
SCRIPT SAMPLE

SCENE ONE. The hillside

The cry of a duduk pierces the darkness. In silhouette, the image of a boy, AARONE, on a raised platform. He is listening, intently.

No. 1 "The Sound of Angels"

AARONE: THERE IS A SOUND
 I LONG TO HEAR.
 IT IS THE SOUND
 OF ANGELS NEAR.
 THEIR VOICES SING
 STRONG, LOUD AND CLEAR,
 THEIR VOICES ARE THE VOICE OF GOD

 THEIR VOICES SING
 STRONG, LOUD AND CLEAR,
 THE VOICE OF GOD
 I LONG TO HEAR.

AARONE reaches his hands high and claps them together. HE kneels and drums on the round platform beneath him.

I AM AARONE,
SON OF ISAIAH.
GOD, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
I AM AARONE
AARONE BEN ISAIAH
GOD, IF YOU HEAR ME
LET ME HEAR YOUR ANGELS SING
STRONG, LOUD AND CLEAR.

SCENE TWO. The Marketplace

ENSEMBLE enters from all corners of the stage. They are merchants, buyers, beggars, young thieves, people of all ages buying and selling. Four ROMAN SOLDIERS patrol the marketplace to keep the peace. AARONE steps off platform into the crowded marketplace.

No. 2 “The Marketplace of Bethlehem”

MERCHANTS: COME TO MY SHOP
 BUY IN MY STORE
 STOP AT MY SHOP
 FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR!
 COME TO MY SHOP
 BUY IN MY STORE
 STOP AT MY SHOP
 FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR!

WELCOME TO THE MARKETPLACE OF BETHLEHEM
BE ASSURED
TAKE PEACE OF MIND!
THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN BETHLEHEM
WHERE YOU ARE SURE TO FIND

OLIVE OIL FROM ARABIA
EGYPTIAN COTTON AND GRAINS
CAMELS TO CARRY YOU
WHERE IT NEVER RAINS.
I HAVE SABERS FROM ASSYRIA
INDIAN SILKS GALORE
STALLIONS TO HURRY YOU HOME
FROM A WAR

WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED AND MORE.
WELCOME TO THE MARKETPLACE OF BETHLEHEM.

Lights up on a preaching ZEALOT isolated on the raised platform; all others move in slow motion or are still.

ZEALOT: I TELL YOU,
 ONE WHO WILL RISE UP
 --THOUGH I AM NO PROPHET--
 ONE WHO WILL RISE UP
 --I AM ONLY A SEER--
 ONE WHO WILL RISE UP
 WILL BRING DOWN GREAT CAESAR

SOLDIERS move toward ZEALOT, threateningly. Three MERCHANTS intercede, tempting SOLDIERS with their wares.

MERCHANT 1: COME TO MY SHOP
MERCHANT 2: BUY IN MY STORE.
MERCHANT 3: STOP AT MY SHOP.
MERCH. 1, 2 & 3: FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR.

MERCHANTS: COME TO MY SHOP
BUY IN MY STORE.
STOP AT MY SHOP.
FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR.

ZEALOT: I TELL YOU
HE BORN AMONG US
WILL DRIVE OUT THE ROMANS.
I TELL YOU
HE BORN AMONG US
WILL DRIVE OUT KING HEROD.

MERCHANTS: WELCOME TO THE MARKETPLACE OF BETHLEHEM

Two SOLDIERS step up to the raised platform, circling ZEALOT.

SOLDIER: YOU'RE IN NEED OF CORRECTION
ZEALOT: I TELL YOU.
SOLDIER: THESE MAD SPEECHES MUST CEASE.
ZEALOT: ONE WHO WILL RISE UP.
SOLDIER: AND YOU PREACH INSURRECTION
YOU'RE DISTURBING THE PEACE.
YOU'RE A WASP IN A NEST
ZEALOT: I SPEAK OF WHAT WILL COME.
SOLDIER: GETTING READY TO STING
ZEALOT: CAN YOU NOT HEAR THE DRUM?
SOLDIER: YOU ARE UNDER ARREST
IN THE NAME OF THE KING

The SOLDIERS drag the ZEALOT away.

ZEALOT: GOD IS SUMMONING HIS ARMY OF ANGELS!

MERCHANTS: COME TO MY SHOP
BUY IN MY STORE.
STOP AT MY SHOP.
FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR.

MERCHANTS and buyers part slowly, and AARONE is drawn to the call of the drum merchant, KHAMET. All freeze in place except KHAMET and AARONE.

KHAMET: DRUMS FOR SALE!
DRUMS, DRUMS, DRUMS!

KHAMET now addresses AARONE directly, punctuated by calls to other unseen passerby.

DRUMS CUT FROM
--DRUMS FOR SALE!--
THE STRONGEST TREES.
NO BETTER DRUM
--DRUMS FOR SALE!--
THAN THESE
DRUMS, DRUMS, DRUMS.

DRUMS STRETCHED FROM
--DRUMS FOR SALE!--
THE FINEST SKINS.
COME HEAR A DRUM
DRUM, DRUM, DRUM A DRUM.

