

STARBRIGHT

by William C. Dixon



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Starbright

A nontraditional Christmas Pageant

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

With Costume Suggestions

Narrator — The Narrator sets the scene and holds the story together, and therefore should be played by someone with a good, expressive reading voice. May be dressed in black or street clothing.

Shepherd — Someone with an innocent, idealistic enthusiasm and a sense of wonder. May be played by either male or female, but must possess a strong voice. Perhaps someone younger, but could be adapted for an older shepherd with a more mature outlook on the world. In this case, Starbright may adjust his wish suggestions accordingly. May wear traditional robe and staff, or contemporary farm clothes — jeans and a plaid shirt.

Starbright — A celestial being with a sassy attitude. This busy, overworked heavenly host (or hostess) has been assigned the menial task of granting wishes on Christmas Eve, but he or she would really rather have been doing some last-minute shopping or icing gingerbread cookies. Starbright might be cast as a heavyweight — large person, dressed all in white, including hat or tiara, and a magic, wish-granting wand. Sequins are always a nice touch for a big star; perhaps a vest or bow tie. If Starbright is cast as a female, load on lots of showy fake diamond bangles, bobbles, and bling. If he's a guy, a flashy pinky ring might be a nice touch. Or you may choose to present the character as a busy bureaucrat in business clothes. Having a cell phone in hand, and a Three Stooges expression on his face would be a plus.

Starbright's cell phone ring tone is programmed to play a phrase of a snappy Christmas tune, "The First Noel," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "Here Comes Santa Claus," or perhaps "The Grinch."

Starbright suggests "Melvin" for the name of the puppy. You may substitute your pastor's name, or any current celebrity, sports star, or politician currently in the public consciousness.

Joseph — A road-weary carpenter traveling with his young bride to pay taxes. May be dressed as a contemporary carpenter with bib overalls, Carhartts, work shirt, and work boots, or with the traditional striped bathrobe and sandals.

Mary — A very pregnant teenager, tired and sore from her long journey on a donkey. She is costumed either in modern polyester pregnancy clothes from Goodwill, or the traditional hooded bathrobe garb. Her appearance should be consistent with Joseph's. The donkey's presence may be implied by mime, or by using a cardboard cutout or other prop.

Magi — Wise folks, professors perhaps, from the East. Traditionally, although not biblically, one of them (Balthazar) was African, another was Asian, and another European. (The Bible doesn't even say that there were three, so a great deal of latitude may be used in the casting.) They may be dressed in scholars' academic robes (perhaps with backpacks and cameras), Bedouin garb, Western riding wear (including boots and Stetsons,) or as traditional wise royalty.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Starbright is a zany, light-hearted, occasionally irreverent drama for use during Advent or Christmas Eve. The play is an alternative to the traditional fare presented in this season, which is sometimes tired, worn, and predictable, and often bereft of charm and wonder. The drama may be done as a simple reading without costumes, or as a fully staged production, complete with cutout cardboard donkey, sheep, and camels. The original Christmas event was a startling revision of the traditional Scriptures of the Old Testament. *Starbright* uses the iconic forms of the Nativity and presents them in surprising new ways in order to transform the imagination.

Starbright may be staged in a variety of settings: on a school stage, in a retirement home dining hall, or a church sanctuary. The characters and costumes may be portrayed very traditionally, or by using a more modern interpretation. Either male or female performers may play the roles of Starbright, the Narrator, the Shepherd, and the Magi. Groups are encouraged to stage the drama making the best use of their own unique gifts and resources.

Starbright needs a laptop computer and a cell phone, and the wise men need gifts. These are the main props.

Lighting may be used effectively in this drama. Those without an elaborate lighting system may use hand-held spotlights, table and floor lamps, or even flashlights. Areas are lit as the actors are On-Stage (excepting the Narrator), and darkened when the actors are Off-Stage.

