

There's no one quite like Grandma



- a different Nativity Story

by

Stewart Auty for Primary Schools

The Evelyn family, Mum, Dad, Sam and Janet prepare to make their Christmas visit to see Grandma. Unsurprisingly, the children are reluctant to go, but when they arrive, Grandma shows them her magical Christmas cards, and the first Christmas story unfolds before their eyes. This is an unusual retelling of the traditional story, funny yet moving, giving everyone a real insight to help understand how and why events happened as they did. Look out for the rapping angels!

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The script is available by email for you to customize.

No music is supplied with this production, but there are suggestions for traditional carols, and for sing-along songs to encourage audience participation.

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The original production included songs as listed, but they are suggested only for inclusion to enhance the production. The script still works as a standalone story. Most if not all backing tracks for the songs can be found on 'karaoke' type CDs, or via the Internet as downloadable mp3 tracks. "Ameritz" is a good place to start. Magic Parrot (The Publisher of the script) is unable to provide the actual musical tracks, lyrics, nor any licence to use them! Having said this, most schools will be able to make use of such tracks and lyrics for educational purposes. Please do check such permissions with your bursar, headteacher or local authority.

A large reversible screen at the back, centre stage can have a log fire on one side and a simple stable on the other. The backdrop is a large copy of Van Gogh's painting of Starry Night.

At one side of the stage there is an old fashioned rocking chair, and a low stool. Once the family arrive at Grandma's house, Grandma sits with the children throughout the play. On the opposite side are four chairs, on a slight diagonal, representing the family car, which can be removed later. There is a steering wheel on the floor. For later scenes, there should be enough room for the full cast to enter stage for all songs. The two narrators have a lectern at one side of the stage. The actors who play Mum and Dad should also play Mary and Joseph.

Cast:

Narrator 1	Shepherd 4
Narrator 2	Shepherd 5
Mum /Mary	Angel 2
Dad /Joseph	Angel 3
Sam	Adviser 1
Janet	King Herod
Gabriel	Adviser 2
Officer	Melchior
Guard 1	Balthazar
Guard 2	Gaspar
Shepherd 1	Innkeeper
Shepherd 2	Innkeeper's Wife
Shepherd 3	Soldier 1 2 and 3

Guards/Soldiers parts could be doubled up.

'There's no one Quite Like Grandma' by St Winifred's School Choir could be the opening song instead of 'Emmanuel'.

Opening Song – Emmanuel

*When is he coming,
When, oh when is he coming, the Redeemer?
When will we see him,
When, oh when will we see him, the Redeemer?*

*Come, oh come, from your kingdom up there,
From your kingdom up there, above.
Come, oh come, to your people on earth,
To your people on earth bring love.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel.*

*Long years awaiting
Many years here awaiting, the Redeemer.
Ready to greet him,
Always ready to greet him, the Redeemer.*

*Come, oh come, from your kingdom up there,
From your kingdom up there, above.
Come, oh come, to your people on earth,
To your people on earth bring love.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel.*

NARRATOR 1: Welcome to our Christmas Production.

NARRATOR 2: Our story features the Evelyn family. Let's introduce them....

NARRATOR 1: Mum, Mrs Evelyn.

(Enter mum, who bows)

NARRATOR 2: Dad, Mr Evelyn.

(Enter Dad, dressed in trilby, over long tie and oversize raincoat. He nods to audience)

NARRATOR 1: And their two children

(Enter two children)

NARRATOR 2: Sam and Janet.

NARRATOR 1: What? Sam and Janet Evelyn?

NARRATORS: *(sing)* Sam and Janet Evelyn - You may meet a stranger!

(Audience groans)

NARRATOR 1: Hmm. I suppose all the grandparents in the audience will appreciate that. The others, well, I don't think they'll understand.

NARRATOR 2: Our play has broad appeal. There is something for everyone.

NARRATOR 1: I hope so.

NARRATOR 2: Let's make a start shall we?

NARRATOR 1: OK! T'was the night before Christmas

NARRATOR 2: Are you sure that's the correct opening?

