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GODSEND

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written by

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Synopsis

A writer is pressed for time to finish the Christmas script he promised for his church's Christmas service. As he is trying to come up with something new and fresh, the story is told behind him through dance, music and narration, contrasting how we work so hard to communicate God's love with the beauty of how simple and wonderful it really is.

Cast of Characters

WRITER

NARRATOR

DANCER

MUSICIAN

ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: a tall café table in front of a scrim; a laptop and cell phone are on the table

At Rise: A WRITER sits at the table. Behind the scrim are a DANCER, a NARRATOR and a MUSICIAN. They are backlit and we see their silhouettes.

WRITER

(on the cell phone)

So, Frank - just to refresh - you need a four-minute piece for two actors, a dancer and a musician. Theme of GODSEND. Right?

(beat)

And this is the primary place in the service to retell the Christmas story.

(beat)

Got it. And you need the script by?

(beat)

Oooooh...that's gonna be a little tight.

(beat)

No, no, not at all. I'll find a way to get it done.

(beat)

Great. December twelfth. I'll shoot it to you via email.

(beat)

No problem.

(beat)

Ciao.

(hangs up the phone; gathers himself in front of his laptop)

WRITER *(self-important)*

The fourth of December. In the year two thousand six. Poised before his sleek and shiny Macintosh Powerbook, the intrepid young writer prepares to retell "The Greatest Story Ever Told" for a church in Orlando that has come asking for his help. How will he re-imagine and re-envision the tale of Christ's miraculous birth for these people? Set the story of the Savior in sonnet form? Verify the virgin birth through verse? Highlight Herod's hubris with some hip-hop?

The possibilities are endless. His talents – unrivaled.

And just as he prepares to glean new life from this timeless tale, he turns to his computer and finds...

A blank screen.

Writer's block.

A mental fog.

Silence.

(The MUSICIAN begins to play "Silent Night" and the DANCER interprets simultaneously with the WRITER's last word and underscores the following narration, ending abruptly when the WRITER speaks again.)

NARRATOR

God had been silent for many years – had not spoken to the people since the time of the prophets. His people wondered where He had gone, when he would send them the promised Messiah, how He would reveal Himself to them once again. In those days, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to a virgin named Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her: "Good morning! God be with you."

She was thoroughly shaken, but the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, and be called 'Son of the Highest'."

Mary said to the angel, "But I can't see how –"

WRITER

I’m supposed to get started here? It’s not like they haven’t heard this story a million times! Gotta keep it fresh! Gotta make it different! Gotta get inspired!

(DANCER interprets as NARRATOR speaks, stopping when WRITER speaks again.)

NARRATOR

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you. Therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, the Son of God.”

And Mary said, “Yes, I see it all now: I’m the Lord’s maid –”

WRITER

-ready to go.

December fifth. Going to start writing, but *first* – a quick power nap.

(puts his head down at the laptop)

(Simultaneous with the word “first,” the MUSICIAN begins playing and the DANCER interprets “The First Noel” and underscores the below narration and fades out as WRITER begins speaking again.)

NARRATOR

Mary was engaged to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, he discovered she was pregnant. Chagrined but noble, Joseph determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced.

While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream– and everything came clear. God’s angel spoke to him:

(WRITER’s phone rings.)

These pages have been removed
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WRITER

(beginning to type)

- as history has shown, was actually birthed in a cave.

(beat, then deleting)

Nope. Too stuffy.

NARRATOR

Jesus –

WRITER

Is there room for him in *your* heart?

(beat)

Too sappy.

NARRATOR

Jesus –

WRITER

-is the reason for the season?

(WRITER yelps in despair; MUSICIAN and DANCER stop.)

WRITER

December tenth!

(DANCER begins again, without MUSICIAN.)

NARRATOR

After Jesus was born — this was during Herod's kingship — a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find the newborn King of the Jews – the one that was prophesied? We observed a star in the eastern sky – a light in the darkness - that signaled his birth and have come to worship him."

King Herod was terrified of losing his throne and gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

NARRATOR (CONT)

They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly."

Herod arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he told them: "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

But in reality, Herod hoped to gain information that would help in find and exterminate the kingly child who had called his power into question.

(DANCER stops as WRITER begins talking.)

WRITER

(on the phone again)

It's ridiculous! If they actually wanted something good, they should have called me a month ago! I can't just come up with something brilliant in two weeks! I've been working on it steadily and I still feel like I'm in the dark!

(beat; even more incensed)

Mom, that's not the part where you were supposed to lecture me on time management! I've been managing my time fine; I just can't come up with a good idea so fast! This isn't about *me* as a writer! I'm a *good writer*! This script is just messing up an otherwise perfect track record.

(beat)

No.

(beat)

No.

(beat)

Listen, I don't wanna talk about it any more. I'm gonna call them and tell them to kill the piece – put something else in place. Bye.

(beat)

I'll talk to you later, Mom.

(beat)

Mom.

WRITER (CONT)

(beat)

Come on!

(WRITER hangs up.)

(The MUSICIAN begins playing "O Come All Ye Faithful" and will do so until the end of the piece. As part of the continuing dance, a DANCER will begin slowly removing the scrim during the following, to have it completely revealed as noted below.)

WRITER

(totally dejected)

December twelfth. Due date.

(picks up the phone and dials)

NARRATOR

There were shepherds watching over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event. A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master and who has come for everyone, worldwide."

WRITER

(on phone)

Hi there, Frank. How are you doing?

(beat)

Great. Hey, listen, about that script –

NARRATOR

The shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing.

WRITER

I can have another day or so? I was a little worried I'd ruin your service.

NARRATOR

Godsend: from the Middle English, meaning "God's message." An unexpected thing or event that is particularly welcome and timely, as if sent by God.

WRITER

Again, I'm very sorry, but I really appreciate your patience with me.

(beat)

Yes, yes. I think I know exactly where to begin.

(beat)

Ciao.

(hangs up the phone and slowly turns back to his laptop; the DANCER has by now completely revealed the NARRATOR and MUSICIAN and herself)

NARRATOR

We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

WRITER

(begins writing, getting quieter and quieter)

In those days, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to a virgin named Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her: "Good morning! God be with you."

She was thoroughly shaken, but the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, and be called 'Son of the Highest.'



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