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PraiseGathering Music Group
praisegathering.com



T H E R E I S
peace in the world
T O N I G H T

Created by Randy Vader and Jay Rouse
Drama Companion
by Rose Aspinall

Characters

Daniel Hudson- age 17- oldest son in the Hudson family, Nate Weber's best friend

Nate Weber- age 17- Daniel's best friend

Edwin Carter – age 75-80 - Daniel's Grandpa, Carol's Dad - a once bright man afflicted with Alzheimer's, well-loved

Jack Hudson – age 5, Daniel's brother

Susan Hudson – age 9, Daniel's sister

Jon Michael Hudson – age 12, Daniel's brother

Ben Hudson – age 14, Daniel's brother

Carol Hudson – mid-fifties, Daniel's mom, energetic, in charge

Allen Hudson – mid-fifties, Daniel's dad, son-in-law to Edwin

Victoria Weber- mid-fifties, Nate's mom

Kenneth Weber- mid-fifties, Nate's dad

Setting

Scene 1 - The kitchen of Daniel Hudson's home. The atmosphere is warm and friendly. The kitchen table where they eat is large enough to accommodate 8 place settings. There are plates, silverware and glasses stacked on one side of the table. Have a space available from which Carol can prepare and serve food.

Scene 2 - The dining room of Nate Weber's home. The setting is formal. If you are changing the set from the Hudson home you can use the same table by changing the table covering. Place a formal centerpiece in the middle of the table. There are only 3 place settings.

Scene 3 - This takes place outside the Weber home and can be as simple as having a step for Nate and Daniel to sit on in another area of the stage or you can make a flat to show the outside of the house.

Scene 4 - We're back at the Hudson's but this time it's their living room. It is decorated for Christmas. The Christmas tree is a hodge-podge of homemade ornaments: paper chains, popcorn/cranberry garlands etc. Put some presents under the tree. Along with a couch, a rocking chair and floor pillows are good additions. The kids can sit on the floor so you won't need much furniture.

Scene 5 - Same as scene 4

There Is Peace in the World Tonight

Narrator: *(page 3)* Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

These are the words given to us by the One whose birth we celebrate this day.

This day we remember the proclamations of the angels.

This day we remember the miraculous star in the heavens.

This day we remember the rejoicing and awe of shepherds and kings. Yes, this day we remember the miracles that occurred on that Holy Night so long ago.

And we rejoice in the assurance that what was true then, is true now—today—in this very hour.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come—there is peace in the world tonight!

Song: There Is Peace in the World Tonight

Narrator: *(page 15)* This is an account of the birth of Jesus. This is a timeless story of ancient promises made and promises kept; promises that began three millennia before the miracle of Bethlehem. These promises by the Lord God-Jehovah were given to a man named Abram...

“As for Me, this is My covenant with you; You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed Me.” (Genesis 17:1-5; Genesis 22:17-28) Yes, the promise was made and the Promise was a long time in coming. There were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to King David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

His advent should not have come as such a surprise—we had plenty of time to prepare the way.

Song: The Light Has Come

Scene One

The kitchen of Daniel Hudson's home. It is nearly suppertime in this busy, active household. Daniel's mother, Carol, is just about ready to round up the troops to eat. There is a towel draped over her shoulder. She is humming. The dining room table is large to accommodate their big family. Susan sits at the table finishing her school work. School papers are scattered in front of her. There are plates, silverware and glasses stacked on one side waiting for someone to set the table. Jack is underfoot. He rambles around the kitchen talking and humming. He is playing some imaginary game that only he knows. Occasionally he pesters Susan who tolerates him with a mixture of amusement and annoyance. Jack has dressed himself and buttoned his shirt incorrectly, but no one seems to notice. Ben saunters into the room and starts to stick his finger into one of the pots. Carol intercepts his hand and promptly steers him toward the table.

Carol: *(Grabbing his hand)* Uh, uh, no snitching. But since you're here, you can set the table.

