

Beth, Alice & Maxine

Kid's Audition Pieces (Good Kids)

Beth.

BETH. The Herdmans were the worst kids in the whole history of the world. They lied and stole and smoked cigars, even the girls, and talked dirty and hit little kids and cussed their teachers and took the name of the Lord in vain and set fire to Fred Shoemaker's old broken down tool house.

(Spot up on MAXINE and ALICE.)

ALICE. And that's not all! Somebody sent five dozen doughnuts for the firemen and the Herdmans ate them all, and what they couldn't eat they stuffed in their pockets and down the front of their shirts.

MAXINE. And they wrote this really really dirty word on the back of Naomi Waddell's favorite turtle, so now Naomi can't take it to the Y.M.C.A. pet show...her mother won't let her.

ALICE. What was the word?

(MAXINE whispers it.)

(horried) Oh-h-h!

MAXINE. And that's not all! They did it with fluorescent paint, so it glows in the dark. When you can't even see the turtle, you can still see the word.

ALICE. And they put a whole bunch of tadpoles in the school drinking fountain, and Miss Barnes swallowed two or three by mistake. Somebody yelled, "Mildred, stop! You're drinking tadpoles! ...but it was too late.

MAXINE. Did she get sick?

ALICE. Not right away.

BETH. Oh, come on, Alice! (mimicking her) I don't know....!

ALICE. I didn't dare raise my hand. Imogene would have killed me! She said, "I'm going to be Mary in this play, and if you open your mouth or raise your hand you'll wish you didn't." And I said, "I'm always Mary in the Christmas pageant." And she said, "go ahead then, and next spring when the pussywillows come out I'll stick a pussywillow so far down your ear that nobody can reach it...and it'll sprout there and grow and grow, and you'll spend the rest of your life with a pussywillow bush growing out of your ear!"

BETH. You know she wouldn't do that!

ALICE. She would too! Herdmans will do anything. You just watch, they'll do something terrible and ruin the whole pageant...and it's all your mother's fault!

Beth

BETH. We never did start over. And we never did go through the whole thing.

(MRS. MCCARTHY enters stage right and crosses, sniffing the air, to exit stage left, as BETH speaks.)

BETH. The five minutes turned into fifteen minutes, and Imogene Herdman spent the whole time smoking cigars in the ladies' room. Then Mrs. McCarthy went to the ladies' room and saw all the smoke and called the fire department. And they came...right away.

BETH. They cleared everybody out of the building and dragged a fire hose through the church looking for a fire to put out...but the only one they found was in the kitchen... All the applesauce cake burned up. Of course all the ladies were mad about that, and Mrs. McCarthy was mad, and my mother was mad.

Beth & Alice

ALICE. It's...like a diary.

BETH. (snatches the book and reads) It is not. It's all about the Herdmans. (reads aloud) Imogene curses and swears all the time. Ralph talks about sexy things. Mrs. Bradley... (gives ALICE a fierce look) ...Mrs. Bradley called Mary pregnant... (if looks could kill) ...Gladys Herdman drinks communion wine... It isn't wine, it's grape juice.

ALICE. I don't care what it is, she drinks it. I've seen her three times with her mouth all purple. They steal, too—if you shake the birthday bank it doesn't make a sound, because they stole all the pennies out of it. And every time you go in the ladies' room the whole air is blue, and Imogene Herdman is sitting there in the Mary costume, smoking cigars!

BETH. (angry) And you wrote all this down? What for?

ALICE. (nose to nose with BETH) For my mother and Reverend Hopkins and the Ladies Aid Society and anybody else who wants to know what happened when the whole Christmas pageant turns out to be a big mess!

Elmer / Alice, Beth, Maxine

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Mother: You know what Mrs. Armstrong

always tells you—there are no small parts, only small actors. Isn't that what Mrs. Armstrong always says?

ELMER. That's what she always says, but she never says what it means.

MOTHER. Don't you know what it means?

MAXINE. I know what it means. It means that the short kids have to be in the front row of the angel choir or else nobody can see them.

MOTHER. Well...not exactly. It really means that the littlest baby angel is just as important as Mary.

ALICE. (full of herself) I don't think anyone is as important as Mary.

BETH. Well, naturally that's what you think, Alice. I think Jesus is more important.

MAXINE. I still think it means short kids have to be in the front row...

Elmer

Good Kids (pg 2)

Shirley, Juanita, Hobie, Charlie

MOTHER. I see. Well, will someone please tell Beverly about the rehearsals? ...The next four Wednesdays, after school. Plan to be here for every one.

ELMER. What if we get sick?

MOTHER. You won't get sick. Of course, Mary and Joseph must *absolutely* come to every rehearsal...

ELMER. What if they get sick?

MOTHER. They won't get sick either, Elmer.

ELMER. Well, Beverly got sick and we didn't even start yet.

Hobie, David, Charlie

Mother There, we do have some volunteers after all! Yes, Hobie, would you like to be a Wise Man?

HOBIE. No, I just wanted to say I can't be a shepherd. We're going to Philadelphia.