NARRATOR 1: *(points to script)* Look, that's what it says here. T'was the night before Christmas.

NARRATOR 2: Oh, yes, I see.

NARRATOR 1: The Evelyn family are about to set off to visit Grandma.

NARRATOR 2: They go every year.

NARRATOR 1: And the children are getting a bit fed up.

NARRATOR 2: We're having the vicar for Christmas.

NARRATOR 1: Makes a change from turkey, I suppose.

NARRATOR 2: Let's see how they get on.

MUM: Nearly ready, children?

DAD: Yes, hurry up. We need to make a start soon.

SAM: It's the same every year. Christmas Day at Grandma's.

JANET: Boring or what?

SAM: It wasn't too bad when we were little.

JANET: And Granddad was still alive.

SAM: Yeah, he was good fun. Always played games with us.

JANET: Always spent time with us. He made it interesting.

SAM: But it's different now. Grandma's all on her own.

JANET: And she's getting on. I heard Mum telling Dad. It's too much for her looking after the whole family.

SAM: But it's a family tradition. If it's Christmas, it's a visit to see Grandma.

JANET: Do we have to go, Dad?

SAM: Can't we stay at home this year?

JANET: We're too big for visiting relatives.

SAM: We want to stay at home.

MUM: That's out of the question!

DAD: Now listen, you two. We don't go to see Grandma for our benefit, we go for hers.

MUM: Since Granddad died, she's all on her own.

DAD: And in any case, we go every Christmas to see her.

JANET: (Mocks Sam) It's a Christmas tradition!

SAM: But that's the point! It's always the same!

DAD: Hey, hang on! We haven't brought you two up to be selfish. Stop thinking about yourselves for a minute.

JANET: But it was good when we were little, when Granddad was still alive.

MUM: And that's why it's even more important than ever to see Grandma at Christmas.

DAD: Most of the year, she's by herself, so we make a special effort to keep the family tradition and visit her just like before.

SAM: But it's always the same. Grandma will be too busy cooking the Christmas dinner to spend any time with us.

JANET: And there's nothing for us to do.

MUM: Well, this year will be different. I've told Grandma that I'll do all the cooking, so she can have a rest, and spend time with her lovely Grandchildren.

SAM: They're not going too, our cousins, are they?

MUM: No, silly, I meant you two.

JANET: Thank goodness for that.

SAM: So it will be just the four of us?

DAD: And Grandma too, of course.

SAM: O.K. But can I take my iPad?

JANET: And can I take my MP3 player?

DAD: Yes, whatever you want. But hurry up, we need to set off soon. It's a long drive to Grandma's house. The Satnav says it will take more than three hours to get there, so we need to get going!

MUM: Now have we got everything?

DAD: Food, drink, children?

SAM: We were a bit selfish, I suppose.
JANET: A bit thoughtless too. There's no one quite like Grandma.
DAD: So we're all ready at last? Out to the car.
SAM: Can I sit in the front this time?
DAD: Every time we go out in the car, it's the same question. And it's the same answer. I don't know why you keep asking.
SAM: There's always hope that one day you'll change your mind.
DAD: Well not today. In the back, both of you.
(Children climb into the back seats)
DAD: Do you want to drive, dear, or shall I?
MUM: Oh, you can. We know the way, so there's no need for a map.
DAD: That's fortunate. You're terrible at map reading. That's why we bought the Satnav!
MUM: Careful! Anyone who can read a map upside down must be very talented!
DAD: Fingers in ears, you two!
MUM: Why do you always say that?
DAD: If their fingers are in their ears, I know I'll not trap them when I shut the doors.
MUM: Then just say that. They're not babies anymore.
DAD: Fine. (picks up steering wheel from floor). Doors? Seatbelts? We have ignition and lift off! (Mimes gear changing etc)
MUM: We're all set. As it's Sunday, it should be quite quiet on the roads. I hope you two can amuse yourselves, without falling out.
JANET: Falling out? What us? Shall we play I spy Sam?
SAM: No, I've a better idea. Let's do a Christmas alphabet.