Ben: *(Mild protest)* Why can't Susan do it? She's already at the table.

Carol: *(Giving him her "don't mess with me" look)* Now! Benjamin. Susan, gather up your papers, Honey. It's time to eat. You'll have to finish after supper. Start getting everyone to the table if you would. Ask your Dad to help Grandpa, please.

Off stage, we can hear Susan calling the family to the table.

Ben sweeps Jack up in his arms and gives him a squeeze and sets him back down ruffling his hair. He starts setting the table.

Carol: *(Helping him with the table)* Did you have a substitute again in Mrs. Stone's class?

Ben: Yeah, looks like we have him for the rest of the semester. Mrs. Stone decided to take a leave of absence.

Carol: Really? Her Mom must really be sick.

Ben: Yeah, I guess she's going to stay with her mom for awhile to take care of her.

Carol: Do you like the sub?

Ben: He's alright. He's a big soccer fan.

Carol: Really? That's nice to have something in common. Did he go over that math test?

Ben: Yes.

Carol: And?

Ben: *(nonchalant)* Aw, I did alright, I guess.

Carol: *(Warily)* What do you mean by alright?

Ben: Umm... about 98 percent worth of "alright". *(He grins.)*

Carol: Benjamin! *(Shaking her head)* Well, I'm glad you got Grandpa's math smarts, not mine. Grandpa never met a number he didn't like.

As they are talking, we hear a car pull up. Daniel enters with a basketball in his hand. He has just come from basketball practice. His mom and Ben greet him. He stoops down to give Jack his basketball. Ben continues.

Ben: *(Excited)* After class today, Mr. Davis asked me if I would be interested in helping to tutor some of the kids in 6th grade. He said he would help me contact the parents to set up times. I'd get paid.

Carol: You think you'd like doing that?

Ben: Yeah, I think so. I'd like to try it anyway. I'd need someone to drive me probly, I mean if I went to their houses.

Carol: *(Drying her hands on the towel and tucking back a strand of loose hair)* We'll try to figure something out Ben. Someone would have to stay with Grandpa. Just make sure you get all the information from your teacher and we'll see, ok?

Ben: Sure Mom. *(Pause)* Mom?

Carol: Yes?

Ben: *(Hopeful)* I'm kinda short on cash and I was thinking that it would help me with Christmas presents. You know that old pawn shop on 25th that Danny likes to go to?

Carol: Yeah.

Ben: Well, I went along with him and I saw something in there. I just gotta get it for Grandpa, Mom. It's important.

Carol: *(Tired smile)* Something special for Grandpa, huh?

Ben: I can't tell you what it is. I want it to be a surprise.

Carol: Ben, I'm glad that you want to do this, but you know I can't make any promises. You know how hard it is to work out everyone's schedule and take care of Grandpa too.

Ben: *(Upset)* I know... I just wish there wasn't such a thing as Alzheimer's. I hate it. Sometimes it's like he's not even Grandpa anymore. I miss the way Grandpa used to be.

Carol: It's hard for all of us, Ben. We just have to do the best we can. What did we decide?

Ben: *(Resigned)* We're in it together.

Carol: *(Taking his chin in her hand)* Right, we're in it together.

Daniel: I could take him Mom.

Carol: You have basketball practice after school, Daniel.

Daniel: *(Shrugging)* I know, but I could work it out. I wouldn't mind.

Carol: We'll see, ok? We'll see.

Ben: *(Looking at Daniel gratefully)* Thanks Danny.

Daniel: Don't thank me yet.

Everyone starts coming to the table. There is lots of talking and joking. Allen helps Grandpa to his spot at the table. Even with the clamor, he is calm and deliberate as he helps Grandpa. It's obvious that Grandpa has buttoned his shirt incorrectly.

Susan is sitting next to Grandpa.

Susan: *(Trying to be helpful)* Grandpa, your shirt's buttoned wrong.