MOTHER. Why didn't you say so before?

HOBIE. I just remembered.

DAVID. My mother doesn't want me to be a shepherd.

MOTHER. Why not?

DAVID. I don't know. She just said, don't be a shepherd.

CHARLIE. I'm not going to be a shepherd!

MOTHER. (*reverting from pageant director to exasperated parent*) Oh, yes, you are! ...What's the matter with all of you?

ELMER. I don't want to be a shepherd... Gladys Herdman hits too hard!

MOTHER. Why, Gladys isn't going to hit anybody! The Angel of the Lord just visits the shepherds in the fields and tells them Jesus is born.

ELMER. And hits them!

MOTHER. Elmer, that's ridiculous, and I don't want to hear another word about it, from anyone. No shepherds may quit...or get sick. Now that's all for today, boys and girls, and you can go...

Leroy, Claude, Elmer, Alice, Ralph, Juanita

MOTHER The inn is back here, offstage...and the shepherds come in and gather around the manger...

LEROY. Where'd all the shepherds come from, anyway?

CLAUDE. What's an inn?

ELMER. It's like a motel, where people go to spend the night.

CLAUDE. What people? Jesus?

ALICE. Oh, honestly! Jesus wasn't even born yet. Mary and Joseph went there.

RALPH. Why?

ELMER. To pay their taxes.

OLLIE. At a motel?!

IMOGENE. Shut up, Ollie! Everybody shut up! I want to hear *her*. (*to MOTHER*) Begin at the beginning.

MOTHER. The beginning...?

IMOGENE. The beginning of the play. What happens first?

BABY ANGEL SHIRLEY. I can't find my halo.

BABY ANGEL JUANITA. My wings got all bent.

ANGEL CHOIR MEMBER DORIS. Janet's got my robe.

BABY ANGEL SHIRLEY. My mother doesn't have any white sheets. Can I wear a sheet with balloons on it?

HOBIE. I haven't got any costume. I was never a shepherd before.

CHARLIE. You have to wear your father's bathrobe. That's what I have to do.

HOBIE. He hasn't got a bathrobe.

CHARLIE. What does he hang around the house in?

HOBIE. His underwear.

David

DAVID. Mrs. Bradley, you can have my little brother for Jesus.

MOTHER. (*newly hopeful*) I didn't know you had a new baby, David.

DAVID. He's not new. He's four years old, but he's double-jointed and he could probably scrunch up.

MOTHER. Well, I don't think...

Charlie

CHARLIE. I don't care what everybody else said, that's what they really thought. All that other stuff is okay but the main good thing about church is that the Herdmans aren't there, ever. (*CHARLIE drops his coat on sofa.*)

FATHER. (*taking his coat off*) That's not a very Christian sentiment, it seems to me.

MOTHER. (*collecting the coats*) It's a very practical sentiment. Charlie was black and blue all last year because he had to sit next to Leroy Herdman in school. (*She exits to hang up the coats.*)

FATHER. Is he the worst one? Leroy?

CHARLIE. They're all the worst one.

BETH. Ralph's the biggest, so if Ralph gets you...

CHARLIE. That doesn't make any difference. Gladys isn't big, but she's fast, and she's mean, and she bites.

FATHER. I'm sorry I asked. Just stay away from all of them.

CHARLIE. That's what I said. Stay away from them. Go to church.

MOTHER. (*as she enters*) I'm glad to hear you feel that way.

CHARLIE. (*suspicious*) Why?

MOTHER. No arguments this year about the Christmas pageant.

CHARLIE. I don't want to be a shepherd again!

MOTHER. Tell Mrs. Armstrong you want to be a Wise Man.

CHARLIE. I don't want to be in it!

CHARLIE. Hey, Leroy, you give me back my lunch!

LEROY. Sure, kid, here. *(hands him a lunch bag)*

CHARLIE. *(looks inside)* You stole my dessert again!

LEROY. How do you know?

CHARLIE. Because it isn't here.

LEROY. What was it?

CHARLIE. Two Twinkies.

LEROY. That's right. That's what it was. *(starts to leave)*

CHARLIE. Hey, Leroy! You think it's so great to steal my dessert every day and you know what? I don't care if you steal my dessert. I'll even give you my dessert. I get all the dessert I want in Sunday school.

LEROY. *(interested in this)* Oh, yeah? What kind of dessert?

CHARLIE. All kinds. Chocolate cake and candy bars and cookies...and Twinkies and Big Wheels. We get refreshments all the time, all we want.

LEROY. You're a liar.

CHARLIE. ...And ice cream, and doughnuts and cupcakes and...

LEROY. Who gives it to you?

CHARLIE. *(momentarily stumped)* Uh...the minister.

LEROY. Why? Is he crazy?

CHARLIE. No... I think he's rich.

LEROY. *(pause)* ...Sunday school, huh?

IMOGENE. Well, I wouldn't just hang around out in the barn. I'd go get a room.

CLAUDE. She said there wasn't any room.

IMOGENE. Then I'd throw somebody out. I'd tell them I've got this baby and it's the middle of winter...so either get out or move over.

