

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT THAT GOT AWAY WITH IT
By Scott Icenhower

(Excerpts may be used royalty free for auditions.)

AUDITION #1 -- for 1 teen, 9 children

In this scene, Pam has taken the children to the police station to practice the Christmas play "Bethlehem CSI."

(AT RISE: In a conference room at the police station. A piano or keyboard is in place. The PIANIST enters, leading the CHORUS. The chorus remains at the piano for the duration of the pageant. PAM enters with a manger, sets it center stage and then addresses the audience.)

PAM: Thank you all for coming to our dress rehearsal of BETHLEM CSI, written by me, Pam Fentress. This is like an out-of-town tryout before going to Broadway...or in our case the church tonight. I would like to thank the academy...the police academy for letting us use their conference room. The kids have worked really hard on this play, and Mrs. Smith at the piano has been a saint. So, sit back and... Oh, please turn down the volume on your police radios. Thank you. Please sit back, relax, and enjoy BETHLEM CSI.

Bethlehem CSI

(An empty room with a manger DSC. As the CHORUS begins singing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," the MAID enters and begins cleaning the carpet. Before the first verse is over MAXIMUS, OCTAVIA, CLETUS, BOB and two LAB TECHNICIANS burst into the room, stopping the chorus mid-verse.)

MAXIMUS: *(Spies the maid.)* Hold it right there. Who are you?

MAID: Housekeeping.

MAXIMUS: What are you doing here?

MAID: Housekeeping.

MAXIMUS: Who sent you?

MAID: Housekeeping.

MAXIMUS: Can you say anything other than
“housekeeping”?

MAID: Yes, but I’ll need better questions.

MAXIMUS: Sorry. We’re Bethlehem CSI. I’m officer
Maximus.

OCTAVIA: *(Steps forward.)* Octavia.

CLETUS: *(Steps forward.)* Cletus.

BOB: *(Steps forward.)* Bob.

MAXIMUS: He’s Greek.

(The TWO LAB TECHNICIANS step forward together, but before they can say their names, MAXIMUS interrupts them.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont’d.)* And two lab technicians who shall remain nameless.

(The TWO LAB TECHS roll their eyes and step back in line.)

OCTAVIA: We’re going to have to ask you to stop cleaning this room. It’s now a crime scene.

MAID: A crime scene? What are you talking about?

CLETUS: Actually, it’s a missing person case.

MAID: Who are you looking for?

MAXIMUS: We’re looking for - one Jesus of Nazareth.

MAID: Have you tried Nazareth?

MAXIMUS: He’s not there yet.

OCTAVIA: We have reason to believe he was born here.

CLETUS: Can you tell us what happened in this room?

(The CHORUS begins to softly hum “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” underscoring the following conversation.)

MAID: They usually don't rent this room. It's got a bad view.
But from what I understand, the manager gave it to this young couple.

BOB: Why was that?

MAID: She was pregnant. He felt sorry for them I guess.

OCTAVIA: What were they doing in town?

MAID: They were here because of the census.

(The MUSIC stops.)

MAXIMUS: Then what happened?

MAID: Next thing I know there were wise men visiting, shepherds and sheep tracking dirt everywhere...

MAXIMUS: Bob, get me a wise man.

BOB: In this town?

MAXIMUS: Don't be a wise guy. Look on the east side. That's where they live. *(BOB exits.)* Cletus, bring me some shepherds for questioning. *(CLETUS exits.)* Caesar...

(OCTAVIA goes over and grabs the maid.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont'd.)* Not seize her, Caesar – Caesar Augustus. He issued a decree that all the world should be taxed. So, they probably did come here for the census. Her story makes sense.

(The MAID has jerked her arm away from OCTAVIA and is walking out the door.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont'd.)* Seize her!

OCTAVIA: What about him boss?

MAXIMUS: No, not Caesar, Seize her! She's leaving. I need you to get her complete statement.

(OCTAVIA follows the MAID out of the door.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont'd. To LAB TECHS.)* All right, people, check this place for clues.

(LAB TECHS put on rubber gloves, get their equipment and start looking.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont'd.)* I hate working holidays.

LAB TECH 1: *(Crossing to manger.)* Sir, I've found something.

(MAXIMUS crosses and looks into the manger.)

LAB TECH 1: *(Cont'd.)* It appears to be swaddling clothes. Apparently she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in this manger.

MAXIMUS: Good work. Bag it and tag it.

(LAB TECH 1 picks up a cloth from inside the manger with tongs and starts to put it in a bag.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont'd.)* Do that outside, will ya?

(LAB TECH 1 carries cloth and bag outside. CLETUS enters with a GROUP OF SHEPHERDS.)

CLETUS: I got 'em, boss. Okay, tell him what you told me.

(The CHORUS hums "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" as underscoring for the following conversation.)

SHEPHERDS: *(In unison.)* We were abiding in the field, keeping watch over our flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon us, and the glory of the Lord shone around us and we were afraid.

MAXIMUS: Makes sense. Then what?

SHEPHERDS: *(In unison.)* And the angel said unto us, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

(The MUSIC ends.)

CLETUS: And when did this happen exactly?

SHEPHERDS: *(In unison.)* Last Thursday night, about 8:30.

MAXIMUS: All right, get them out of here.

(CLETUS and the SHEPHERDS exit.)

