

**Grammie Cats's
Very First Night
Before Christmas**

**A One-Act Play
By Anne Bressert**

Contact:

**Anne Bressert
GrammieCatsChristmas@gmail.com**

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The Characters:

GRAMMIE CAT, an adult woman or older teen (speaking part)

MAMA CAT, an adult woman or older teen (speaking part)

KITTY CAT #1, a child (speaking part)

CAT #2, a child (with one line)

ADDITIONAL CAT FAMILY MEMBERS, (optional parts for children)

NARRATOR , an adult or older teen (speaking part) As an option, the Narrator parts can also be done by Grammie Cat.

MARY, a child

JOSEPH, a child

ANGEL, could be a child, an adult, or an older teen.

EXTRA ANGELS, (optional parts for children) accompanying the main angel in the manger scene only.

INNKEEPER, an adult or older teen

MAIN SHEPHERD, an adult or older teen who supervises all the child shepherds and sheep

ADDITIONAL SHEPHERDS, children

SHEEP, children

3 WISEMEN, children

CAMEL, an adult or older teen who supervises the Wisemen and Star

STAR, an adult carrying a baby dressed in a soft star outfit, or a child walking ahead of the wisemen, carrying a pole with a star hanging from the end of the pole.

ADDITIONAL MANGER ANIMALS, children

The Setting:

Five minutes before the play begins, Grammie Cat goes to the front of the church (stage right) and sits on a large comfy chair or rocking chair and begins reading her book. She does not engage with the congregation but keeps her head bowed and eyes on her book. *(Inside the book is a copy of the script.)*

See “Performance Notes” for more details.

THE PLAY

(A bell tolls 8 times)

(When the bell begins to toll, Grammie Cat stops reading and stands up, checks her watch and looks out in the distance. Then she sits back down and resumes reading her book.)

MAMA CAT

(Mama Cat, after the last bell tolls, enters from the back of the church with the cat family following her and holding Kitty Cat #1's hand, begins to walk down the aisle. Mama Donkey calls out loudly to the cat family.)

Come -on kids, we're running late!

(Halfway up the aisle, Kitty cat #1 stops and begins to pull at Mama Cat's hand and pulls backwards towards the back of the church.)

Come -on Kitty, stop digging in your claws!"

KITTY CAT #1

(whining)

But Mom! I don't want to go to Grammie Cat's house. She always tells the same old story every year!

(Kitty lowers her voice a little to try and sound old like Grammie Cat. She gestures like Grammie Cat making a loud lapping sound, then begins to quote the beginning of Grammie Cat's story, starting with the loud lapping sound)

There I was just lapping my milk. IT'S...SOOOOO...BOOOOORRRRRING!

MAMA CAT

(Sympathetically Mama Cat reaches over to gently touch Kitty's ears)

Oh Kitty...it only sounds boring because you are using your outside kitten ears to listen to Grammie Cat's story. You must use your inside ears to really hear what the story is all about.

KITTY CAT #1

(whining even more)

Inside ears?

MAMA CAT

Yes, your heart,

(gestures the drawing of a heart with both hands in the center of her chest about 4 inches away from her body)

has ears.

(cupping both hands, the way we use them to cup our ears to hear, and cup each side of the heart just drawn in the air)

Use these ears tonight to listen to Grammie Cat's story.

KITTY CAT #1

(Kitty drops her hands down, rolls her eyes up, and with an open mouth, turns her head back and forth in a "no." She then begins to trudge along behind Mama Cat as she begins again to proceed to the front of the church.)

CAT #2

(As the cat family begins to walk down the aisle again, Cat #2 calls out loudly from the back of the group of cats)

Mom! Are we there yet?

MAMA CAT

(Mama Cat does not even look back but calls loudly to the back of the group by lifting her head up and answers the question with the same answer she always says to the same cat who always asks the same question)

We'll... be... there... when... we... get... there!

(Mama Cat and her cat family arrive at Grammie Cat's house)

Hi Grammie Cat!