The drama takes place in five different areas. The Narrator reads from a darkened podium with a reading light. Shepherd is played from Stage Right. Starbright is Upstage Center. The Magi are Stage Left. Joseph and Mary may move down the center aisle and at the end of their dialogue are Downstage Center to form the beginnings of a crèche scene.

The presentation may be preceded by a reading of the appropriate traditional Scriptures for the season and accompanied by familiar carols such as "Silent Night," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "Joy to the World," etc.

(The stage is darkened as the drama begins and the PLAYERS move silently to their places.)

NARRATOR: In a faraway place very long ago, a young shepherd boy stood alone on the hills, guarding his sheep as the late afternoon sun faded into twilight. (Spotlight fades up on SHEPHERD.) In the distance, the silhouette of a small town began to disappear into the dusk. A bell tolled solemnly from the temple, calling the people to evening prayers (Off-Stage, a bell sounds) and formally marking the beginning of nightfall. The sheep huddled together uneasily as the dark shadows of the evening crept across the nearby valleys. The eerie call of a hidden owl, (Off-Stage, whoooo) and the chilling howl of distant wolves (Off-Stage, a frightening howl) caused the little shepherd boy to shiver with fear.

SHEPHERD: (Trying to convince himself) I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid.

NARRATOR: The shepherd boy said to himself, over and over again. A sudden wind whistled through the valleys, ruffling the grasses and stirring the leaves of ancient trees. Earthy smells, damp wool, and the breath of beasts danced with unsettled dust and the sweet smoke from distant hearths to scent the dry December air with mystery. The heavens glowed a deep amethyst, and the slim silver sliver of a moon hung just above the pale horizon to the west. Then suddenly, in the infant darkness of the twilight sky, a star appeared. (STARBRIGHT, Center Stage, opens his laptop computer, which illuminates his face. He begins to type there in his modest cubicle.)

SHEPHERD: It's a star! (Shading his eyes and looking towards STARBRIGHT) Or at least I think it's a star.

NARRATOR: It *was* a star! Now emerging from hidden depths to take its place in a familiar constellation, that bright, bright star smiled a twinkling sparkle to reaffirm its celestial presence in that evening's sky. (Lights fade up on STARBRIGHT.) Almost automatically, as if he were unable to contain all his hopes, the little

- 1 Shepherd began to recite timeworn words he had
 2 learned long ago.
- 3 SHEPHERD: (*Folding his hands together and closing his eyes, as*
 4 *if in prayer*) Star light, star bright, first star I've seen
 5 tonight ... (*STARBRIGHT's cell phone rings, but he has*
 6 *evidently misplaced it. He searches for it as it rings.*)
- 7 NARRATOR: The boy said almost automatically, as if
 8 chanting an ancient evening prayer. The Shepherd was
 9 a dreamer. He envisioned many wonderful things, like
 10 a stone house for his family. Or a safe place for the
 11 flocks to graze, where hungry wolves didn't prowl in
 12 silent packs among the shadows of the grape arbors and
 13 olive groves.
- 14 SHEPHERD: I wish I may, I wish I might ...
- 15 NARRATOR: But often this lad envisioned even grander
 16 things, like world peace, human liberty, and justice for
 17 everyone.
- 18 STARBRIGHT: (*Still searching*) Where is that stupid cell
 19 phone? Oh, no. This is going to be one of those nights. I
 20 can feel it already.
- 21 NARRATOR: Tonight, he wished upon that first appearing
 22 star, as he had hundreds of nights before. But this night
 23 was a special night; a numinous night, full of mystery,
 24 wonder, and awe. A night where urgent longing, hearts'
 25 desires, and the deepest passions of the human soul
 26 come forth into being, and possibility is born anew.
 27 This was a very special night indeed.
- 28 SHEPHERD: ... Have the wish I wish tonight.
- 29 STARBRIGHT: (*Finding the phone at last, he answers.*)
 30 Starbright. How may I help you?
- 31 NARRATOR: And to answer that wish, on this very special
 32 night, a voice was heard among the winds.
- 33 STARBRIGHT: Helloooo? (*Studying the phone impatiently*) Can
 34 you hear me now?
- 35 SHEPHERD: (*Frightened*) Is someone there?
- 36 STARBRIGHT: Ah, there we go. (*To SHEPHERD*) And you
 37 shall have your wish, young man. Tonight!
- 38 SHEPHERD: What? Who is it? (*Aside, unconvincingly*) I'm not