RALPH. I'd go after Ol' Herod.

LEROY. I'd send the angel after him. She could just point her electric finger and turn him into a pile of ashes.

GLADYS. *(happily)* Yeh! ...Zap!

OLLIE. What's the name of this play? She never said.

CLAUDE. Christmas pageant.

OLLIE. That's no name. That's what it is.

GLADYS. I know a name! ...I know a name! I'd call it... Revenge at Bethlehem!

IMOGENE. What's a pageant?

ALICE. It's a play.

IMOGENE. Like on TV? What's it about?

ALICE. It's about Jesus.

IMOGENE. *(visibly disenchanted about Sunday school)* Everything here is.

ALICE. And it's about Mary. Mostly, it's about Mary.

IMOGENE. Who's Mary?

ALICE. I am... Well, *probably* I am. I know the part.

(ALICE walks off stage left: IMOGENE watches her go, then looks out at the audience, wearing a cheshire-cat smile. Spot off IMOGENE. Curtain)

Mother. ...Janet? ...Roberta? ...Alice, don't you want to volunteer?

ALICE. *(choking it out)* No, I don't want to.

GLADYS. I'll be Mary!

IMOGENE. Shut up, Gladys. I'm already Mary. You be a Wise Man.

MOTHER. Well, the Wise Men are usually boys. Of course, they don't *have* to be, and we could...

LEROY. I'll be a Wise Man!

OLLIE. Me, too. Claude, you wanta be a Wise Man? Raise your hand.

CLAUDE. What's a Wise Man?

RALPH. Just raise your hand!

(CLAUDE raises his hand.)

GLADYS. What's left to be?

IMOGENE. Some angel.

GLADYS. I'll be that. What is it?

IMOGENE. I'll get us a baby.

MOTHER. How can you do that?

IMOGENE. There's always two or three babies in carriages outside the supermarket. I'll get one of them.

MOTHER. Imogene! You can't just walk off with somebody's baby! ...I guess we'll forget about a baby. We'll just use the doll.

IMOGENE. Yeh. That's better, anyway... A doll can't bite you.

MOTHER. And, Imogene...you know Mary didn't wear earrings.

IMOGENE. I have to wear these. I got my ears pierced and if I don't keep something in them, they'll grow together.

MOTHER. Well, they won't grow together in an hour and a half. What did the doctor tell you to do?

IMOGENE. What doctor?

MOTHER. Well, who pierced your ears?

IMOGENE. Gladys.

Kid Auditor Pieces (pg 4) Heidman's

MOTHER. *(reading)* ...And wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

IMOGENE. My God! They didn't have room for Jesus?

MOTHER. Well, nobody knew the baby was going to be Jesus.

IMOGENE. Didn't Mary know? *(points to RALPH)* Didn't he know? What was the matter with Joseph, that he didn't tell them? Her pregnant and everything...

LEROY. What's a manger? Some kind of bed?

MOTHER. Well, they didn't have a bed in the barn, so Mary had to use whatever there was. What would you do if you had a new baby and no bed to put the baby in?

IMOGENE. We put Gladys in a bureau drawer.

MOTHER. *(slightly taken aback)* Well, there you are. You didn't have a bed for Gladys, so you had to use... something else.

RALPH. Oh, we had a bed...only Ollie was still in it and he wouldn't get out. He didn't like Gladys, *(yells at OLLIE)* remember how you didn't like Gladys?

BETH. *(to ALICE)* That was pretty smart of Ollie, not to like Gladys right off the bat.

MOTHER. *Anyway...* A manger is a large wooden feeding trough for animals.

CLAUDE. What were the wadded up clothes?

MOTHER. The what?

CLAUDE. *(pointing in the Bible)* It said in there...she wrapped him in wadded up clothes.

MOTHER. *Swaddling* clothes. People used to wrap babies up very tightly in big pieces of material, to make them feel cozy...

IMOGENE. You mean they tied him up and put him in a feedbox? Where was the Child Welfare?

GLADYS. The Child Welfare's at our house every five minutes!

ALICE. There wasn't any child welfare in Bethlehem!

IMOGENE. I'll say there wasn't!

MOTHER. *(raising her voice)* ...And there were shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the Glory of...

GLADYS. *(Leaps up, flinging her arms out)* Shazam!

MOTHER. What?

GLADYS. Out of the black night, with horrible vengeance, the Mighty Marvo...

MOTHER. I don't know what you're talking about, Gladys.

GLADYS. The Mighty Marvo, in Amazing Comics...out of the black night, with horrible vengeance...

MOTHER. This is the angel of the Lord, who comes to the shepherds...

GLADYS. Out of nowhere, right? In the black night, right?

MOTHER. Well... In a way...

(GLADYS repeats her big line, almost to herself, as she sits down, looking pleased.)

GLADYS. Shazam...!

GLADYS. Hey! ...Hey! ...Unto you a child is born! ...It's Jesus, and he's in the barn... Go see him!

(When the SHEPHERDS hesitate, she grabs one to move him along, and then another one.)

Go on, he's over there... Go on!