Lillenas® Drama Presents

Don’t Be Afraid
from Mighty Joe Prompter
By Larry & Annie Enscoe

Cast

BOB: in his 30s or 40s
RALPH: in his 30s to 50s
MYRA: in her 30s to 50s
JIM: in his 30s to 50s
SHEPHERDS: in their teens
SUSAN: in her 20s to 30s

Scene

Backstage of a Christmas pageant

Props

Wise men crowns
Shepherds’ crooks
Spear
Parchment
Turban
Lantern
Chicken drumstick
Beard
Stuffed sheep
A Christ child

Costumes

Biblical: Angel, Shepherds, Innkeeper, Innkeeper’s Wife, Soldier, Mary

Running Time

8 minutes

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Notes

The scene takes place backstage, while the Christmas pageant goes on out of sight of the audience.

Also, for those who wish to do so, a real baby can be used for the Baby Jesus.

(In the darkness, a slightly halting version of “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” Lights. The backstage of a Christmas pageant. We are behind the background of Bethlehem. Props lie on tables: shepherds’ crooks, Oriental crowns, turbans, biblical robes, the manger, etc. At lights, Bob is peeking around the flats out onto the stage. Actually, he’s looking at the audience beyond. He’s dressed in the white robe of an angel. Bob is one heartbeat shy of total panic.)

Voice (out onstage): “This is a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed!”

Bob (to himself): “Don’t be afraid . . .”

Voice: “And each should go to his own city and be registered!”

Bob: “I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all people . . .”

(Ralph comes in wearing an innkeeper’s costume. He puts on a turban, grabs a lantern.)

Bob: “. . . tonight in the City of David a Savior has been born to you, he is—”

(Ralph taps Bob on the shoulder. Bob jumps.)

Bob: —Christ.

Ralph: Hey, Bob.

Bob: Don’t do that!

Ralph: Sorry. How’s it look out there?

Bob: It looks packed.

Ralph: I heard not only are the pews filled, but the balcony is too. Frank Sedgewick even set up a video camera so they could put people in the gym to watch. They’ve never seen so many people come out for a pageant before.

Bob: Ralph.

Ralph: What?

Bob: Shut up.

(Onstage there’s a knocking.)

Man’s Voice (onstage): Is there anyone there?

Ralph: Bob, you’re whiter than your costume. You’re not nervous, are you?

Bob: No, I just haven’t had any spit in my mouth since eight o’clock this morning.

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(A knock onstage)

MAN’S VOICE (onstage): Are there any rooms for the night?

RALPH: Bob, it’s a Christmas pageant, there’s nothing to be afraid of.

BOB: Are there people out there?

RALPH: Tons.

BOB: Are they watching us?

RALPH: All eyes.

BOB: Then there’s something to be afraid of.

MAN’S VOICE (onstage): ARE THERE ANY ROOMS?

RALPH: That’s our cue! Myra!

MYRA (off): What?

RALPH: We’re on!

(MYRA rushes in dressed as the innkeeper’s wife. Eating a KFC drumstick, which she hands to BOB.)

MYRA: Hold this for me, will you, Bob?

RALPH (to BOB): Don’t be afraid.

(RALPH lifts the lantern as he and MYRA go out onstage.)

RALPH: Who’s that knocking on my inn door at this hour?

MYRA: Tell them to go away, Malachi!

(BOB’s alone. He looks at the drumstick, wrinkles his nose, and dumps it on the prop table.)

BOB: How can she even think about food at a time like this? (He paces, wringing his hands.) Why did I say I’d play the angel? Why? I was happy playing the back end of the donkey all those years. I didn’t have any lines. No one saw my face. No one knew it was me in there. I was happy in the donkey suit!

(JIM comes in, wearing a Roman soldier outfit. He pulls off his helmet, puts his spear and “tax decree” parchment on the table.)

JIM: Running smooth this year. No hitches yet.

BOB: Yet.

JIM: Bob, you look terrible. Got the flu or something?