Grandpa looks down at his shirt and frowns, mumbling something about shirts and starts fumbling with the buttons. He is unable to fix it and it frustrates him.

Jack: *(Who has been looking at his own improperly buttoned shirt, stands up on his chair and announces proudly)* Grandpa, I like your shirt. It looks like mine.

Everyone laughs

Allen: *(Gently)* Don't worry about the shirt, Dad. It's fine just the way it is. Give me your hand; we're going to give thanks.

Everyone quiets and they all join hands while Allen prays.

Allen: *(Earnestly)* Lord, we give You thanks for Your gifts, for this family, for strength and daily bread. Place Your peace in our hearts this day. Amen.

Grandpa's place setting is different from the others. He has a plain brightly colored bowl instead of a plate. He has a hard plastic cup with a bendable straw in it. Allen places one item in Grandpa's bowl.

Allen: Ok, give this a try. We'll start you off with a little casserole. Oops, wait a minute. *(He tests the temperature of the food)* It's alright, not too hot. *(handing Grandpa his spoon)* Does it smell good?

Grandpa: *(Slowly leaning over, he sniffs)* Is it eggs? Smells like eggs.

Allen: No Dad, it's chicken casserole.

Grandpa: I eat eggs at breakfast.

Carol: But, it's suppertime now Dad.

Grandpa: I'd know it was supertime if Susan hadn't taken my watch.

Susan: *(Surprised)* I didn't take your watch Grandpa!

Grandpa: *(Accusing)* Yes, you did. You took my watch.

Susan: *(Distressed)* Grandpa!

Carol puts her hand on Susan to quiet her.

Carol: Dad, I'm sorry you're missing your watch. After supper we can help you find it, ok?

Grandpa: Ok, after I eat my eggs. We'll look then. *(He starts poking at his food)*

General conversation resumes. Susan and Carol exchange looks and we can see Carol patting Susan's arm reassuring her.

Carol: Daniel, we haven't seen Nate around for awhile. I miss him hanging around. *(teasing)* I'm going to have to take his toothbrush out of the bathroom if he doesn't come and use it pretty soon.

Daniel: Yeah, I was hoping he'd hang here this weekend. Senior projects are due next week in Girard's science class. Nate's just been consumed by it. He's hoping Mr. Girard will give him a good recommendation. He finally decided to attend Baylor in the fall and he's trying to get into some special study project right away. He always thinks he's behind. I wish he'd chill out a little. Seems like he's trying to prove something to his Dad.

Carol: Well, tell him we miss him. You two have been friends since second grade. It's going to be like we're losing two sons when you both leave for college in the fall.

Daniel: I will. Considering we won't be seeing each other much after this year, I was hoping we could do some things together over Christmas break. We haven't had much chance to talk. He's always stressed. He missed basketball practice the last two days and Coach wasn't too happy. If he's not careful, Coach'll bench him.

Allen: Maybe Christmas break will be just what he needs. Tell him we're saving a spot for him by the tree for the Hudson "Popcorn/It's A Wonderful Life" movie night. No excuses accepted.

Grandpa: *(Interrupting)* We'll look for my watch after breakfast, Daniel.

Daniel temporarily caught off guard by the quick subject change, quickly shifts gears and smiles at Grandpa.

Daniel: Sure Grandpa, we'll finish eating and we'll look for your watch.

Jack: Maybe it's in the frigerator again!

As lights fade, we see rueful expressions on each face.

Narrator: *(page 26) And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:8-12)

Song: Good Tidings Now We Bring

Scene Two

Nate's house the same day

Nate and his mother and father are also eating dinner. The setting is much more formal. You can use the same table if you change the covering. There is a formal centerpiece in the middle of the table. They are already eating when the scene opens and all we can hear is the clink of the silverware on dishes. The atmosphere is tense. Victoria, torn between her husband and son, acts as mediator. Nate starts to reach for the potatoes.

Victoria: *(Cautioning, she shakes her head negatively)* Nate.

