

**WOULD YOU BELIEVE...
A STABLE?**

by Linda Thomas



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**Would You Believe . . .
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by LINDA THOMAS

CAST

ANGELS

URIAH

Sgt. of Angels (*lacks imagination, believes in following the Book, typical "career officer"*)

BROTHER DANIEL

Acts as messenger between group and God

BROTHER JUSTIN

Public Relations and Field Expert

SISTER HANNAH

Bit of a snob, condescending and fastidious

SISTER URSULA

Member of Celestial Choir (*full of her own importance as a member of the choir*)

SISTER JOANNA

Youngest of the group (*unsure of herself*)

HUMANS

MAN

Dressed in working clothes

CHILDREN

2 or more

PROPS

For ANGELS — Choir robes (*with small poster paper wings attached*); cleaning equipment spray painted gold (*mop bucket, shovel, broom, and feather duster*).

For sleeve of URIAH's robe — Sergeant stripes (*made of construction paper*)

For URIAH — Clipboard

For BROTHER JUSTIN — Bible and slide rule

For MAN — Pruning shears

For DANIEL — Scroll

Also needed — (*to be hidden behind screens at beginning of play*):

Picture (*suitable for nursery*)

Fluffy throw rug

Baby bassinet with skirt

STABLE is created by using 2 FOLDING screens in front of which are a BALE OF STRAW and a MANGER. Hanging on one folding screen by means of a BENT HANGER are some PIECES OF HARNESS.

Playing Time: 12 Minutes (approximately)

1 **AT RISE:** URIAH marches the band down the center aisle. He is
 2 the only one displaying military precision. The other ANGELS
 3 are out of step and looking around. Each ANGEL is carrying
 4 cleaning equipment. URIAH has a clipboard and JUSTIN has
 5 Bible and slide rule.
 6

7 **URIAH:** Left, right, left, right. *(Continues cadence until stable*
 8 *has been reached.) To the right, march! Halt! About face!*
 9 *At ease! We of the Twenty-Second Angel Flight Division*
 10 *have been commissioned to prepare the way of the Lord.*
 11 *(URSULA bursts forth in a loud "Gloria" as she will continue*
 12 *to do each time GOD is mentioned. The other ANGELS will*
 13 *display varying degrees of exasperation with her. The "Gloria"*
 14 *does not have to be sung well, but with enthusiasm.) Proper*
 15 *robe for the day is angelic fatigues. This here is a work*
 16 *detail. Target time is twenty-four hundred hours so I*
 17 *don't want to see any slacking. Does everybody*
 18 *understand?*

19 **JOANNA:** Sgt. sir. Excuse me, sir. I hate to say anything, sir,
 20 but . . .

21 **URIAH:** What is it, Sister? If you have something to say, spit
 22 it out.

23 **JOANNA:** Well, sir, I think we're in a . . . well, a stable, sir.

24 **URIAH:** *(Looking around.) Brother Justin, check those*
 25 *coordinates again.*

26 **JUSTIN:** *(Fiddling with the slide rule.) These are the correct*
 27 *coordinates, sir. We're definitely in Bethlehem of Judea.*

28 **URIAH:** Well, check the manual and see if it says anything
 29 about a stable.

30 **JUSTIN:** *(Thumbing through Bible.) Yes, it does say something*
 31 *about a stable.*

32 **DANIEL:** *(Looking hopeful.) Maybe this is the wrong century.*

33 **JUSTIN:** No, this is definitely the time the Almighty
 34 *(URSULA: "Gloria") has judged right for the birth of His*
 35 *Son.*

