

"Stormy Night, Holy Night" Sample page #1

written by Fred Passmore

Actions during the introduction narration: *The stage starts out in darkness which lasts for a few moments as we hear the first few lines of narration and the intro music.*

Narrator: Over 2,000 years ago, on a quiet night in the small town of Bethlehem, words spoken by a prophet came to pass: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." The light that came to men was the Creator of light itself; the Messiah, God With Us, the Lord Jesus Christ. Of Himself, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." When He was born, the skies lit up over a field near Bethlehem as angels announced his birth to the shepherds sitting in darkness.

Actions during the next paragraph: *A light is switched on overhead (to coincide with the above words "sitting in darkness") as the two characters come into the room, the father carrying a flashlight, and the daughter has her smartphone. They go to the area where some boxes are piled up. There are a couple of lawn chairs, or the foldable type one might take to the beach or ballgame, which the father opens and places side by side. He locates a small table or plastic storage box and puts it on the floor in front of their chairs. As he does this, the girl is standing to one side thumbing through her smartphone. Rummaging around for a moment more, her father then brings an old hurricane lantern out of a box and sets it down on the table (or container) in front of them, to use in case they need it. He then reaches into the same box and pulls out a battery-operated radio and puts it on the table (or container) also.*

Narrator: Christmas Eve... for many, it is a special time like no other night of the year... a time of light and warmth, comfort and joy. But this Christmas Eve is not starting out that way for the two people in our story, hurriedly taking refuge in their basement from an approaching storm. For the young lady in particular, this night seems dark and cold, uncomfortable and joyless. Her name is Caroline, and her father is Harold Singer, an electrical engineer who has made a good life for his family in this small mid-western town. They had been in the midst of a somewhat subdued Christmas Eve in their home, the father doing his best to make things cheerful even though one was missing from the usual family celebration. Just a little over a year ago, they had lost his wife, Caroline's mother, to an auto accident just before Christmas. And to make matters worse, only a few weeks later they lost his wife's mother, Caroline's grandmother, after a lingering illness. Now, facing together the storm front coming through, unusual for this time of the year, Harold and his teenaged daughter are taking no chances.

Actions during the next paragraph: *Sitting down, the father tunes through some stations until he hears one with a weather report. They both listen for a few minutes they listen to a newscast about the severe thunderstorms and the tornado watch. The girl begins pacing worriedly as she listens.*

Radio Announcer: ...repeating, the Severe Thunderstorm Watch is in effect until 9 PM in our area, with strong winds up to 75 miles an hour, dangerous lightning, and hail is likely. Under these conditions the formation of a tornado may be possible. It is advised that everyone stay indoors, and if you are on the streets, stop somewhere and take shelter inside. In the event that a tornado is spotted, take cover in the safest part of your home, such as an closet in the center of the house, or ideally a basement. Although tornadoes this time of year are rare, they can happen if conditions are right. In fact the last one in our area in December was reported back in 1982, when the nation experienced the largest Christmastime outbreak, and one of the largest winter tornado outbreaks on record. We'll keep you informed with our up-to-the-minute forecasts, so stay tuned right here for reports. And now, back to more sounds of the season on WGKW.

Actions during the next paragraph: *Just then there is a loud crack of thunder, and the lights go out completely. The girl lets out a quickly-stifled scream by reflex. The father switches on the flashlight, and calmly hands it to his daughter., shaking his head at her outburst. Chagrined, she holds it so he can see to light the lantern, which he does. Then she switches off the flashlight. The oil lantern should be the only light in the scene. On the radio, after the weather update, a Christmas song is playing. Harold sits back down, then leans over and looks through a nearby box of old outdoor Christmas decorations. Commenting that he just didn't feel like putting up the outdoor decorations this year, he asks her if she remembers helping him put them up in years past. She nods, as he takes out a tabletop manger scene. Putting it on the table beside the lamp, he continues to look through the box. He then brings out a Christmas book, reminiscing about reading the Christmas story to her from it when she was small. On the radio, the song "Silent Night" begins playing. "All is calm, all is bright..." He makes a comment about the song on the radio, and then, sitting back down, says he is going to read the story again to get their minds off the storm. He motions her to sit down as he thumbs through it and settles on a page. She sits down reluctantly as he begins to read, but she is not sitting comfortably; she pulls her legs up into the chair and*

puts her arms around her knees, then puts her chin on her knees and rocks a little.

Narrator: With a crack of thunder much closer than the last, and a flash of lightning, the power goes off and they are plunged into darkness. Calmly, Harold switches on the flashlight, then hands it to his daughter to hold as he lights the lantern he had set up. Chiding her a little for her outburst, at her age, he adjusts the light level until the immediate area of the basement is lit with a warm glow. Catching sight of a box of old Christmas decorations, he looks into it, saying that a lot of these had belonged to his grandmother, and he had forgotten they were down there. He takes out a box containing a small manger scene, which he opens. He motions to Caroline to help him as he sets out the small figures on the table next to the lamp. As they position them, he recalls putting them out on the dining room table at his grandmother's house when he was a kid. As she helps somewhat reluctantly, he tells her how this was the center of the decorations at her house, and that she didn't put up a tree, living by herself as she did in her old age. But with all the wreaths, and candles, and home-made cakes and pies she always made during the holidays, he never even missed it when he was visiting. In her house, you always knew that Jesus was the reason for the season. He rummages through another box, pulling out some books and cards from Christmases past. Holding up one particular book, a collection of Christmas stories, he asks Caroline if she remembers him reading to her from it each holiday season when she was younger. She absently admitted that she did. On the radio, the strains of a familiar song begin to play.... ("Silent Night")

Actions during the next paragraph: *Harold flips through the book he found, and tries to lighten the mood, but his daughter resists any attempt with a shaking of her head. He tells her they should think about something else. After a few moments, Caroline sits down impatiently as he finds a page and begins to read.*

Narrator: Looking through the book, and nodding toward the radio, he makes a wry observation that tonight is anything but silent and peaceful like Christmas Eve should be. Maybe, he joked, they could sing another version of the song, one titled "Stormy Night, Holy Night." Seeing his daughter is in no mood for light chatter, he decides he needs to do something else to help settle her down. Sitting back down with the book in his hands, he tells her that perhaps focusing their minds on the reason for the holiday might calm their nerves. After all, he reminds her, the Bible tells them that "He will keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." Noticing that the thunder and lightning seems to be getting closer increases Caroline's apprehension, and she sits down in the other chair as her father thumbs through the book looking for the pages he has in mind. He settles on a page, and as he reads the familiar story, it somehow seems to him to be fresh and new.

Actions during the next paragraph: *The father reads the verses and the girl listens. The focus is on the story, and nothing else.*