Nate: *(He stops mid reach and pulls back his hand)* Will you pass the potatoes, please?

She passes them silently.

Nate: *(An attempt at small talk, to no one in particular)* Mr. Girard checked over the senior projects in class today to see if we're on track. They're due on Monday.

Kenneth: *(Looking up from his plate)* And?

Nate: Well, I think he likes my choice. I picked the investigation of enzyme kinetics because it's sort of a specialty of his. I thought that I could get some good input from him.

Kenneth: Just don't expect your teacher to do the work to make sure your project is up to par for consideration for the study project. That's not his job, that's yours.

Nate: *(Tightly)* I already checked out the requirements Dad. I know what's expected. It's just that Mr. Girard has experience with this type of science. I just thought it wouldn't hurt.

Kenneth: As long as that's your only motive.

Nate: *(Tense)* What else would my motive be? I've worked for hours on this. It's not like I've been slacking.

Victoria: *(Warning)* Kenneth, not here at the table.

He looks at her as if to answer but lapses into silence. Again, we hear the clink of the silverware. Nate pushes his food around on his plate.

Victoria: *(Clearing her throat)* How's basketball practice going?

Nate: *(Shrugging and shaking his head)* I had to miss the last two practices.

Kenneth: *(Looking up sharply)* What? Why?

Nate: Because of this project. I've been kinda overwhelmed. I was with Mr. Girard going over some things and there wasn't a good stopping point. I would have had to start the experiment over again and I just didn't feel like I had the time. Don't worry, I covered it. Mr. Girard wrote an excuse for me.

Kenneth: *(In clipped tones)* Do you think that they aren't looking at your extracurricular activities too? How do you think it will look if Mason suspends you from the team? You think that you can just not show up to practice? Basketball is a team sport. Your teammates count on you.

Nate: *(Standing and pushing himself away from the table, voice rising)* What do you want from me? I already feel like I can't keep up. Maybe I should just drop basketball.

Kenneth: Just like that? The going gets a little tough and you quit? I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

Nate: What is that supposed to mean?

Kenneth: Let's just say your behavior is pretty close to expectations.

Nate: *(Angry)* Well, good. I'm glad you didn't get your hopes up.

Nate exits. There is silence again, neither Kenneth nor Victoria speak for a moment. Kenneth picks up his fork and resumes eating. Victoria massages her temple.

Victoria: *(calm, emotions in check)* I asked you not to do that at the table.

Kenneth stops eating, looks at her and sighs but doesn't answer. Lights fade.

Narrator: (page 38) And so in the perfection of the Father's time... "it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger." (Luke 2:1-7)

Song: Jesu, Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Narrator: (page 48) Yes, it was an angel from the heavenly chorus that brought the message of peace to a war torn world—a world that was divided more by conquest than by culture, by might regardless of right—by the tyranny of tyrants regardless of covenants. Indeed, war was the common human experience. And yet listen:

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:13-14)

Song: Born in Bethlehem

Scene Three

Later that night.

Nate is sitting outside on a step despondently bouncing a basketball when Daniel enters.

Nate: *(Surprised to see him)* Hey, what are you doin’ here? *(They greet each other by bumping fists.)* Daniel settles down beside Nate.

Daniel: *(Casually)* Just dropping off some books at the library. I missed you after class the last few days and you weren’t at basketball. I thought a little detour was in order.

Nate: *(Shrugging)* Yeah, guess I’ve been pretty consumed with this project in Girard’s class. Coach say anything?

Daniel: Not much. He gave Keller your position until he could find out what’s going on.

Nate: Well, he can keep it.

Daniel: *(Concerned)* Why, what’s going on, Bro?

Nate: I don’t know. I don’t seem to be able to keep all of it together anymore. I thought if I just worked harder... maybe, it would get better.

Daniel: What would get better?

Nate: Aw, Dad rides me all the time. Nothing I ever do is good enough for him. The only way to get any peace is if I just don’t talk. Silence is better.