KHAMET: See something you like?

AARONE: I like them all.

KHAMET: The finest choices in all of Judea.

KHAMET: THIS ONE CALLS THE GUESTS TO THE FEAST
SEE THE CARVINGS DEEP ON THE SIDE
THIS ONE, FIT FOR ONLY A PRIEST
WE CALL IT JERUSALEM'S PRIDE
THIS ONE, BENT FROM--LOOK--SOLID OAK
FLAWLESS JOINTING, BARELY A SIGN
THIS ONE--FEEL IT--ONLY A STROKE
WILL TELL YOU NO SKIN IS SO FINE.

AARONE: I want a drum loud enough that God can hear me.

KHAMET: *(handing a drum to AARONE)* Ah, then this is the drum for you.

AARONE: THE SILENCE OF MY PRAYERS
WAS ONCE MY PLACE TO START.
NOW THE BEATING OF THIS DRUM
CAN SPEAK MY HEART.

VOICES: DRUM, DRUM, DRUM!

AARONE: WHAT I FEEL IN MY SOUL,
I SPEAK NOW THROUGH MY HANDS.
AND MAYBE GOD WILL HEAR MY PRAYERS.

AARONE lifts his hands high and brings them down with all his might, hitting the drum with a mighty sound.

KHAMET: *(taking drum)* Whoa! Easy, boy. That will be one gold coin.

AARONE: But I have no money, sir.

KHAMET: Expensive taste for a man with no coin.

ISAIAH, AARONE'S father, enters with satchels filled with food.

ISAIAH: Aarone, come. We go—I, to greet our guests—you, to take the sheep to graze.

AARONE: Yes, Papa.

AARONE and ISAIAH get lost in the mass of humanity as the marketplace again becomes a street of chaos and noise, selling and buying.

MERCHANTS: COME TO MY SHOP
BUY IN MY STORE.
STOP AT MY SHOP.
FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR.

ENSEMBLE exits, leaving KHAMET alone on center platform.

KHAMET: DRUMS FOR SALE
DRUMS, DRUM, DRUMS FOR SALE.

SCENE THREE. Outside the inn

The ENSEMBLE is now a group of travelers trying to get into a very crowded inn. They are noisy and persistent. ESTHER stands in doorway of the inn, as ISAIAH and AARONE push their way through the throng.

ISAIAH: Let me through! Please. Let me get by.

ESTHER: *(yelling above the din)* I am sorry, my friends! There is no room. We are full.

ISAIAH: *(reaching ESTHER, calling out)* We are sorry, travelers. There is no room here. Every corner of every room is filled. Please, move on.

ESTHER and ISALAH exit through the door of the inn. The crowd disperses, revealing a man, YOSEF OF NAZARETH, who sits in the road, squatting. A woman, MIRIAM, is kneeling next to him. AARONE approaches.

AARONE: Is she sick?

YOSEF: She is with child.

AARONE: She will have her baby soon?

YOSEF: Yes.

AARONE: Here in the road?

YOSEF: We have gone from inn to inn. Every place is full.

AARONE: Wait here. *(running to the door of the inn)* Mama, Papa, come outside! Come quickly!

ESTHER: *(at the door)* Aarone, what is it?

AARONE: Look, Mama.

ESTHER: *(running to MIRIAM)* Oh, my God.

ISALAH enters, rushing to ESTHER'S side.

MIRIAM: It is soon.

ESTHER: *(trying to lift MIRIAM to her feet)* Come, come inside. *(to YOSEF)* You, help me with her. Isaiah, help, please.

ISALAH: There is not a foot of space in the house, Esther.

ESTHER: She cannot have her baby here in the road.

Miriam cries out.

AARONE: Papa, the barn?

ISALAH: Yes. It is all we have. You are welcome to it.

MIRIAM: *(in pain)* He is coming.

ESTHER: It is only a stable, but it will be warm and dry. Come, this way.

ISALAH leads the group to the stable. As THEY move, lights cross to reveal a stable, interior.

SCENE FOUR. The stable

ISALAH and YOSEF enter and prepare a place for MIRIAM to lie down. ESTHER enters, assisting MIRIAM. AARONE follows closely.

ESTHER: Aarone, bring me a blanket.

AARONE exits, quickly.

ISALAH: *(to ESTHER)* You will be all right?

ESTHER: Yes, yes. Of course.

ISALAH: Then I must return to our guests.

ESTHER: Go, go. We will be fine.

ISALAH exits to the inn. With YOSEF'S help, ESTHER assists MIRIAM to lie down.

ESTHER: Come, my dear. Easy. You are safe here. All will be well.

AARONE: *(enters with multicolored striped blanket)* This one, Mama?

ESTHER: Your favorite, Aarone?

AARONE: I don't mind.

ESTHER: Then roll it up for a pillow. *(helping MIRIAM lie down)* What is your name, child?

MIRIAM: Miriam.

ESTHER: Miriam, lie back. *(to YOSEF)* And you are?