- 1 **HANNAH:** Certainly the Almighty (*URSULA: "Gloria"*) doesn't
 2 mean for His Son to be born here. It's so . . . so unsanitary.
- 3 **URSULA:** There's no place for the Celestial Choir to stand
 4 and the acoustics are terrible.
- 5 **URIAH:** I want everyone to scout through the town. We'll
 6 just have to find a better spot ourselves. (*All ANGELS*
 7 *except URIAH depart from the stable. They scatter in different*
 8 *directions. CHILDREN enter, running and playing a noisy game*
 9 *of tag.*)
- 10 **DANIEL:** Children, children! Stop all this racket! You can't
 11 play here.
- 12 **CHILD 1:** Why not? We've always played here.
- 13 **DANIEL:** (*Making his voice into the type adults use with children.*)
 14 Well, a little baby is coming soon. And babies need lots
 15 of sleep. And we don't want to wake up the baby, now do
 16 we? So you just run along and find another place to play.
- 17 **CHILD 2:** Aw, come on. I didn't want to play tag anyway.
 18 (*CHILDREN exit. Last one out sticks his tongue out at DANIEL.*
 19 *MAN enters from another direction carrying a pair of pruning*
 20 *shears.*)
- 21 **HANNAH:** (*Seeing him.*) Where do you think you're going?
- 22 **MAN:** I'm going to prune my fig tree.
- 23 **HANNAH:** You can't prune your fig tree! Go home and put
 24 your best clothes on. A king is going to be born here
 25 tonight.
- 26 **MAN:** A king in Bethlehem! You gotta be kidding, Lady. (*MAN*
 27 *exits, shaking his head.*)
- 28 **URIAH:** (*Still in the stable.*) A stable — a *stable!* Twenty years
 29 as an angel — always followed the Book and this is the first
 30 time there's ever been this kind of mix-up. I'll probably
 31 lose my stripes. Worse yet, I'll be a laughing stock.
 32 (*ANGELS return.*) Well, what's the story?
- 33 **JUSTIN:** This stable belongs to the Innkeeper, Abraham. I
 34 checked at the Inn and it's full.
- 35 **URIAH:** What if we offered him double money for a room?

- 1 JUSTIN: Not a chance. He's even got people sleeping in the halls.
- 2 HANNAH: There aren't any palaces either. Herod has a nice
3 summer place not too far from here. Maybe we could ask
4 the Almighty (URSULA: "Gloria") to move the birthplace.
- 5 JOANNA: The hotels are all full! There's some sort of census
6 going on. Everyone born of the house of David has to
7 come here.
- 8 URSULA: We might have arranged something if it weren't
9 for all the visitors.
- 10 DANIEL: The private residences are as bad. Most are just
11 one room and all of them are wall-to-wall with people.
- 12 URIAH: Well, we'll just have to send a messenger to the Lord.
13 (URSULA: "Gloria") Brother Daniel, you go to the Lord
14 (URSULA: "Gloria") and tell him the situation here and
15 ask him where we should go.
- 16 DANIEL: Yes, sir. (DANIEL leaves.)
- 17 JOANNA: (To SISTER HANNAH.) Does Sister Ursula have to
18 sing everytime you-know-who is mentioned?
- 19 HANNAH: She's one of the Celestial Choir and quite frankly,
20 my dear, they just can't help themselves.
- 21 JUSTIN: (To URIAH.) When I was looking through the town,
22 I couldn't find one person of any importance. Everyone
23 here seems to be just ordinary working folk. I'm not sure
24 what kind of public relations job I can do. Now if the
25 Almighty (URSULA: "Gloria") had waited until the
26 twentieth century, we could have handled this thing
27 properly with television and Madison Avenue. We could
28 at least scare up a better quality crowd in Jerusalem.
- 29 JOANNA: I hated to say anything before, but . . . there were
30 some drunken Roman soldiers in the streets.
- 31 HANNAH: Well, we'll just have to ban the sale of alcoholic
32 beverages for a few days.
- 33 URSULA: Tonight there will be the most beautiful music
34 ever heard on the face of the earth and not one
35 professional critic in the crowd. (DANIEL returns.)