Daniel: Doesn’t sound very peaceful either way. Did something happen?

Nate: I made the mistake of talking about my Kinetics project at dinner. I even took on this project partly ‘cause I thought he’d be proud of me. I mean, his field is biochemistry, right? I thought he’d think it was interesting, and maybe it would get him to talk to me. He doesn’t even act interested except to make sure I’m not slacking off. I think he’s afraid I won’t actually leave for college next fall.

Daniel: It’s important to him that you succeed.

Nate: Wouldn’t want him to look bad.

Daniel: Are you sure you're being fair?

Nate: I'm not sure of anything. It's not like this at your house. I don't get it. There's always something going on at your place. I mean it's like a zoo. Jack's always underfoot, your Grandpa's sick. But it's not like my family. We don't really talk but we're always mad at each other. I come over to your crazy noisy house just to get some peace and quiet. You know what I mean?

Daniel: *(Hesitating)* I think I do. My folks are great. I guess I never really thought about it when I was younger. I mean, they're just my parents right? But now I'm older and I see things, like Grandpa coming to live with us, I know that's really hard for them. But they make it work. They make it about the whole family. They're always saying we're all in this together.

Nate: That's what I mean. How do they do that?

Daniel: I don't know. That's just how they are. *(Choosing his words carefully)* You know we've always gone to church. You used to come with us sometimes when you spent the night.

Nate: Yeah...

Daniel: Well, church isn't just about Sunday morning for them. It's part of them. They live it. When I get home tonight, they'll be in the living room praying together before they hit the sack. I used to take it for granted, but now that I'm older, I can see how it makes a difference in our family.

Nate: *(Teasing)* Think they'd adopt me? You always wanted an older brother too, didn't you?

Daniel: *(Laughing)* Probly, what's one more?

Nate: You know how I feel about your family. And I think it's a good thing to believe in God. But I don't know. I'm not so sure it would work with my family.

Daniel: Why not? Faith isn't about living some sort of strategy. That never works for very long. It's about believing in God; that He's real, that He can and does change things. Look, I'm not trying to sell you on anything. I just hate seeing you like this. All I can say is if it wasn't for God, my family would be in trouble.

Nate: Yeah? Maybe. I just can't see my Dad getting into religion. So, I guess I don't see anything changing.

Daniel: You might be surprised. One thing's for sure. It can't work if you don't give it a try.

Nate: God's welcome to work on my Dad anytime He wants. I won't interfere!

Daniel: *(Laughing)* Yeah? Well, he'll probly start on you first.

Nate: Figures!

Daniel: *(Getting up and looking at his watch)* Hey man, I gotta get to the library before it closes. But I'm supposed to tell you my folks are expecting you for the annual Hudson Family Christmas popcorn and movie night. Same day as always, December 23, Christmas Eve's eve. Put it on your calendar. Dad said no excuses.

Nate: *(Laughing)* Are you kidding? I wouldn't miss it.

Daniel starts to exit

Nate: Hey.

Daniel: Yeah?

Nate: Thanks man, you know, for stopping by.

Daniel: *(Shrugging it off)* It's nothin'. *(He starts to leave and turns around)* Anytime you want to talk...

Nate: I know, thanks Danny.

Lights out

Narrator: (page 61) The mystery and joy of the Incarnation was not limited to the small village of Bethlehem. The signs and wonders of the birth of God's Son stretched into the very heavens where a new and mysterious star appeared.

Although the news first came to lowly shepherds it would take the skill and education of royalty to read the message God had placed in the evening sky.

Through the star God led them to the place where His son was. When they arrived they came into the presence of Heavenly Royalty—and they bowed down and worshiped Him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

Song: The Kings Came Calling

Scene Four

Two days before Christmas. We are in the living room of the Hudson home. It is decorated for Christmas. The Christmas tree is a hodge-podge of homemade ornaments: paper chains, popcorn/cranberry garlands etc. The whole family is present except for Ben and Daniel. Nate is there. There are bowls of popcorn. As the scene opens, Jon Michael is holding Jack in his lap. Everyone is sitting and listening to Allen as he recounts a story about a past Christmas. The atmosphere is warm and relaxed.