- 1 afraid. I'm not afraid.
- 2 STARBRIGHT: It is I, Starbright. You wished a wish?
- 3 SHEPHERD: Yes. Why, yes I did. But I didn't mean anything
- 4 by it, honest. That was just a poem that I learned from
- 5 my Gramma. (*Aside*) I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid.
- 6 STARBRIGHT: Works for me. So, what's your wish?
- 7 SHEPHERD: But ... (*Aside, still trying to reassure himself*) I'm
- 8 not afraid. Really, I'm not!
- 9 STARBRIGHT: Well, come on, then. Out with it. Tell me your
- 10 wish.
- 11 SHEPHERD: Oh, I don't know, really. I don't know what to
- 12 wish for.
- 13 STARBRIGHT: Well, I suppose it could be something like ...
- 14 a bag of candy. (*Waits politely for an answer.*) Some organic
- 15 fruit, perhaps? Maybe a new toy. An iPod. You know,
- 16 that sort of thing.
- 17 SHEPHERD: Oh, well ...
- 18 STARBRIGHT: Whatever you want.
- 19 SHEPHERD: Really?
- 20 STARBRIGHT: Anything. Think Toys-R-Us. Picture the
- 21 Sharper Image catalogue. Neiman Marcus, even. Sky's
- 22 the limit, little fella. Go for it.
- 23 SHEPHERD: But I never imagined my wish would actually
- 24 come true.
- 25 STARBRIGHT: (*Becoming impatient*) Well, it just might not if
- 26 you don't make up your mind pretty quick here. Look,
- 27 I'm really kinda busy right now. Between winter
- 28 solstice, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and all those birthday
- 29 candles being blown out, there's a whole lot of wishing
- 30 going on out there.
- 31 SHEPHERD: I'm sorry, sir, but I've never had a wish
- 32 granted before. This is important. I want to make sure I
- 33 wish for the right thing. (*STARBRIGHT's phone rings*
- 34 *again.*)
- 35 STARBRIGHT: Sorry, it's the other line. Gotta catch this
- 36 call. Hold that thought, will ya, kid?
- 37 NARRATOR: At the same time, just west of where that very
- 38 shepherd shivered in indecisive anticipation, a

1 determined young man wearily trudged a dusty trail
2 towards a distant village in order to pay his taxes. (*A*
3 *spotlight illuminates MARY and JOSEPH.*) Beside him,
4 riding a humble donkey, was his partner and
5 companion on the road, a young woman — scarcely
6 more than a girl — weighed down by the burdens of her
7 travel. The two push on bravely while exchanging
8 intimate pleasantries about the unexpected little trials
9 of their journey.

10 MARY: Are we there yet?

11 JOSEPH: Not too much farther. (*Pointing ahead*) I think I can
12 see the lights of the city just ahead there.

13 MARY: Oh man, I sure hope we get there soon, Joseph. I'm
14 tired and I'm sore and I'm cold. And I'm starting to get
15 cranky.

16 JOSEPH: You're tired?! At least you have the donkey.

17 MARY: Listen, this beast is no cushy limo, lemme tell ya. I
18 feel like I've been rear-ended by a semi. And I'm
19 starting to have this weird craving for pickled herring.

20 JOSEPH: It won't be much longer, Mary. I just wish we had
21 somewhere to stay when we get there.

22 MARY: Hey, don't go bringing that up again. We've been
23 over all this before. I tried. You know I tried. I got us
24 nice reservations at the Holiday Inn in beautiful
25 downtown Jerusalem. A wonderful suite, right beside
26 the pool. With breakfast. And forty percent off with the
27 coupon. Eighty-inch-screen TV and everything, so you
28 could watch your Bowl games.

