

Eyewitness Christmas

A Candle Star Christmas Production

by
Shell Isenhoff

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ISBN-13: 978-1470186586

ISBN-10: 1470186586

Candle Star Press
www.michelleisenhoff.com

A Note to Directors:

Thank you for choosing to use a Candle Star Christmas Production in your church or school. My purpose in writing each play was to create a pageant that even small groups could produce simply. (They have all been produced in my own church of 200 people.) But stronger still was my desire to immerse viewers in a powerful story that left no question about the true meaning of Christmas. Christ's coming to dwell with man is only part of a whole gospel message, which is clearly presented in each script. My hope is that this play will help you spread that message in your community this holiday season.

Merry Christmas and break a leg! And to Jesus Christ be all the glory.

Shell Isenhoff

Find additional
Candle Star Christmas Productions
on my website:

www.michelleisenhoff.com

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Summary

In a humorous blend of biblical and modern culture, an aspiring journalist named Luke is trying to break into the periodical, *National Scroll*, with a fantasy Christmas article, but editor Liebowitz rejects it, demanding facts and authenticity. In a second attempt, Luke conducts four interviews to learn exactly what happened that first Christmas night. What he discovers changes everything.

Length

Candle Star Christmas Productions are designed to run between 45 minutes to an hour when music is included at scene breaks.

Cast of Characters

Narrator

Luke: A young aspiring journalist

Editor Liebowitz: Editor of the periodical, *National Scroll*

Betty: A geriatric Bethlehem innkeeper

Pythagorean: A highly educated wise man

Boswell: The red-neck sheep

Mathias: a shepherd

Stage Setup

Set up for this play is extremely minimal. It requires only a small table with a chair on either side for the interview process.

Prop List

A small table that will seat two people

2 chairs

A “recording device” (this can be the actual microphone)

A lamp

A sheaf of ten or twelve papers that is Luke’s “manuscript”

A small, rolled-up paper which is Mathias’ “pocket testament” scroll

A pen and paper

Music Recommendations

At the end of most scenes, an option break for music is inserted. This is left wide open on purpose, because the organizations that produce this play will have vastly different musical talents available. They may even choose to skip some or all of these opportunities. However, music offers a great distraction while switching scenes, and it provides a whole additional platform for worship. Here is a list of suggestions to fill these opportunities:

Songs sung by children's Sunday school classes or school classrooms

Vocal solos or groups performed by children or adults

Instrumental solos performed by school children or adults

Brief piano interludes

Traditional carols provide simple, recognizable tunes for instrumentals. Vocal arrangements might consist of carols as well, or be drawn from the variety of contemporary music available.

All is Well, written by Wayne Kirkpatrick and Michael W. Smith, makes a powerful conclusion to this play. It is available commercially by a variety of artists. The “canned” version may be played over the sound system, or it can be performed live by members of your organization.

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Scene One

Job interview. Luke and Liebowitz seated on opposite sides of a table.

Luke: Do I get the job, editor Liebowitz?

Liebowitz: So, you want for me to hire you to write for the *National Scroll*, but you give me such rubbish to print? And for Christmas?

Luke: Well, I thought to draw in a larger audience. Children perhaps.

Liebowitz: Little men in red suits, flying donkeys...bah! (*He tosses the manuscript.*) A journalist you are not! You need facts, eyewitnesses! Then produce for me a story that will touch the heart of your readers! This, this *embarrassment* is not worth the sheepskin to write it on!

Luke: (*Thoughtfully*) Eyewitnesses. Hmmm...

Optional break for music.

Scene Two

Luke now sits on the other side of the interview table. He'll stay there till the last scene. Betty knocks, enters, and sits opposite.

Luke: Please state your name and occupation into the microphone.

Betty taps it.

Luke: It's just a recording device, ma'am. For your story.

Betty: Oh, the gadgets young people think they need these days. Why, I remember when I was a girl...

Luke: Ma'am, your name?

Betty: Oh, yes. Silly me. I'm Betty. I run the Sleep Cheap Inn in Bethlehem. At least I did until I burned it down. And then my kids decided it was time to stick me away in this rest home. (*Spoken as an aside*) I think I'm the only one there who isn't crazy. But they do serve us a mean chocolate pudding in the evenings...

Luke: Betty, will you please tell me what you remember of the original Christmas night?

Betty: Let's see...that was the middle of the census, right? Whale of a busy week. Good ol' Caesar Augustus, making extra work for an old woman while he's being waited on hand and foot in his palace.

Luke: Do you recall the couple expecting the baby?

Betty: Oh, yes. I remember them. It's a shame, these unmarried young folks these days getting the cart before the horse.

Luke: No, ma'am. You misunderstand. The virgin Mary...

Betty: (*Snorts*) She didn't look like no virgin I've ever seen. Anyway, I was full up, but I sent them out back to the barn. Felt sorry for the gal. I remember carrying my own young ones. Right about that ninth month you start thinking the farmers are gunna paint you red.

Luke: The baby, ma'am...

Betty: Oh, yes, the baby. He made an appearance that night. Can't stop these things, you know. He was a loud one too. Nice set of lungs. Could hear him in the house. I always like a loud baby. Indication of good health. Take my Levi, for instance...

Luke: But wasn't there anything unusual about his birth?

Betty: Nope, nope. Except he got a lot of visitors real late at night. They came whooping up the road waking everybody up. They all crowded into my barn. Every last one of them. Not sure what they were doing out there.

Luke: Didn't you go out to investigate?

Betty: Naw, I needed my beauty sleep. Fifteen extra people to cook for, thanks to that no good Caesar. And I knew the lines at the market would be...

Luke: Thank you, Betty. You've been so helpful.

Exit Betty.

Luke: Nice lady, but a few donuts shy of a dozen. I need a more reliable source. Perhaps someone a bit more intelligent...

Optional break for music.

Scene Three

Pythagorean knocks, enters, and sits.

Luke: Please state your name and occupation into the microphone.

Pythagorean: My appellative is Pythagorean, my livelihood incorporates the systematic application of knowledge.

Luke: You're a wise man?

Pythagorean: Precisely. (*Pointing out microphone*) Your documentation devise appears substandard. This model has been superseded by the Xonic 785, with greater reception and enhanced reverberation.

Luke: Uh, I'll look into that. So, Mr. Pythagorean, can you tell me what you remember about the first Christmas?

Pythagorean: A stellar apparition appeared approximately 18 degrees west, southwest.

Luke: A star?

Pythagorean: Affirmative. My colleagues and I, upon deciphering its significance, traveled 2,547 miles, that's 4,245 kilometers if you prefer, to reverence the young Jewish Messiah, of whom ancient prophecy foretold. A journey which encompassed 837 days, 13 hours and...

Luke: There was a prophecy about the baby?

Pythagorean: Approximately 324.

Luke: No kidding. Did you see the baby?

Pythagorean: Affirmative. However, the earth achieved two complete orbits by the conclusion of our expedition.

Luke: Of course. Your journey took two years.

Pythagorean: Correct. Unfortunately, maximum sustained camel locomotion registers a mere 3 miles per hour, or if you prefer, that's 5...

Luke: ...kilometers an hour. Yes, yes. Thank you so much for your time, Mr. Pythagorean, but I really need someone who was there that first night.

Optional break for music.