Allen: *(Laughing)* So, I come down the stairs and I'm tip toeing, you see. My heart is racing and I'm clutching the broom. And there sits Jon Michael in his pajamas under the tree singing "Feliz Navidad" and he is re-taping the paper on the last of the Christmas presents!

Everyone breaks out into laughter. Susan gives Jon Michael a playful shove.

Susan: Sing it, Jon. I wanna hear it.

Jon Michael: *(Laughing)* Forget it. It's bad enough I have to hear this story every year.

Nate: I can't believe you actually called 911.

Allen: Yeah, well, we were all pretty embarrassed. The next morning we took a big batch of Christmas cookies and hot chocolate over to the police station. It's sort of become a tradition. Every year on Christmas morning, we take cookies and hot chocolate to the police station.

More laughter

Carol: *(Looking at her watch)* What do you think, Allen, should we wait on Ben and Danny? I sure hate to start without them.

Allen: Let's give them another 15 minutes. The pawn shop closed 10 minutes ago. They shouldn't be much longer. Why did they have to go tonight?

Carol: It's the last night the shop is going to be open until after Christmas. Ben just now had the money to get this "mystery gift". He's been awfully secretive about it. He was worried that it wouldn't still be there.

There is the sound of a car pulling up.

Nate: Maybe that's them now. *(He gets up to look)*

We hear the sound of car doors closing. After a moment, Daniel and Ben enter. Ben is carrying a flat, wrapped package, which he immediately sets aside as he takes off his coat and gloves.

Daniel: Sorry we're late.

Ben: *(Beaming)* Yeah, sorry.

He is excited and his words come out in a rush.

Daniel: You wouldn't believe the traffic. We almost didn't make it to the shop before they closed. The clerk started to close early. Guess he was anxious to start his vacation since there weren't any other customers. We got in the store and we couldn't find it.

Ben: I thought it was gone! But Danny wouldn't leave until we looked everywhere. Someone laid it behind some kitchen stuff. The guy seemed kinda annoyed, didn't he Danny?

Daniel: *(Grinning)* Yeah, I think we were keeping him from a party.

Ben: *(Taking a deep breath and letting it out)* Anyway, we got it. *(He goes back over to the package and picks it up. He half turns his back away from Grandpa so he can't hear him.)* Mom, can I give it to Grandpa now?

Carol: Don't you want to wait till Christmas morning?

Ben: No, there'll be too much excitement and we're all together now. Please?

Carol: Allen?

Allen: It's all right with me.

Ben walks over to Grandpa who has been sitting in his chair dozing. Everyone quiets.

Ben: *(Touching Grandpa's arm)* Grandpa?

Grandpa: *(Startling a little)* Huh?

Ben: *(Kneeling down in front of him, holding the gift behind his back)* Grandpa, I have a gift for you.

Grandpa: *(Sounding puzzled)* A gift for me?

Ben: Yeah. *(He pulls it out from behind his back and presents it)* Merry Christmas, Grandpa.

Grandpa: Why are you giving me a gift?

Ben: Because it's Christmas, Grandpa. Open it, you'll like it.

Grandpa: What is it?

Ben: *(Pleading)* Grandpa, just open it!

Grandpa: Well, alright then. *(Fumbling with the paper)*

As he pulls off the wrapping, he stops and stares at the gift. There is complete silence in the room for a moment. Ben searches his Grandfather's face for some reaction.

Grandpa: *(Stunned and confused)* Where did you get this?

Ben: *(Distraught)* Are you upset? I didn't mean to upset you.

Grandpa: *(Insistent and shaking his head to clear his thoughts)* Where did you find this?