29 JOSEPH: Yeah, great. A lot of good that'll do us in
30 Bethlehem.

31 MARY: It's not my fault. I thought you said we were
32 supposed to pay the taxes in Jerusalem. That's the
33 capital, isn't it? And by the time I Googled Bethlehem,
34 the entire town was booked solid. Christmas season,
35 you know.

36 JOSEPH: Next time I'll make the reservations myself.
37 (*Pouting*) We'll probably end up having to sleep in some
38 stable somewhere.

- 1 MARY: We're on the waiting list at Motel 6.
- 2 JOSEPH: Just what I always wanted. My son, born in a
3 barn.
- 4 MARY: Yo, Joe, this ain't exactly a picnic for me, either.
- 5 NARRATOR: Hardly the sweet murmurings of romantic
6 young lovers on their honeymoon. But finally, at sunset,
7 the two weary travelers pause for a brief rest stop.
8 *(JOSEPH moves out of the spotlight a short distance away*
9 *while MARY stretches and rubs her back.)* Joseph feeds the
10 donkey a handful of grain and goes off to check his
11 e-mail. Mary scans the twilight sky as the last scarlet
12 strands of sunset fade into azure when suddenly, on the
13 deepening blue of the distant horizon, a faint but
14 distinct glimmer sparkles through the hazy dusk of the
15 evening sky.
- 16 MARY: It's a star! Oh look, honey — first star of the evening.
- 17 JOSEPH: *(Still pouting)* Probably just a planet. Venus,
18 maybe.
- 19 NARRATOR: Yet the weary young traveler, feeling alone
20 and far from home, finds solace in a familiar childhood
21 ritual.
- 22 MARY: *(Folding her hands together)* Star light, star bright, first
23 star I've seen tonight. *(The cell phone rings and lights fade*
24 *up on STARBRIGHT as he fumbles to answer.)*
- 25 STARBRIGHT: Yeah, Starbright here. Wishes granted. How
26 may I help you?
- 27 MARY: I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish
28 tonight.
- 29 STARBRIGHT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Same ole, same ole. OK,
30 you got it right, sweetie. What's on your list tonight?
- 31 MARY: *(Confused)* Wha ... ? *(Looking toward JOSEPH)*
- 32 STARBRIGHT: What's on you mind? What is your heart's
33 desire?
- 34 MARY: Well, I know it looks like I've gotten off to a rather
35 bad start and all, but I really have the highest hopes for
36 this child of mine.
- 37 STARBRIGHT: Every mother does.
- 38 MARY: No, honestly! This baby is special. I'm not sure you'd

- 1 understand, but I know this child is destined for
2 greatness.
- 3 STARBRIGHT: (*Condescendingly*) Of course you do. But could
4 you be a little more specific about your wish? Narrow it
5 down a bit? Early admission to Harvard Medical
6 School, perhaps?
- 7 MARY: I mean it! I believe he may even become the Savior of
8 the world.
- 9 STARBRIGHT: (*Aside*) Ya gotta love a Jewish mother! (*To*
10 *MARY*) Oh, I'm sure your little darling has great
11 potential, but I need something a little more concrete.
- 12 MARY: Oh, I don't know. (*She rubs her back.*)
- 13 STARBRIGHT: Come on, will ya? I have to fill out this
14 purchase order.
- 15 MARY: I just wish we could find a place to stay, have my
16 baby, and all this would be over. Soon!
- 17 STARBRIGHT: Ooooh-kayyyy. I can arrange that. Shouldn't
18 be too difficult. Let me just ... (*Text-messaging his*
19 *instructions*) Yup, there we go. One double room with a
20 crib. Holiday Inn Executive Suites, beautiful downtown
21 Jerusalem. Comes with a continental breakfast.
- 22 MARY: (*Glaring*) Don't even go there.
- 23 STARBRIGHT: I wasn't planning to. What's the matter, you
24 have something against Holiday Inn? I have a coupon,
25 forty percent off.
- 26 MARY: It's supposed to be Bethlehem!
- 27 STARBRIGHT: Oooops, my bad. (*Redoing his text message*)
28 Ummmm, that's gonna be a bit more difficult. Uhhhh,
29 Jerusalem is nice this time of year. (*MARY scowls.*) No?
30 OK. Let's see, just give me a minute here. Home delivery
31 OK with you? (*MARY concurs.*) Birthing room with
32 midwife? (*MARY nods.*) Swaddling clothes?
- 33 MARY: Sure.
- 34 STARBRIGHT: Pink or blue?
- 35 MARY: Blue. (*STARBRIGHT's cell phone rings again.*)
- 36 STARBRIGHT: Starbright. Hold, please. (*Aside*) It's that
37 shepherd kid again! (*To MARY*) Sorry, busy night. No
38 problem. I'll work out the details and get right back to