YOSEF: Yosef of Nazareth.

ESTHER: Yosef, put your arms under her back. *(YOSEF does and MIRIAM lies back)* That's it.

Yes. Yes. Easy, easy. Lift her legs gently. There we go. Good.

AARONE: *(handing ESTHER rolled up blanket)* Here, Mama.

ESTHER: *(placing pillow under MIRIAM'S head)* Now, lay your head down. There, that's better.

MIRIAM cries out in pain.

ESTHER: It will be soon.

MIRIAM: Help me. God, help me. Oh, my God, help me.

ESTHER: *(soothing her)* It's all right. It's all right.

YOSEF: What can I do?

ESTHER: Wipe her brow. Remind her to breathe. And you be ready to be a papa. Aarone, you go now.

AARONE: I want to stay.

ESTHER: There will be much pain, and Miriam needs to cry out. You are not afraid?

AARONE: No, Mama.

ESTHER: Good. It is life coming into the world. *(kneeling to MIRIAM)* Breathe deeply, my child, and cry out so even Heaven can hear you, and all will be well. *(to a mesmerized YOSEF)* And you, Yosef of Nazareth, you'll do no good standing like a column in the synagogue. You also must remember to breathe.

YOSEF: *(kneeling beside MIRIAM, wiping her forehead)* I am here, Miriam. I am here.

ESTHER: It is time. Now it begins.

LIGHTS fade.

SCENE FIVE. King Herod's Palace

HEROD is pacing as his chief minister, ALABAR, pleads with him.

ALABAR: I think it wise you see them, Majesty.

HEROD: No.

ALABAR: They have traveled far from Persia, Arabia and India.

HEROD: For what purpose? What do they want?

ALABAR: They bring news.

HEROD: *(suddenly interested)* Yes?

ALABAR: That a new king is to be born here in Judea.

HEROD: *(outraged)* A new king? A new king!

ALABAR: They say they have read it in the prophecies and in the sky.

HEROD: Show them in.

Trumpets. Three magnificently dressed men, MAGI, enter. They bow deeply to HEROD.

HEROD: *(gesturing for them to rise)* Up! Up! Up! Who are you? What do you call yourselves?

PERSIAN: Magi.

ARABIAN: Scholars.

INDIAN: Prophets and seers.

HEROD: Seers! Well, can you see this?

No. 3 “Herod the Great”

HEROD: SEE THIS ROOM, SEE THIS GOWN?
 SEE THIS PALACE I CALL HOME
 GIVEN ME BY DECREE
 OF THE EMPEROR OF ROME?

 SEE THIS GOLD, SEE THIS THRONE?
 SEE THIS CROWN UPON MY HEAD?
 SEE THIS RING? I’M THE KING.
 YOU MUST WORSHIP ME INSTEAD.

MAGI: WE BRING YOU GLAD TIDINGS!
 WE BRING YOU GOOD NEWS!
 A SAVIOR’S BEEN BORN
 A NEW KING OF THE JEWS.

HEROD: BUT I HAVE SOME ISSUE WITH THIS NEWS YOU BRING
 HERE IN JUDEA THERE’S ONLY ONE KING.
 THAT KING IS

 HEROD THE GREAT!
 THE RUTHLESS KING OF THE JEWS.

I HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY ROME
FOR MY UNORTHODOX VIEWS.

AND THOUGH HEROD THE KING,
RULES BY TYRANNICAL CODES.
THEY CALL ME HEROD THE GREAT
I BUILD THEM TEMPLES AND ROADS.

THEY SAY I'M HEROD THE CRUEL,
I RULE BY TERROR AND FEAR.
THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE KING:
THE KING WHO'S STANDING RIGHT HERE.

PERSIAN: We have located a new star in the heavens, Majesty.
HEROD: Wine, Gentlemen.

SERVANTS hand a goblet to each of the MAGI.

ARABIAN: And it is moving.
INDIAN: We are following it to its destination.
PERSIAN: To a rare and amazing event.

A SERVANT passes a tray of small loaves of exquisite bread.

HEROD: And lovely loaves made from Judean grain.

MAGI: WE PROCLAIM A NEW GOD.
ASSURED WE ARE RIGHT.
WE BELIEVE HE'S THE CHILD
THEY CALL THE NEW LIGHT.

HEROD: YOU CALL HIM A NEW GOD.
YOU'RE GOING TOO FAR.
YOU HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY
THAT SHINY NEW STAR.
SO BEFORE YOU BOW DOWN AND
COMMIT HERESY,
BE SURE YOU'RE NOT SPOUTING
A FALSE PROPHECY.

ARABIAN: We repeat only what has been foretold, Majesty.
ALABAR: Has it been foretold where this star will settle in the skies?
INDIAN: It is prophesied it will lead us to Bethlehem.

HEROD: (*bitter and sarcastic*) How predictable! The city of David, cradle of kings. Hah!

PERSIAN: So it is written.

HEROD: So I have read. I can read

————END OF SCRIPT SAMPLE————