Ben looks from his Dad's face to his mom's face. She moves to Ben's side.

Ben: *(Haltingly)* Danny and I found it in that old pawn shop we always go to. I was looking through their old records and I remembered you were telling me one time about playing your saxophone for some of those old gospel quartets. I saw this record and it said The Statesman. I remembered that was one of the quartets you mentioned. I looked on the back and your name was right there. I couldn't believe it. It's like you're famous or something.

Grandpa: I... forgot about this record.

Susan: Why didn't you tell us you were famous Grandpa?

Grandpa: *(A little gruffly)* I wasn't famous.

Danny: You were good though, weren't you Grandpa?

Grandpa: Yes. I was good, at one time.

Jon Michael: But you were a math teacher.

Carol: Not always. When Grandpa was young, not much older than Nate and Daniel, he earned his living as a musician.

Susan: Wow, that's cool. You played on records?

Grandpa: I played in an orchestra at the Biltmore Hotel. We recorded tracks for the Statesman's TV show with Nabisco.

Jon Michael: But why did you quit Grandpa, if you were that good?

Grandpa: It was complicated. I wanted to be a musician so much I was willing to sacrifice anything. It cost me my relationship with my father.

Danny: Why?

Grandpa: He didn't want me to be a musician. He didn't think I could earn a good living. He wanted me to have a "respectable" job, something that I could count on, something stable so I could raise a family. So I left home and went to New York. I never spoke to him again. Before we could reconcile, he had a fatal heart attack. I was on the set when Mother called me to tell me. I left New York and never went back. I went to college and became a math teacher.

Danny: But Grandpa, didn't you miss playing?

Grandpa: I didn't let myself; I was so eaten up with guilt. It took me a long time to come to terms with what happened. I blamed myself for his heart attack. I was bitter that he never heard me play, that he never knew how good I was.

Nate: But Mr. Carter, how did you ever get over it?

Grandpa: *(Looking at Nate, he squints a moment)* Well, the guilt was eating me up so, something had to change. Plain and simple, young man, I found the Savior and I gave it to Him. I told Him I'd messed everything up doing things my own way. I don't know how to explain it any other way except that it was the first time I ever really felt at peace. It's not something you can calculate like a math problem. It's just something that changes inside you when you meet Him and you invite Him in here. *(He taps his chest)*

Nate: But you gave up your music.

Grandpa: Not really, I did for awhile but after a couple of years, I started playing again. The church I started going to had an orchestra. That's where I met my wife. She played piano for the choir. That's another thing about the Savior, son, He's always got a plan and you can count on it being better than what you've got in mind. He turned my life around. *(He looks at all the faces listening to his story and starts to choke up)* Because of that, I have this family.

Carol: *(Going to him and giving him a hug)* We love you Dad.

He pats her and smiles.

Grandpa: *(Indicating the record)* Ben, thank you for this. Some things a man shouldn't forget. You helped me remember God's faithfulness. I needed that.

Narrator: *(page 75) Mary and Joseph's world had been turned upside down. Nothing had happened the way they had planned. Angels and shepherds and kings and stars all appeared so unexpectedly upon the landscape of their lives.*

The journey God was embarking on through them would lead them to places they would never have imagined. There would be struggle and sacrifice, surrender and responsibility—but this Holy night had already taught them that peace—the kind of peace that their child brought—was not dependent upon the absence of conflict—it was defined by the presence of God.

And they rejoiced in the knowledge that peace had come to the world in the person of Jesus

their tiny child

Jesus

God's only Son

Jesus

the Prince of Peace.

Song: There Is Peace in the World Tonight Reprise

Narrator: *(page 96) The hope of peace came to us in a most miraculous way on that Holy night in the little town of Bethlehem. God did hear the prayers of His people.*

Through the life and ministry of His Son, He redefined Love and Peace forever. Peace is the presence of God.

In a world ravaged by the evil of war we must never lose sight of the promise of peace that comes to us from Heaven.

The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)