MAXIMUS: *(Cont'd. To LAB TECH 2.)* Have you found anything yet?

LAB TECH 2: Just some traces of frankincense and a little myrrh.

MAXIMUS: A little more what?

LAB TECH 2: Not more, myrrh.

MAXIMUS: Whatever. Get the maid to clean up that myrrh.

LAB TECH 2: That would make her a myrrh maid. Good one, boss.

MAXIMUS: All right, go outside and check around.

(LAB TECH 2 exits. BOB and WISE MAN enter.)

BOB: Boss, I got a wise man for you.

MAXIMUS: What's your name?

WISE MAN: Alec.

MAXIMUS: All right, Alec. My boss, King Herod, tells me three of your kind came to town looking for the King of the Jews. What tipped them off?

WISE MAN: They had seen his star in the East.

BOB: And exactly why were they coming here?

WISE MAN: To worship him.

MAXIMUS: And how did they know to come to this place?

(With big fanfare the CHORUS sings "A star, a star dancing in the night, with a tail as big as a kite – with a tail as big as a kite" from "Do You Hear What I Hear?" The WISE MAN gives the chorus a dirty look and they stop singing immediately.)

WISE MAN: I don't know if they came here or not.

MAXIMUS: Oh yeah? We found traces of frankincense and myrrh all over this room. That's your calling card, isn't it? So, I'll ask you again. How did they know to come to this place?

WISE MAN: I guess the star that went before them stood over where the young child was...like they were singing.

BOB: Don't be a smart Alec.

WISE MAN: I can't help it.

(LAB TECH 2 enters.)

LAB TECH 2: Hey, boss, you won't believe this. There is stardust all over the roof. Just like a star stood over this place.

MAXIMUS: *(Looking at WISE MAN.)* Let him go.

BOB: *(Escorting WISE MAN out the door.)* You're going back to your own country another way. *(THEY exit.)*

LAB TECH 2: And there's something else. *(Holds up a feather.)*

MAXIMUS: What's that?

LAB TECH 2: Angel feather. Messenger variety, I'd say. Didn't those shepherds mention angels?

MAXIMUS: They sure did. This place has miracle written all over it.

AUDITION #2 -- for 3 m.

In this scene, Pastor Taylor unexpectedly meets Girby in jail.

GIRBY: *(Concentrating more on his card game, but is willing to make some small talk.)* A preacher, huh? This ought to be good. What you in here for?

PASTOR TAYLOR: Huh? Oh, you heard of separation of church and state?

GIRBY: Yeah.

PASTOR TAYLOR: Well, this is what happens if you don't keep them separate.

GIRBY: Lame. *(Goes back to playing cards.)*

PASTOR TAYLOR: So, what are you in here for? (*GIRBY doesn't respond.*) My name is Taylor, Jack Taylor. I'm a—

GIRBY: Pastor. Yeah, I heard you come in. (*Goes back to playing cards.*)

PASTOR TAYLOR: Well, what's your name? (*GIRBY doesn't respond.*) Just tell me your name and I leave you alone.

GIRBY: Clonch.

PASTOR TAYLOR: Girby Clonch?

GIRBY: How do you know me?

PASTOR TAYLOR: Your sister Beulah wanted me to talk to you.

GIRBY: She did, huh? How do you know her?

PASTOR TAYLOR: She's a member of my church. And I figured a brother of this woman has got to be a strong-willed man who could get through anything. So let me talk to this guy 'cause Beulah's killing me.

GIRBY: (*Starts laughing, stops playing cards, and turns to PASTOR TAYLOR.*) I might could give you a few tips. Boy, she's been a disappointment to the family.

PASTOR TAYLOR: I can believe that.

GIRBY: Taylor... The chaplain back up at the prison said a preacher named Taylor wanted to talk to me. How'd you know I'd be here?

PASTOR TAYLOR: I didn't know that—

GIRBY: (*Almost thinking out loud.*) Nobody's ever gone to that kinda trouble. Got yourself arrested for somethin' lame just so you could talk to me?

PASTOR TAYLOR: So, it's okay if we talk?

GIRBY: All right. You play cards?

PASTOR TAYLOR: Gin Rummy and Go Fish.

(*OFFICER MONTGOMERY enters.*)

OFFICER MONTGOMERY: (*Interrupting.*) Pastor, you want anything now?

PASTOR TAYLOR: I want to apologize to you and thank you for this wonderful Christmas gift.

OFFICER MONTGOMERY: What gift?

PASTOR TAYLOR: I'd been asking for more time during the holidays, and God used you to answer my prayer.

OFFICER MONTGOMERY: *(Confused.)* He sure works in mysterious ways, don't He?

PASTOR TAYLOR: He sure does. Merry Christmas to you.

OFFICER MONTGOMERY: Merry Christmas. *(As exits.)* Stir crazy in under five minutes. That's got to be a record.

GIRBY: I bet that chaplain told you about movin' me over here 'cause of the bad plumbing. *(Starts gathering his cards and reshuffles them.)* Gin Rummy and Go Fish. Sounds like you got grandkids with that kind of skillset.

(At this moment all the CHILDREN rush in calling "Pastor Jack" or "We're here to bust you out of jail." They grab hold of the bars and won't let go.)

GIRBY: *(Cont'd.)* How many grandkids you got?

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