- 1 **DANIEL:** The Almighty (*URSULA: "Gloria"*) says this is the
2 right town, the right century, and the right place. (*Some*
3 *of the ANGELS groan, some shake their heads.*)
- 4 **URIAH:** OK, you guys. You heard Brother Daniel. Let's get
5 this place cleaned up. (*ANGELS begin dusting, etc.*)
- 6 **HANNAH:** What is this stuff on the floor?
- 7 **URIAH:** Well, it ain't stardust, Twinkle Toes. Someone get a
8 shovel and clean it up.
- 9 **JOANNA:** How do you clean straw? I've tried dusting it,
10 polishing it, and sweeping it. But nothing works.
- 11 **URSULA:** The only place to put a baby is in this manger and
12 it's so dirty, I wouldn't let a cow eat out of it. It's just a
13 hopeless job!
- 14 **JUSTIN:** Do you think we could board up the door to keep
15 the animals out?
- 16 **DANIEL:** If we board up the door, it will keep everyone out.
17 That just won't work.
- 18 **EVERYONE:** (*To URIAH.*) We can't do it. It won't work. It's
19 hopeless.
- 20 **URIAH:** OK, OK! Brother Daniel, go back to the Almighty
21 (*URSULA: "Gloria"*) and this time *make sure he*
22 *understands.* (*DANIEL leaves.*)
- 23 **HANNAH:** (*Thoughtfully*) You know, we might be able to fix
24 this place up if we got rid of all this junk and did just a
25 few things. (*ANGELS take harness off of stable wall, remove*
26 *straw and manger to behind folding screen. One brings in picture*
27 *dusting it and carefully hanging it on the wall where the harness*
28 *once was. Another brings in the fluffy rug giving it a shake or*
29 *two. Two others bring in the bassinet lifting it high for everyone*
30 *to see. The last one puts the skirt around the bassinet with great*
31 *flourish.*)
- 32 **JOANNA:** Oh yes, that's much better!
- 33 **JUSTIN:** Too bad there won't be any photographers.
- 34 **URSULA:** It's certainly nicer but there's still no room for the
35 Celestial Choir. Well, maybe I can squeeze in a

1 **quartet.** (*DANIEL returns.*)

2 **DANIEL:** I talked with the Almighty (*URSULA: "Gloria"*) and
3 I'm sure he understands. In fact, he gave me a message
4 for you.

5 **URIAH:** Great! Now we can get this all straightened out. Go
6 ahead and read it.

7 **DANIEL:** (*Reading from scroll.*) To Uriah's band of Angels:
8 **Thus Saith the Lord:** (*Whoever is closest to URSULA will put*
9 *their hand over her mouth before she can "Gloria" and that stops*
10 *her for the rest of the play.*)

11 I am deeply touched by your efforts on behalf of my
12 son. I know you were motivated by your love for me. You
13 thought I made a mistake when you found a humble
14 stable. You know I don't make mistakes.

15 If my son were born in a palace amid rich
16 surroundings, people would expect him to rule by might.
17 Throughout history, men will have rulers such as this
18 and they will never be satisfied. No! My son will begin as
19 he must go on. I have looked into the hearts of my people.
20 They do not need a ruler — they need a Savior.

21 It must not be said in the future, "Of course, the Son
22 of God could afford to be kind, loving and forgiving. Did
23 not the Lord cushion him from the harsh realities of life?"
24 Down through the ages, people of humble birth and
25 humble hearts will look to this night and this stable and
26 say, "He was one of us. He understands because he lived
27 as we do."

28 I am not sending my son to reinforce the rich and
29 powerful. He brings a message to the sick, the sad, the
30 sinful, the oppressed. I have seen their sorrow with love
31 and compassion. For *their* sakes, he will become the Son
32 of Man to strengthen their spirits, give new direction to
33 their lives, and bring salvation to their souls.

34 Tonight, Sister Ursula and the Celestial Choir will
35 go to the hills where shepherds are tending their flocks.

1 **They will sing to these lowly men of the birth of their**
 2 **Savior. Brother Uriah will hang a new star in the sky —**
 3 **for my Son is also for the wise. All those who have ears**
 4 **to hear or eyes to see will know that I am with them.**

5 **So you must put everything back as you found it.**
 6 **But, my dear Angels, so that you may feel nothing but**
 7 **joy this night, I send you this message. The real birthplace**
 8 **of my Son will not be a crude and humble stable, but a**
 9 **place deep in the hearts of my people.** *(The ANGELS remove*
 10 *the bassinet, etc. and return the "stable" to its original condition.*
 11 *While they are doing this, the AUDIENCE sings a Christmas*
 12 *hymn. Suggestions: "Born in the Night, Mary's Child," "Once*
 13 *in Royal David's City," or "Away in a Manger." When the*
 14 *ANGELS are finished, they pick up their equipment and march*
 15 *out.)*

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33 *NOTE: The numerals running vertically down the left margin*
 34 *of each page of dialog are for the convenience of the director.*
 35 *With these, he/she may easily direct attention to a specific passage.*



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