- 1 you, OK? (*Spotlight fades on STARBRIGHT.*)
- 2 MARY: Whatever. (*As an afterthought*) Oh yeah, and while
- 3 you're at it, how 'bout having room service send up a
- 4 large crock of pickled herring, will ya?
- 5 JOSEPH: (*Returning to the light*) Who are you talking to?
- 6 MARY: I was just wishing this would all be over soon. I feel
- 7 like a beached whale.
- 8 JOSEPH: Don't blame me!
- 9 MARY: I know, I know. You're right. But my ankles are
- 10 swollen, and my back is killing me.
- 11 JOSEPH: It's not much farther now, dear. Come on, let's get
- 12 going. (*Light dims on MARY and JOSEPH and comes up on*
- 13 *the SHEPHERD.*)
- 14 STARBRIGHT: Yo, little shepherd. Come up with anything
- 15 yet?
- 16 SHEPHERD: Well, I've been sort of leaning towards world
- 17 peace.
- 18 STARBRIGHT: So, it's the little shepherd with the big ideas.
- 19 OK, that's nice. But let's try and be a little practical
- 20 here. How about some new threads? I could see you in a
- 21 fancy new robe that would keep you warm on a chilly
- 22 night like this. Midnight blue with black velvet trim?
- 23 Vibrant crimson? Chinese silk lining? Maybe brass
- 24 buttons. What do you think?
- 25 SHEPHERD: I don't know.
- 26 STARBRIGHT: OK, go with the gold buttons, whatever. It's
- 27 your choice. Of course if you can't make up your mind
- 28 by midnight, then ... (*The phone rings again.*) Hang on. I'll
- 29 only be a minute. (*Lights fade on the SHEPHERD and come*
- 30 *up on the WISE MEN.*)
- 31 NARRATOR: Meanwhile, many miles to the east, three
- 32 affluent scholars riding thoroughbred camels fervently
- 33 debate theology. They finally decide to give it a rest for
- 34 the evening, and dismount at a trendy, upscale oasis.
- 35 CASPAR: (*Rubbing his behind*) Holy smokes, those camels are
- 36 harsh! Gonna be the death of me yet.
- 37 MELCHIOR: You got that right, bro. I feel like I just backed
- 38 into a bark shredder.