JIM: You got something, all right.
BOB: Really?
JIM: Yeah. Stage fright.
BOB: Thanks, Jim.
JIM: Bob, what are you afraid of?
JIM: Forgetting your lines? Bob, you’ve been in this pageant for 10 years.
BOB: Playing a donkey!
JIM: Yeah, but you’ve heard the angel speech 500 million times. Between hearing it in Sunday School and in the pulpit and seeing it in the Christmas pageant, you could rattle off the “Fear not, shepherds” speech under anesthesia.
BOB (pulling on his costume): Oh, really. You think you could?
JIM: Sure I could.
BOB: Then take this stupid sheet and do it!
JIM: I can’t. (Grabs a crown and a beard off the table) I’m playing one of the Wise Men next.
BOB: C’mon, Jim. They’re not even in the same scene. You could do the angel part and the wise man.
JIM: Bob, relax. You won’t forget your lines. And if you puke, scream, or pass out, hey, at least that’d be something for people to talk about for once.

(JIM goes out. BOB paces, then he stops, takes a breath.)

BOB: OK, Bob, run your lines one more time. (He starts. He stops. He looks terrified.) I can’t remember my first line. Oh... no... what’s the first line... I forgot... I’m going to be the first mute angel. A mime in a bedsheets. The shepherds are going to see a bright light, look up, and say, “Behold! In the sky! It’s Marcel Marceau!” Oh... please... God, just get me through this. Just help me say the lines, and I swear I’ll never complain about being an usher again. (Takes a deep breath) OK, don’t panic. Don’t panic. Don’t be afraid. (It hits him.) Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid! That’s the first line. (Rattles fast) Don’t be afraid! I’m bringing you good news of great joy—

(The sound of a halting piano playing “It Came upon the Midnight Clear.”)

BOB: That’s the beginning of my scene. I hate that word “scene.” I don’t want to make a scene.

(SHEPHERDS come in. They’re kids from the youth group in shepherds’ robes. One of them is carrying a stuffed sheep. They grab their crooks and get ready to go onstage.)
SHEPHERD 1: Whoa, Mr. Kendricks, you look bad.

SHEPHERD 2: You’re not gonna like yak out there, are you?

BOB: Listen, I’ve got this great idea. Pretend I’ve already appeared to you, OK. And you guys can go out onstage talking about how you saw an angel and wasn’t it awesome and now you’re all going to go to Bethlehem to see the Christ child.

SHEPHERD 1: That’s a pretty cool idea.

(SHEPHERDS nod all around.)

BOB: So, you’ll do it?

SHEPHERD 2: Get out. Mrs. Fingerworthy would have a heart attack at the piano if we did that.

SHEPHERD 1: Maybe we can do it next year.

(SHEPHERDS go onstage.)

BOB: No, wait! You don’t understand. It won’t matter next year! (Shepherds are gone.) Because I’m going to die this year. (Starts to panic) I can’t do it. I can’t. Why do we do these stupid pageants! Everybody knows the story. Everybody’s heard it a million times. Why do we keeping doing it year after year after year—?

(He turns and sees SUSAN standing there. She’s dressed as MARY and holds the Baby Jesus in her arms. She’s cryin.)

BOB: Susan? Are you OK?

SUSAN: He did, didn’t He?

BOB: Did what?

SUSAN: Came into this painful, frightening, sad world.

BOB: Yeah, I guess so. Look, Susan, I don’t know if I can go out there—

SUSAN: Every year I see this, but now I’m holding Him and I realize, somebody really did hold the Son of God. In her arms. Just like this. God said to us... (as to a baby)... “Shhh, quiet now, I’m here. I’m with you. Don’t be afraid.”

(She holds the baby out. BOB slowly takes the baby in his arms. He feels the fear draining out of him.)

SHEPHERD’S VOICE (onstage): Look! Do you see what I see? An angel!

ANOTHER SHEPHERD (onstage): Where?

SHEPHERD’S VOICE (onstage): He’s right there!

(A bright light suddenly comes up on the stage beyond.)

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BOB: Don’t be afraid. (He gives the baby back to SUSAN. Then turns and strides onstage.) Don’t be afraid! I’m bringing you good news of great joy which will be for all people! (The lights fade, as a single light comes up on SUSAN, standing there, holding the Christ child in her arms.) Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born to you! (Now only a light on SUSAN and the Child.) He is Christ the Lord!

(The light hangs on her a moment, then blackout.)