Christmas Alphabet

*C is for the Candy trimmed around the Christmas tree
H is for the Happiness with all the family
R is for the Reindeer prancing by the window pane
I is for the Icing on the cake as sweet as sugar cane
S is for the Stocking on the chimney wall
T is for the Toys beneath the tree so tall
M is for the Mistletoe where everyone is kissed
A is for the Angels who make up the Christmas list
S is for old Santa who makes every kid his pet
Be good and he'll bring you everything in your Christmas Alphabet*

(Verse could be repeated and audience encouraged to sing along)

NARRATOR 1: So the Evelyn family set off to visit Grandma.
NARRATOR 2: It wasn't a long way.
NARRATOR 1: The children amused themselves by trying to complete a Christmas Alphabet.
SAM: Angels
JANET: Bethlehem
SAM: Carols
JANET: 'D' – Help! I can't think of one for 'D'!
MUM: *(whispers)* Decorations
JANET: Decorations!
SAM: That's cheating! I win! Are we nearly there, yet?
DAD: Go back to the game Sam. You haven't won. Janet is younger than you, so sometimes she needs a bit of help.

JANET: You're supposed to say something beginning with 'E'.

SAM: Can't think of one.

JANET: That means I win!

MUM: Easy. Everybody.

SAM: Everybody? That's cheating!

MUM: But everybody loves Christmas!....

NARRATOR 2: They were near the end of their journey now.

SAM: W - Wise Men

JANET: X has to be Xmas

SAM: And Y can only be Yule, so I win. You can't think of a word beginning with 'Z'.

JANET: I don't need to. It looks like we've arrived.

(Family mime getting out of the car, and shutting the door, stretching. Grandma sits in rocking chair)

DAD: Hello! Are you there, Mum?

GRANDMA: Come in son, the door's open.

MUM: Oooh, it's good to see you again, Mum. (Big hug)

GRANDMA: I won't get up if it's all the same. It's my knees, you know.

DAD: Hello, Mum. How have you been keeping? How are you? (Another hug)

GRANDMA: Mustn't grumble dear. But my arthritis is getting worse, and it's not too easy getting about. I don't see too well either, and my feet and legs ache. But apart from that, and my bad chest, I mustn't grumble.

DAD: That's it Mum. Always look on the bright side.

GRANDMA: And where are my lovely Grandchildren? Come here both of you!

JANET: Hello Grandma. You look well. (Hug)

GRANDMA: Haven't they grown!

DAD: Well, they're a year older! And we make them sleep in potting compost!

GRANDMA: Come here, Sam. Have you got a big cuddle for your Grandma?

SAM: *(aside)* I hate this bit!

DAD: Go on, Sam. Try to look as though you're pleased to see her.

GRANDMA: He's such a big boy now. *(Tousles Sam's hair)* He reminds me of you when you were little.

SAM: Yuk, don't do that!

GRANDMA: Oh, it's so good to see you all. I look forward to Christmas so much.

MUM: And we all love coming to see you too, don't we?

SAM and JANET: Yes, Mum.

MUM: Well you could sound more enthusiastic.

DAD: Now you sit there Mum, whilst we go into the kitchen, and start to get things ready.

MUM: There's no need for you to worry about anything. It's all taken care of.

(Exit Mum and Dad)

GRANDMA: Now you two, come and sit with your old Grandma. Sit on the floor, Sam, next to me. You can sit on the stool Janet. I want to tell you how important your visit is to me.

SAM: But we come every Christmas, Grandma.

GRANDMA: I know, and I do appreciate it. And I know that since your Granddad died, it's probably not as much fun as it used to be.

JANET: But we always have a lovely time, Grandma.

SAM: We look forward to seeing you. It makes Christmas a very special time.

GRANDMA: I know you're just saying that, but this year, I'm going to try very hard to make it more than special. I want to make it memorable, the best Christmas ever. There should be some magic about Christmas.