- 1 BALTHAZAR: Yo, dudes. This must be the place. Check it
2 out.
- 3 CASPAR: Yeah, pretty nice, eh? Everything you could want.
4 Fit for a king.
- 5 MELCHIOR: It better be. I've got to recharge my Blackberry
6 and see if I can get this danged GPS repaired. From the
7 maps we've got, I have no earthly idea where we're
8 going.
- 9 BALTHAZAR: So what's new? Some navigator you turned
10 out to be.
- 11 MELCHIOR: I'm so sick and tired of that little voice saying,
12 (*Mocking*) "At the next exit, turn left." Who is that lady in
13 there, anyway? And who does she think she is, telling a
14 king where to go?
- 15 CASPAR: Well, if we don't find out where we're headed
16 pretty soon, someone's going to have to wash down the
17 camels. Phew!
- 18 BALTHAZAR: Maybe that frankincense of yours has gotten
19 a bit ripe.
- 20 CASPAR: Whatever.
- 21 MELCHIOR: Well, I think I'm going to dust off my sandals,
22 mosey on in, and have myself a double tall, extra-hot,
23 non-fat, half-caf, no whip, soy caramel macchiato. And
24 maybe a shish kebob.
- 25 CASPAR: Sounds good to me. My treat.
- 26 NARRATOR: While the others went inside, Balthazar
27 wandered out behind the camel corral to stretch his
28 legs and attend to a matter of personal hygiene.
29 Surveying the horizon, he pondered the long journey he
30 and his scholarly colleagues had embarked upon many
31 months ago. (*BALTHAZAR practices some martial arts*
32 *moves.*) Indulging himself in a brief ritual of Tai Chi in
33 order to work out the knots and kinks in his
34 travel-worn body, he allowed his eyes to drift aimlessly
35 across the horizon. Then, all at once, he glimpsed a
36 bright celestial object emerging in the distant sky.
- 37 BALTHAZAR: Hey, will you look at that? I'll bet if I
38 triangulate with my sextant, that star will turn out to

1 be the very one Triple A said would lead us to this new
2 royal dude we've been looking for these many months.
3 *(He begins making calculations; then, scanning the entire*
4 *heavens, he stops abruptly.) But, wait! That's the only star*
5 *in the sky right now. Hey, I wonder if ... (He looks around*
6 *to see if anyone is watching.) Oh, what the heck. I think I'll*
7 *give it a go. (BALTHAZAR folds his hands and looks toward*
8 *STARBRIGHT.) Star light, star bright, first star I've seen*
9 *tonight. (Spotlight comes up on STARBRIGHT as his cell*
10 *phone rings.)*

11 STARBRIGHT: Yeah, Starbright here. How may I help you?

12 BALTHAZAR: Wha ... ? *(Looking around fearfully. Seeing no one,*
13 *he shrugs and continues.) I wish I may, I wish I might, have*
14 *the wish I wish tonight.*

15 STARBRIGHT: Well, those are the right words. So now
16 you've got your wish, cowboy.

17 BALTHAZAR: Who's there? Is this Starbucks?

18 STARBRIGHT: *(Sighs impatiently.)* Starbright. You rang?

19 BALTHAZAR: *(Frightened)* Whoever you are, don't hurt me,
20 please. I'll give you whatever you want, OK? Look,
21 we've been traveling for months now trying to find this
22 new king and stuff, and I'm tired. We come bearing
23 gifts. Expensive gifts. If this is a stick-up, I could give
24 you —

25 STARBRIGHT: You wouldn't by any chance have any
26 pickled herring, would you?

27 BALTHAZAR: No. You're probably smelling the
28 frankincense. I think it may have gone bad. Why?

29 STARBRIGHT: Never mind. Just trying to save myself a
30 little legwork. What are you looking for?

31 BALTHAZAR: Well, let's see. It was just me and a couple of
32 guys from my men's group. You know, we drum
33 together, read poetry, stuff like that. I guess it started
34 out as kind of a pilgrimage, a religious quest, that sort
35 of thing. Maybe it was a midlife crisis, I don't know. It
36 all seems so long ago. It was kind of fun at first. A real
37 adventure. We all applied for sabbaticals. It was a real
38 hoot. But now I'm weary. It's getting kinda old.

1 STARBRIGHT: Listen, no offense, but I've got no time for
2 whining. I'm in a time crunch, so here's the deal. You
3 said the magic words, so now you get a wish. It's that
4 simple. So let's dispense with the theatrics and cut to
5 the chase. Whaddaya want?

