

THE TRUE ROYAL

by Beth Troop



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A children's Christmas play of princely contrasts

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SYNOPSIS: First George, then Charlotte. Royal Highness baby fever is everywhere! This children's play contrasts two Reporters' views of the frenzy surrounding a prince's birth with a Bible Commentator's narrative of Jesus' humble beginnings. Instead of riding in a limo to the hospital, Mary rode a donkey to a stable. While throngs of well-wishers received word of the baby prince, Jesus' birth was announced to lowly shepherds. Rather than a christening with lavish gifts, young Jesus received three symbolic gifts from the wise men. A study in opposites for the Christmas season. Perfect for the smaller children's department, with few speaking parts and a flexible number of spectators. Though Jesus was not afforded the respect and adoration he deserved, the reign of the "King of kings" is a study in "the last shall be first" (Matthew 20:16). "He shall reign... forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33).

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 either, 5+extras)

REPORTER 1 (m/f).....(9 lines)

REPORTER 2 (m/f).....(9 lines)

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR (m/f)(11 lines)

EXTRAS:

SPECTATORS (m/f)..... *(Non-Speaking)*

MARY (f)..... *(Non-Speaking)*

JOSEPH (f)..... *(Non-Speaking)*

TECHNICAL ASSISTANT (m/f)..... Controls lights as needed for
each speaker. *(Non-Speaking)*

STAGEHAND (m/f) Optional; to carry wooden cross.
(Non-Speaking)

(ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE)

DURATION: 20 minutes

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PRODUCTION NOTES

COSTUMES: Contemporary professional dress for Reporters and Biblical Commentator. The Spectators wear casual contemporary clothing. Mary and Joseph wear biblical long gowns and head scarves. The stagehand should wear black attire.

SETTING: You will need a pulpit with microphone, folding chairs (optional), and a manger. Lights are dim at the beginning. The pulpit stands in the middle of the stage area. Each reporter stands on opposite sides of the pulpit, but slightly closer to the audience than the pulpit. Commentator stands at the pulpit. Lights shine on each speaker as he/she talks, then dim when each speaker ends, so only one person is highlighted at a time. NOTE: If facility does not allow for front lights to be lit and dimmed alternately, then keep lights for Reporters lit until both speakers are finished and dim when the Biblical Commentator speaks. Another option is to leave the lights as they are and direct each character to sit down after he/she speaks, so only one is standing at a time. In that case, a chair will be needed for each speaker. Position the manger just left or right of Center Stage. The cross to be used may be the altar cross already hanging on the front wall, or one that is manageable enough to be carried in at the end of the program.

PROPS

- ☐ Two Hand-held Cordless Microphones
- ☐ Two Cell Phones
- ☐ Cameras/Phones for spectators
- ☐ A Baby Doll wrapped in white cloth (for baby Jesus)
- ☐ A Large Cross (unless a cross already hangs at the front of your sanctuary)

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1 **AT START:** *REPORTER 1 and 2 are each holding a microphone*
2 *in one hand and a small electronic device in the other.*
3 *REPORTERS should refer to their digital devices occasionally as*
4 *they speak, as if looking at information for their reports.*
5 *REPORTERS could download the script onto their devices for*
6 *reference, but they need to be sure that the ringtones are silenced.*
7 *If lighting option is available, raise lights on each speaker prior to*
8 *him/her speaking; lower lights after each speaker is finished.*
9 *Otherwise, keep lights on and direct only one speaker to stand at a*
10 *time.*

11
12 **REPORTER 1:** *(Enthusiastically.)* “Baby watch” is in full swing here
13 in the square outside the hospital. Thousands of people from
14 around the world are hoping to be present when the royal couple
15 arrives — and better yet, when the baby is born! What a
16 wonderful change of pace to take our minds off the daily burdens
17 of life, even if it’s just for a brief moment.

18 **REPORTER 2:** *(Slightly less enthusiastic.)* We have been here for
19 a couple weeks now, and we are hopeful that something will
20 happen soon. Anticipation is still building, but frankly, I think
21 everyone is ready for the new royal to make an entrance.

