

“Glory Night”

by
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What This heart-touching monologue highlights the wonder of God shining His glory on shepherds—the outcasts of society.

Themes: Christmas, Glory, Grace, Love, Redemption, Jesus’ birth, Shepherds, Angels

Who Bethanna

When At the time of Jesus’ birth

Costumes and Props Simple tunic or dress
Laundry tub filled with clothes
Large rocks
Old blanket

Why Luke 2: 8-20

How Bethanna is a shepherd’s wife and mother of three who grew up as a respected merchant’s daughter in Bethlehem. She is a warm, intelligent young mother who chose to marry Zach, a shepherd, even though it lowered her status in Bethlehem society.

Create simple staging with rocks for doing the laundry and watching the stars just outside the door of their cottage.

Time Approximately 9-10 minutes

Bethanna enters from door of cottage with laundry basket.

It took so long to get the children to bed last night! *(Puts tub down and washes children's clothes as she speaks)* Tobias couldn't settle down. Kiva asked more questions than I had answers. Sammy drooled and fussed so much I expected him to wake up with half a dozen new teeth. *(Shakes head and sighs)*

But you know: None of that matters now. *(Stops washing clothes. Speaks in excited tones)* Not after what I saw last night! I'm telling you: It was a night of wonders and marvels and glories beyond...GLORIOUS!

I don't even know how to describe it.

I mean...I'm just a shepherd's wife. *(Shrugs and resumes washing clothes)* And shepherds are treated like nobodies. People think we're slackers and thieves, the lowest of the low who have no say in society.

I say "we" on purpose. The kids and I feel the sting of being rejected just like Zach does, even though I grew up in Bethlehem where my father was a respected merchant.

I'm the same person I always was: Bethanna, named for my Nana and the village of Bethlehem. *(Stops washing clothes and acts out what she's saying)* But now, when I take the kids into town to get supplies, some uppity town mother looks down her pointy nose and says, "Oh, Bethanna, I haven't seen you for so long. You married Zach, didn't you? And now you have three children and live out by the shepherds' fields, don't you?"

Then, before I can answer, she flashes a snide smile and walks away, oozing pious pity as she adds, "You poor dear...I can't imagine how you stand the stench way out there."

(Animated and angry) Oh, they make me so mad! *(Rinses clothes vigorously; then wrings them out and places them on rocks to dry)* If you want to know, I'm glad I don't live in town where I'd have to see them every day. Here I have breathing room. The children run and play. And Zach comes home to see us more often because we live close to the fields.

Now, how did I get off on all that? It's so—so not important compared to what happened last night.

The evening started off normally. Zach was taking care of the sheep and lambs, just like his family's done for generations. I was tending our little flock at home, just like I do every night. *(Stops washing and goes to door to check on the children)*

By the time I got the children to sleep on their mats, I needed space and a place to think. But there was none in our little cottage, so I found an old blanket and came outside. *(Picks up blanket and goes to a flat, empty rock)*

(Sits on rock and leans back) I sat on my favorite rock and gasped with delight as I watched a million stars dance across a dark blue sky. Ah, I was richer than any of those hoity-toity ladies in town!

Then suddenly, the sky burst into gold...a rich, liquid gold that spilled over onto the hill where Zach and his friends graze their sheep.

The gold glowed from within, a brilliant pulsing light that grew brighter and brighter until it blinded me. *(Covers eyes and turns away)* Terrified, I turned away, burying my face in part of the blanket while winding the rest around my shaking body. *(Wraps self in blanket)*

(Frightened and passionate) What was happening? Was it fire from heaven? A million shooting stars cascading to earth? A volcano erupting from deep within?

And Zach? What about Zach? Was he all right? Had he been consumed by the golden explosion? I covered and shook with agonizing fear.

Until I heard a voice. *(Becomes calm)* A rich, resonant voice saying, "Don't be afraid." Or at least, that's what I thought I heard. The voice was so compelling that I peeled off a corner of my blanket cocoon and peeked up at the heavens. *(Peels off part of blanket and looks up slowly)*

(Throws off blanket, stands, and points to sky) There, against the glowing gold stood something majestically white.

The voice continued, but I only caught a few words. "Good news. Bethlehem. Baby?"

While I tried to piece the words together, a vast host of other majestic white beings swarmed in around the first one. The sky exploded with an expanse of movement and a symphony of melodious sounds. *(Gestures in wonder)*

Harps...flutes...trumpets...drums...rushing water...whispering wind...singing stars...and every other delightful sound of the universe intertwined with wonder-filled words!