SAM: This sounds exciting!

JANET: But how are you going to do that?

GRANDMA: Well, I thought I'd show you some of my Christmas cards.

SAM: But everybody gets Christmas cards.

JANET: They're all the same – robins, and coaches in the snow.

SAM: Pictures of the Nativity, decorations on the trees, Victorian carol singers, they're so predictable.

GRANDMA: But I have some cards that are different. They will help me tell you the story of Christmas, and bring it to life, as if you were there. As if the story unfolded right in front of you.

JANET: So your cards, they're like magic?

GRANDMA: That's right dear. I'll tell you the real story of Christmas, with the help of my magic cards.

SAM: Magic cards? She's finally lost it!

GRANDMA: Christmas should have a bit of magic, that's what I think.

JANET: Better go along with her.

SAM: But we know the story of Christmas. Everybody does.

GRANDMA: But do you know the real story?

JANET: Jesus was born in a stable, and some shepherds and the Wise Men visited.

SAM: That's all there is to it.

GRANDMA: Oh, there's much more than that.

SAM: What do you mean?

GRANDMA: Let me show you my first card. It's a beautiful picture.

JANET: Oh, look, I can see Mary, in her garden.

SAM: She's all by herself, but what's that up in the sky?

GRANDMA: Listen while I tell you, tales to blow your mind. Stop, Look, Listen, see what you will find.

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came.

*The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady," Gloria!*

*"For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favoured lady," Gloria!*

*Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name."
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!*

*Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,*

*and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say--
"Most highly favoured lady," Gloria!*

(Mary is left alone on the stage; Enter Gabriel)

MARY: Who's there? Who are you?

GABRIEL: Don't worry. There's no need to be afraid.

MARY: But I was always brought up never to talk to strangers.

GABRIEL: You can trust me. I bring you good news.

MARY: But I don't know you, so how could you know anything about me?

GABRIEL: You have been chosen by God to have his child.

MARY: Are you winding me up?

GABRIEL: No, it's true. Of all the women that God could have chosen, he picked you.

MARY: And I'm going to have a baby?

GABRIEL: Yes, that's right.

MARY: If you don't mind, I think I had better sit down.

GABRIEL: You are highly favoured in God's eyes.

MARY: But what about Joseph, does he know?

GABRIEL: Joseph knows nothing about this. The child is not his. Your son will be the Son of God.

MARY: What will Joseph think?

GABRIEL: Trust Joseph to do the right thing. He is a decent man. He will not let you down.

MARY: I'm not sure I can take all this in.

GABRIEL: You have found favour with God.

MARY: I hope Joseph will understand.

GABRIEL: Joseph is a good man. Talk to him. He will stand by you.

Stand by me

(Mary solo?)

When the night has come....

(Everyone)

And darlin', darlin', stand by me, oh now now stand by me

GABRIEL: When the baby is born you will call him Jesus. I must go now. You need to talk to Joseph.

MARY: I don't know what to say. How can I tell him?

GABRIEL: You will think of something. Just be honest with him. Here he comes now. This is your chance to explain.

(Exit Gabriel, and enter Joseph)

MARY: Joseph, I need to talk to you.

JOSEPH: Can it wait? I'm busy.

MARY: No you're not, Joseph. We need to talk.

JOSEPH: It's not about that Angel is it?

MARY: You saw him? You were listening?

JOSEPH: It's not every day you're visited by an angel.

MARY: So you know about the baby?

JOSEPH: I couldn't help overhearing. I was angry, at first, but now I think we should be honoured. And he did say I was a decent man. I rather liked that bit.

MARY: Oh, Joseph! I'm so lucky.

JOSEPH: Life always throws up problems. It's how you deal with them that counts.

MARY: So you don't mind?

JOSEPH: It's a test, Mary. We're caught in a trap.

Suspicious Minds

(Joseph solo?)

We're caught in a trap, I can't walk out

Because I love you too much baby

(Mary solo?)

Why can't you see what you're doing to me

When you don't believe a word I say?