22 **BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR:** As Mary, a scared young mother-to-
23 be, sat atop a donkey for a long, tiring ride to Bethlehem, she did
24 not know what to expect when she and her husband would arrive
25 at their final destination. She only knew that the baby would
26 come soon. She hoped they would make it in time.

27 **REPORTER 1:** *(Looks out beyond audience, as if seeing the royals*
28 *arriving.)* Oh, here they come in the royal limousine!

29
30 *REPORTER 1’s gaze moves from the back to the right side, as if*
31 *following the royals from their car to the hospital. Allow several*
32 *seconds to pass before speaking again. SPECTATORS—*
33 *optional—rush in. They talk quietly but excitedly among themselves,*
34 *looking and pointing. Some take pictures. SPECTATORS’ chatter*
35 *quiets as REPORTER 1 resumes.*

REPORTER 1: *(Continued.)* And there they go into the hospital! We will know shortly whether the baby is a boy or girl. Excitement is building once again! Look at all the cameras and phones poised to capture the first photo of the royal baby. What a reception this little one will have!

SPECTATORS look at their pictures, compare them with one another, and resume talking excitedly among themselves after REPORTER 1 finishes. SPECTATORS then exit.

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: *(Begins speaking after all SPECTATORS have left and it is quiet.)* There was no fanfare more than two thousand years ago as Mary, pregnant and exhausted, entered the crowded town of Bethlehem with her husband, Joseph. She was carrying the world's most royal heir. This was the end of an uncomfortable week-long journey through desolate wilderness that had begun in Nazareth, Mary's hometown. They had traveled there to fulfill Caesar Augustus's order that all citizens must return to their cities of origin to be counted, and Bethlehem was Joseph's. As a result of so many travelers, Bethlehem was filled beyond capacity. But no one was waiting to greet Mary and Joseph in anticipation of their child's birth. No hospital stood ready to accommodate them. In fact, the only place with any room was a stable. The Messiah was about to be born among barn animals.

REPORTER 1: Breaking news! The newest heir to the throne is a boy, born at 4:24 p.m. local time, weighing eight pounds, six ounces! We're still waiting for an official announcement of the baby's name.

REPORTER 2: *(Busy texting, then quickly lowers phone and speaks into microphone.)* Oh, sorry – just tweeting the good news! Yes, we can confirm that this afternoon, the princess gave birth to a boy in a private suite, surrounded by the best doctors, nurses, and attendants money can buy. The child weighed in at eight pounds, six ounces.

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: No one pulled out a scale to measure the young heir's weight and length, nor did they keep track of the exact hour and minute he was born – yet Jesus' birth was the only event in history powerful enough to stop and restart our measurement of time, from BC to AD. As with all newborns, he no doubt strengthened his tiny lungs with plenty of crying and shivered in the cold until he was held in his mother's arms. His parents were overjoyed that he was healthy, and at that moment, it was all that mattered.

Optional: SPECTATORS may return and mill around in background, to the right of the REPORTERS, cameras and phones poised.

REPORTER 1: *(Has been looking toward the right, indicating direction of the hospital, then faces audience.)* Word is getting out around the world! Likes and tweets are abounding on social media! The crowd here has not dwindled. In fact, I'd say it has *grown* since everyone found out about the birth.

REPORTER 2: I wonder what the princess will think when she looks out her suite window at this crowd. Will she be overwhelmed, or will she embrace this new role as the mother of a prince who will someday have an impact on this country and the world?

SPECTATORS stand still after REPORTER 2 finishes speaking.

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: The royal birth of two thousand years ago was announced on the grandest scale to the lowliest of people. A band of unassuming shepherds sat among their sheep, quieting them down for the night, when all of a sudden, they were startled by an amazing light that filled the entire sky. As they ran to hide, they heard an angel declare, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior – yes, the Messiah, the Lord – has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others – the armies of heaven – praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased” (*Luke 2:10-14.*). Because they were low on the social scale, the shepherds were amazed that the angels chose to announce the Messiah’s birth to *them* – but they wasted no time in leaving their posts to find the baby the angels had described. When they arrived at the stable, the shepherds saw the baby lying there, with his earthly parents at his side and angels watching over him. They realized they were in the presence of a King more regal than any they had known before, and they knelt to worship and admire him. Mary watched with awe as everything unfolded around her.