6 BALTHAZAR: Well, I guess it seems like I have everything
7 that anyone could ever want. I mean, like, we *are* kings
8 and everything. Yet I have these questions — life and
9 death questions. Questions that can't be answered by
10 all my learning and scholarship. Deep yearnings and
11 urgent longings — hopes for the world. Ultimate issues,
12 you know what I mean?

13 STARBRIGHT: Yadda, yadda, yadda. Great. That's all very
14 nice, I'm sure, Professor. But how do we translate that
15 into a wish I can grant?

16 BALTHAZAR: A grant? A wish?

17 STARBRIGHT: Come on, come on. I haven't got all night.
18 (*Aside*) How hard can this be?

19 BALTHAZAR: Oh, well, I guess I just wish we could find this
20 dude we've been lookin' for so we could go on to Egypt,
21 check out the pyramids, maybe write a few postcards,
22 and then finally be able to get back home again. Do you
23 know what it's like carrying a cask of myrrh for a
24 thousand miles on the back of an arthritic camel? Right
25 now I'd settle for my slippers, my La-Z-Boy, a large
26 platter of spicy buffalo wings, and a nice cold —

27 STARBRIGHT: Buffalo wings?!

28 BALTHAZAR: Oh, forget it. Just show us how to find this
29 new King.

30 STARBRIGHT: OK, I can handle that. (*STARBRIGHT checks*
31 *his computer.*) Yeah, there you go! Perfect. Now we've got
32 you all routed.

33 BALTHAZAR: But, I —

34 STARBRIGHT: So, what did you expect — your own
35 personal tour guide? OK, listen. I'll tell you what. See
36 that star over there? I'll boost up its candlepower a few
37 hundred million gigawatts and shine it right where you
38 need to end up. That should be simple enough.

1 **BALTHAZAR:** Well ...

2 **STARBRIGHT:** It's the best I can do. (*Cell phone rings again.*)

3 Trust me. You'll find him, I promise. Gotta go. (*Spotlight*
4 *fades on BALTHAZAR and comes up on SHEPHERD. To*
5 *SHEPHERD*) OK, kid, right back at ya. What did you
6 come up with? A pony, maybe? Everybody loves a pony.

7 **SHEPHERD:** Well, I've been thinking more along the lines of
8 peace on earth and stuff like that. Maybe solving the
9 world's hunger problem. You know, perhaps having
10 everybody love each other and getting rid of cruelty
11 and suffering. Freeing people of their sins. Redemption,
12 salvation, that kind of thing.

13 **STARBRIGHT:** Whoa! Easy now, kid. (*Aside*) Where does he
14 come up with this stuff? (*To SHEPHERD*) Are you sure you
15 wouldn't just like a nice doggie to keep you company here
16 at night with your sheep? Something simple like that? A
17 dog would chase the wolves away. They make great
18 company. You could call him ... Marvin. You know, teach
19 him tricks and stuff. How about it?

20 **SHEPHERD:** Well ...

21 **STARBRIGHT:** I could have a nice black-and-white puppy
22 delivered to you there (*Checking his Blackberry*) by, um,
23 say, eight tomorrow morning. FedEx overnight.
24 Registered, with papers, license, shots, and everything.
25 Whaddaya say? You need a tracking number?

26 **NARRATOR:** The shepherd boy thought for a long time. A
27 puppy would be very nice. But his mind was on
28 grander, more serious things.

29 **SHEPHERD:** I don't know how you could possibly grant all
30 those things I've been hoping for. Oh, I guess maybe
31 that would be impossible.

32 **STARBRIGHT:** I'll throw in a fifty-pound bag of Puppy
33 Chow and a coupon for neutering at a later date. I could
34 guarantee the pup would be housebroken. (*He waits for*
35 *an answer.*) Shiny little black nose. Dark, sad, loving
36 eyes. What do you think, kid? Man's best friend.

37 **SHEPHERD:** Unless, possibly, God would come and show us
38 how.



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STARBRIGHT

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