(Everyone)

We can't go on together with suspicious minds

And we can't build our dreams

On suspicious minds....

GRANDMA: So you see, when Mary found out she was having God's baby, it was quite a shock.

SAM: We never looked at it like that before.

JANET: I thought Joseph looked just like Dad.

SAM: You'll be telling me next that Mary looked like Mum!

GRANDMA: That's right! Your imagination shows you're already involved with the story.

JANET: I bet it was difficult telling Joseph.

SAM: They were like a real family, with real problems.

GRANDMA: But they were real! And they were a family too!

JANET: Joseph was a good man, standing by Mary.

GRANDMA: Yes, he was. Now Mary and Joseph lived in Galilee, but Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

SAM: Why did that happen?

GRANDMA: Well, it was ordered by the Romans.

JANET: The Romans? I thought they lived in Italy.

GRANDMA: Yes, they did, but they ruled other countries. They had an empire.

SAM: But I thought Herod was the King.

GRANDMA: Yes, he was, but he had no real power. The Romans needed to find out some details about the people and where they lived.

SAM: I know about this! They ordered a Census.

GRANDMA: Look, as the card comes to life. Listen while I tell you, tales to blow your mind. Stop, Look, Listen, see what you will find.

(Enter Soldiers)

OFFICER: *(As soldiers march on)* Sinister, dexter, sinister dexter!

GUARD 1: What's he say?

GUARD 2: He means 'left, right, left, right'.

GUARD 1: Then why doesn't he say that?

GUARD 2: He's speaking in Latin. Because we're Romans.

OFFICER: Is your name really Abramovitch?
GUARD 2: Yes. I am the original Roman Abramovitch.
OFFICER: I hate this place! This isn't the best place in the world.
GUARD 1: I think you're homesick.
OFFICER: Yes, I keep thinking of the green, green grass of home.
GUARD 2: I know what you've got. You've got Tom Jones' Syndrome.
OFFICER: Is it serious?
GUARD 2: It's not unusual.
OFFICER: Shall we make a start?
GUARD 1: Anytime you're ready.
GUARD 2: Hear this, hear this, hear this.
OFFICER: This broadcast is a public information announcement on behalf of your caring
GUARD 2: Your sharing
GUARD 1: Your very overbearing Roman Governor.
OFFICER: Listen carefully; I shall say this only once. Wash out your ears, pin back your lugholes.
GUARD 2: Take heed to our words, for they are important to all the men in this land.
OFFICER: On the appointed day
GUARD 1: All the adult males of the population
OFFICER: Have to go to the place of their birth
GUARD 2: To be counted.
OFFICER: This by order of Caesar Augustus.
GUARD 1: This will happen at the time of the Winter Solstice, or thereabouts.
GUARD 2: In the month which will become known as December.
GUARD 1: For those who can read, notices will be posted in prominent places.
OFFICER: For those who can't, you can phone a friend.
GUARD 2: Further details available on the government website www.census.com
OFFICER: You know, I still keep thinking of the green, green grass of home.
GUARD 1: It won't make any difference. We have to stay here.
GUARD 2: Just do as you're told. You're in the army now.

In the Army (Status Quo)

On vacation in a foreign land....

***** (Optional Interval) *****

NARRATOR 1: Welcome back. We take you now to a hillside outside Bethlehem.
NARRATOR 2: They were out on the hillside taking care of their sheep. With no entertainment, life could get a little tedious.
NARRATOR 1: So they often sang songs together.

(I'll Never Find Another Ewe – The New Seekers)

*There's a new world somewhere
They call The Promised Land
And I'll be there some day
If you will hold my hand
I still need you there beside me
No matter what I do*

For I know I'll never find another ewe....

NARRATOR 1: Do you think they understood that? I'll never find another ewe?

NARRATOR 2: Well, they are a very sophisticated audience. I don't think we need to explain.

NARRATOR 1: Now for most of the time, nothing much happened on the hillside.

NARRATOR 2: But they took their job seriously.