REPORTER 1: (*Holds one hand on ear as if listening to information from an earpiece. Stops and looks up as light comes up on him/her.*) We are just receiving information on the child’s name. It’s official: George!

SPECTATORS are texting and talking quietly among themselves.

REPORTER 2: Well, folks, George it is! A tribute to his royal ancestor of the same name! Already people from everywhere are indicating their approval. Right now, “George” is the most popular name on social media!

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: This long-awaited Messiah, from the line of King David, is known as King of kings, Lord of lords, Emmanuel, God with us! He is Jesus, “the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived” (*Luke 2:21.*). No other name in all the universe holds such majesty as that of the little child born in a stable so many years ago.

SPECTATORS are taking photos and texting while REPORTER 2 speaks. REPORTER 2 gazes in the direction of the SPECTATORS.

REPORTER 2: The day has come for little George to head home to the palace. As you can see, the family is now leaving the hospital. He is wearing an expensive designer going-home outfit.

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: Jesus' first outfit consisted of swaddling clothes, or long strips of cloth, with which he was securely wrapped.

REPORTER 2: George's father is carrying the baby in his carrier. What a great dad! He is setting the baby carrier in the back seat—and *look*, he's double-checking to make sure the seatbelt is snug. The princess has gotten into the backseat with George while Daddy, it appears, is preparing to drive them home. Great start for this royal family!

REPORTER 2 moves gaze toward the back, watching the royals' car leave. SPECTATORS exit in that direction, continuing to snap pictures as they go.

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: Joseph cared greatly for his young family and saw to their health and safety without cameras, reporters, or spectators recording his every move. With God's help, he would be ready to provide for his new wife and brand-new baby.

REPORTER 1: Well, it has been several weeks now. The time has come for George's christening. The prince, third in line to the throne, was baptized by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which has drawn the attention of dignitaries from around the world.

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: Several weeks after his birth, Jesus was presented in the temple for the redemption of the firstborn son, in obedience to the Torah. Simeon and Anna offered prophecy, prayer, and praise.

REPORTER 1: Among his many gifts are silver casts of his hands and feet, and a meadow of wildflowers.

REPORTER 2: This young prince is certainly not lacking in lavish gifts and attention!

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: When Jesus was still young, he was visited by wise men who had followed a star to his location. They did not travel in elaborate caravans, nor did they hold any press conferences to announce their arrival. Instead, they quietly and respectfully worshiped the young King and brought three meaningful gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, each with special symbolism for Jesus' life.

REPORTER 1: *(Yawns off camera, then speaks, first as if to crew.)*
Ready? OK, let's finish this story. *(Stands for a moment and smiles before starting report.)* The hoopla over this young prince seems to have settled down a bit. One can only imagine what his first Christmas will be like!

REPORTER 2: It will be years before the young prince understands the significance of his privileged life, one that so many would envy. What child wouldn't love to be in George's shoes?

BIBLICAL COMMENTATOR: No one would envy the life of Jesus, the eternal King born among smelly livestock on that first Christmas. He never lived in a lavish palace. Nor was he ever surrounded by attendants eager to wait on him. In fact, he and his family fled for their lives shortly after his birth. With his parents he became a refugee, escaping from King Herod, who considered Jesus a threat to his own throne. As a young child, Jesus understood his purpose and place here on earth as the Son of God, even while he learned the humble craft of carpentry from his earthly father, Joseph. His family and peers did not fully comprehend the enormous burden he carried into adulthood, and the mercy that he would show to a sinful world. Though many followed him while he ministered during the last three years of his earthly life, no one volunteered to take his place as he hung on the cross, willing to die for sins he never committed.

REPORTER 1: *(Looking around, seemingly impatient, speaks off camera, as if to crew.)* Well, we've been here long enough. This story is getting old. Not much left to cover right now. Let's call it a wrap. *(Turns off microphone and exits.)*

REPORTER 2: *(Waits to speak until REPORTER 1 has exited. Speaks off camera, also to "crew.")* I'd say it's time to pack it in and look for a more exciting story. People are tired of quaint photos and pasty smiles. We'll come back on the baby's first birthday.



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