)

Excuse me, sir. I need a room for the night for my wife and myself.

PROPRIETOR (brusquely)

You're too late. There's nothing left.

JOSEPH

We're not choosey. I'll take anything, any space or room you have. Anything.

(A woman, SARAH, not a traveler, comes up to the PROPRIETOR and begins to speak to him. It is apparent she is his wife.)

SARAH

I'm afraid we're not going to have enough food and we're running out of hay.

PROPRIETOR

Send Benjamin to get more. Here.

(He begins selecting and counting out some coins into her hand.)

-- five, six, seven --

JOSEPH (politely)

Please, sir. We need a place to stay.

(Hearing his plea, SARAH stops to listen as she receives the coins.)

PROPRIETOR

-- ten, eleven, twelve--

(turning back to JOSEPH)

I told you there's nothing. You can stay in the yard and sleep on the ground with the mule drivers.

JOSEPH

But my wife is pregnant.

(He points toward MARY.)

She is due at any time.

PROPRIETOR

(looking, pauses briefly)

I'm sorry for that, but there's no room here for you.

(Seeing someone - unseen by the audience - across the way - perhaps at the back of the audience - he goes off, yelling.)

Hey, hey! Didn't I tell you not to do that in here? Get those donkeys out of there.

(JOSEPH turns, tired and dejected, and slowly crosses toward where MARY is resting.)

JOSEPH

(looking skyward)

Oh Lord, helps us.

(SARAH has been watching, and she follows him.)

JOSEPH (Cont.)

(apologetic, discouraged)

Mary, there's no room for us here at the inn.

(SARAH walks up to them)

SARAH

Excuse me. I couldn't help overhearing. I'm Sarah. My husband is the proprietor. He's a bit gruff, but he's an honest man, for the most part.

(She pauses as she looks over MARY, as a mother might.)

SARAH (Cont.)

I see that you're due soon.

(apologetically)

We have no room, but I know a place nearby. It's used as a stable, but it's warm and dry, and there's bedding straw. Would that be okay, dear?

(MARY nods, smiling, very appreciative, and smiles up at JOSEPH.)

JOSEPH

Yes, thank you. Thank you for your kindness, ma'am.

SARAH

I'll send my son Benjamin to lead you there. He knows the way.

(MARY struggles to her
feet, hand on her stomach,
JOSEPH helping her.)

MARY

May the Lord remember your kindness and bless you.

SARAH

May He bless you and your baby, too.

(She goes, calling.)

Benjamin, Benjamin!

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IVScene 3

SETTING: A stable.

AT RISE: Night. In the darkness a baby cries out. Jesus was born a short time ago.

MARY

Joseph.

(JOSEPH gets up.)

Bring him to me.

(Light comes up as the moon comes out from behind clouds. JOSEPH gets the baby and gives him to MARY who is lying on the straw resting after having given birth earlier. The manger, used as a crib, is clearly seen. The scene is a sweet tableau of father, mother, and child; MARY comforting the baby, and JOSEPH admiring his family.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IVScene 4

SETTING: A hillside outside Bethlehem.

AT RISE: Night. A few SHEPHERDS are watching over their flocks at night. A bright light appears, the angel GABRIEL in the light. The SHEPHERDS are at first fearful, cowering.

GABRIEL

Do not be afraid. I bring you good new of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.

(Suddenly a HEAVENLY CHORUS appears--or is heard--praising God.)

HEAVENLY CHORUS

(singing)

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on
whom his favor rests.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on
whom his favor rests.

(The bright light fades,
then the angel GABRIEL and
the HEAVENLY CHORUS are
gone. After a minute, in
the silence, one of the
SHEPHERDS speaks.)

SHEPHERD

Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

(They gather their few belongings and leave quickly, excited, but not noisily.)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE

ACT IVScene 5

SETTING: The stable.

AT RISE: Night, a few hours later.
Moonlight filters down. MARY is awake tending the baby. When the SHEPHERDS arrive, excited, JOSEPH, not knowing their motives, moves quickly to intercept them.

JOSEPH

(barring the way)

Wait. What do you want here?

SHEPHERD

We beg your pardon, sir. We've come to see the Christ child.

JOSEPH

(cautiously, but intrigued)

How do you know of this?

SHEPHERD

We were in the hills nearby tending our flocks when a bright light came down and a messenger of the Lord told us that the Savior had been born in Bethlehem -- the sign would be a baby lying in a manger. So we've come to praise him.

(JOSEPH hesitates, amazed
by this revelation.)

MARY

(gently, but sure)

Joseph. Let them come in; let them see him.

(After a moment, JOSEPH
lets them pass and they
enter quietly and politely
to see the baby Jesus held
in MARY's arms.)

SHEPHERD

(in reverent awe)

Messiah.

(After admiring the Christ child, the SHEPHERDS leave glorifying and praising God to the audience, perhaps going up the aisles encouraging the people. After they have gone through the audience, all join in singing--the audience, too--"Silent Night" and/or other Christmas songs.)

THE END

Scriptures Quoted
in this playscript

Psalm 103:1-5a

Luke 1:28b

Luke 1:30b-38

Luke 1:42-56

Matthew 1:20b-21

Luke 2:10-12

Luke 2:14-15