NARRATOR 1: Their first concern was always the safety of their sheep.

NARRATOR 2: But tonight, something remarkable was about to happen.

(Shepherds sit cross legged in a semi-circle)

GRANDMA: My next card showed the shepherds. Can you see them?

JANET: Yes, over there on the hillside.

SAM: They must be quite worried about their sheep during the night.

GRANDMA: They know to protect the sheep. But tonight, there's something special going on.

JANET: Is this more magic from your Christmas cards? It's a beautiful card!

SAM: Look at the stars in the night sky. There's millions of them!

Starry, starry Night

(sung by everyone, or alternatively a select group, possibly just the shepherds)

Starry, starry night....

GRANDMA: Let's watch together, and see what happens.

SHEPHERD 1: It's the same every night.

SHEPHERD 2: Nothing ever changes. What's for supper?

SHEPHERD 3: Shepherd's pie.

SHEPHERD 4: Like I said, nothing changes.

SHEPHERD 1: What do you get if you cross a sheep with a kangaroo?

SHEPHERD 2: I don't know. What do you get if you cross a sheep with a kangaroo?

SHEPHERD 1: A woolly jumper!

SHEPHERD 2: That's a terrible joke. It wasn't even funny the first time you told it. We've heard that joke so many times.

SHEPHERD 1: Yes, I feel quite sheepish in telling it!

SHEPHERD 4: I never thought when I became a shepherd it would be like this.

SHEPHERD 5: Not for us the bright city lights.

SHEPHERD 3: Not for us the excitement of life in the big city.

SHEPHERD 1: Nothing ever happens here, every day's the same.

SHEPHERD 2: And the nights – there's the odd wild animal which might attack the sheep.

SHEPHERD 4: But most of the time it's very quiet.

SHEPHERD 5: I would even say - dull.

SHEPHERD 1: Routine.

SHEPHERD 2: Uninteresting.

SHEPHERD 3: Unexciting.

SHEPHERD 4: Unspectacular.

SHEPHERD 5: Good one! I like that. Unspectacular – very good.

SHEPHERD 1: Your turn.

SHEPHERD 4: Monotonous.

SHEPHERD 3: Tedious.

SHEPHERD 4: Mundane.

SHEPHERD 5: Oh, another excellent synonym! Mundane – super word!
SHEPHERD 2: I can't think of anything else, it's just so boring.
SHEPHERD 5: There! Made you say it! You're out!
SHEPHERD 2: It's not fair! I never know as many words as you lot.
SHEPHERD 4: Let's play I Spy.
SHEPHERD 2: We always play I Spy. Every night.
SHEPHERD 1: You can start.
SHEPHERD 2: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'S'.
SHEPHERD 1: Sheep.
SHEPHERD 4: Too easy. You pick one.
SHEPHERD 1: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'S'.
SHEPHERD 3: Sky.
SHEPHERD 1: That's right.
SHEPHERD 3: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'S'.
SHEPHERD 4: Star. I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'S'.
SHEPHERD 5: Sheep.
SHEPHERD 1: We've had that one.
SHEPHERD 4: It was a different sheep.
SHEPHERD 5: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'S'.
SHEPHERD 2: Star.
SHEPHERD 3: We've had that too.
SHEPHERD 5: It was another star. A different one - look there's lots of them.

It was on a Starry Night

It was on a starry night when the hills were bright
Earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still.
Then in a cattle shed, in a manger bed
a boy was born, king of all the world.
And all the angels sang for him, the bells of heaven rang for him
for a boy was born, king of all the world.
Soon the shepherds came that way where the baby lay
and were kneeling, kneeling by his side.
And their hearts believed again for the peace of men,
for a boy was born, king of all the world.

(A rumble of thunder, and the lights flash)

SHEPHERD 1: What's that?
SHEPHERD 2: I can't see! I'm blinded by the light.
SHEPHERD 3: What on earth is it?
SHEPHERD 4: It's not on earth, it's up there!

END OF SCRIPT SAMPLE

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