"Glory...glory...glory to God..." rang out repeatedly, punctuated with a refrain promising peace.

Peace? Oh, how I needed that!

And glory? Shepherds know nothing of that. But I longed for glory.

(Jumps up and lifts arms in praise) I jumped up and joined the heavenly chorus: "Glory...glory...glory to God!" Warmth and joy coursed through me as I praised God with arms uplifted and body swaying with the rhythm of the universe.

It was a Glory Night where I felt as if I'd discovered the ultimate joy in living!

Somewhere in the midst of my jubilation, a small cry pricked the corner of my consciousness. *(Gradually stops swaying. Cups ear. Listens carefully. Shows recognition)* It was Sammy! My Sammy.

Strangely, as much as I hated to leave the glow of celestial glory, I felt a surge of mother love sweep through me. Newly energized by hope and joy, I went into the cottage and scooped up Sammy.

(Acts out scene as if comforting Sammy) "Now, now, it's all right, my sweet Sammy," I cooed, rubbing his gums and rocking him back and forth as I walked. Back and forth, back and forth. Softly, I sang the glory song to him: "Glory...glory...glory to God...and peace, sweet peace...to you, my little one...and everyone...everywhere."

Sammy relaxed and slept as long as I held him and sang to him. But when I tried to put him down, he cried. I would have collapsed from weariness if it hadn't been for my Glory Night.

I don't know how much time passed, but I was still rocking and walking Sammy when Zach burst through the door. He shouted, "Bethanna! You'll never believe what happened!"

(Act out the excitement) Then he wrapped Sammy and me in a big exuberant hug that crushed the breath out of me...the kind of hug that had made me love this big, brawny, brown-eyed outdoor man in the first place.

As soon as I could breathe again, I murmured, "Shhh...you'll wake the children."

"And why not?" he asked. "There's never been a night like tonight! You don't want them to miss it, do you?"

Golden skies, heavenly beings, and marvelous music swirled through my head. I knew he was right.

Of course, it didn't really matter what I thought because the children were already awake, running to Zach and yelling, "Daddy! Daddy!"

When Zach finally hugged and kissed each of us into a story-listening mode, he told of the golden sky and the shepherds' terror. He described the armies of angels who joyously proclaimed God's glory and promise of peace.

He said a great angel appeared who told the shepherds not to be afraid because there was good news! The Savior...our Messiah...had been born in Bethlehem and was lying in a manger wrapped snugly in strips of cloth.

Troubled, Tobias asked, "Isn't a manger a place to feed animals?"

"Exactly right," Zach said. "The angel gave us a special sign so we could find the baby. After all, who else do you know who was placed in a manger after he was born?"

Zach smiled. Tobias smiled. I smiled as I relived it.

Oh, it had been a Glory Night! Zach had no idea I knew about it, but he was so excited, I didn't want to interrupt him.

Besides, Zach's night had gone far beyond mine. He and the other shepherds had actually seen... and worshiped...the Baby Messiah!

Imagine! God chose shepherds to be the very first visitors to see the Savior of the world!

Suddenly, I was overcome with the wonder of it all!

God poured out a rich golden glory that spilled over onto the shepherds' fields.

God sent angels...ranks and ranks of angels...to announce the Savior's birth to shepherds. Shepherds, mind you!

God sent shepherds to Bethlehem so they would be the first visitors to see the Savior of the world! Shepherds like my Zach who care for the flocks that supply sacrificial lambs for the temple.

God did all that for shepherds!

And for me. And for our children.

Meanwhile, those fancy town ladies, snugly snuggled under their fine comforters, slept through it all!

"Oh, Zach," I said, nestling close to his big heart. "You were so right! There's never been a night like this!"

PURCHASE

Zach pulled us to our feet and all five of us—Sammy on Zach's shoulders—started circle dancing and singing, "Glory...glory...glory to God...and peace on earth."

Oh, it was a Glory Night!

A Glory Night filled with transcendent glory: God's glory!

A Glory Night when God reached down from heaven to wrap Himself in the tender flesh of a human baby destined to be the Savior of the world.

A Glory Night when God chose shepherds—shepherds, mind you—as the first ones to welcome God's gift of love and grace!

Glory...glory...GLORY TO GOD...for such a GLORIOUS GLORY NIGHT!

Light out.

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