(The cat kids all call out different hellos at the same time (i.e. Hi Grammie Cat. Merry Christmas Grammie Cat, or little meows)

GRAMMIE CAT

(Grammie Cat stands)

Merry Christmas! I'm glad to see you all.

(Grammie Cat gestures for everyone to sit down)

Now grab your hot chocolate and Christmas cookies and get settled so I can tell you the story of our very first cat family's Christmas.

(Mama Cat pretends to be handing out food, and the other cats sit down around Grammie Cat as she sits back down in her chair. Option to have the youngest cat kid sit on Grammie Cat's lap or Mama's lap)

As you all know, this story did not start with me. It started with my great, great, great, great, great.... many, many, many.... great, great, great, great.... many, many, many Grammie Cats ago. The very first Grammie Cat!

Now, there was a very special baby born over 2000 years ago named Jesus and the very first Grammie Cat was there when He was born. Our first Grammie Cat loved Baby Jesus with all her heart and cared for Him and His family. The night before Jesus' first birthday, Grammie Cat gathered her family to share all she remembered about Jesus' birth, calling it "the miracles of Jesus' birth." So, just like my Grammie told me, and her Grammie told her, and her Grammie told her, all the way back to the very first Grammie Cat, I'll tell you the story just exactly like our very first Grammie Cat told it.

(Grammie Cat looks up as if to be remembering the story. Mary enters stage left with a dish towel in her hand and pretends to be washing dishes. Grammie Cat pretends to pick up a bowl with her hands and starts making loud lapping sounds.)

There I was, just lapping my milk and watching young Mary washing the morning dishes after eating breakfast with her mom and dad. She was standing there by herself, when suddenly! WOW!

(The Angel enters stage left bent over, then stands up straight next to Mary)

A flash of light, so bright it hurt my eyes to look, but look I did, indeed! And there, standing in the kitchen was an angel! The Angel says, "Hello Mary!"

(Angel waves to Mary with a smile)

You are full of God's love,

(Angel reaches arms out to make a big circle in front of themselves, then pulls their hands to their heart)

and Father God

(Angel points up)

has chosen you

(Angel points to Mary)

to be the mother of His son Jesus.

(Angel makes rocking arms movement as if to be rocking a baby. Mary acts surprised)

Mary said back to the angel, "Me? Really?"

(Mary points to herself looking puzzled)

The angel tells her "Yes, you"

(Angel points twice to Mary, once on each word)

So, Mary said, “Okay”

(Mary shrugs her shoulders and nods yes. Angel and Mary exit stage left.)

And sure enough, eight months later, when Mary was getting things ready for her baby’s birth, the Governor of their country commanded everyone to travel to their hometown to be counted, and to pay taxes. Mary was worried because her hometown Bethlehem was a great distance away, and she did not want to travel, as the baby was due soon.

NARRATOR

(Narrator enters stage left and stands behind a podium.)

Now, Mary was engaged to this young man named Joseph, who was a wonderful carpenter in the town where she lived. So, Joseph said to Mary, “Don’t worry Mary. I’ll take care of you and take you to Bethlehem so we can pay our taxes together, and you can ride on your donkey all the way there.” So, Mary and Joseph set out for Bethlehem. They traveled for several days, and when they finally got there, they couldn’t believe their eyes!

(Innkeeper enters and stands center stage with his arms folded across his chest looking stern.)

The town was so noisy! and so full of people coming there to pay their taxes, that they couldn’t find any rooms anywhere!

(Mary walks behind Joseph as they enter from stage left and approach the Innkeeper. Mary stops as Joseph walks closer to the Innkeeper and pretends to knock on a door)

Now Joseph was starting to get worried because Mary told him that it was time for baby Jesus to be born.

(Innkeeper opens the door and Joseph gestures as if talking to the Innkeeper and points to Mary)

So, at the next inn they stopped at, Joseph told the Innkeeper about Mary needing a place to stay because she was about to have a baby.

(Innkeeper crosses hands back and forth in front of himself, then points his thumb over his shoulder several times to signal a stable out in the backyard).

Of course, the Innkeeper tells him they had no room for anybody in the inn, but if they wanted to, they could stay in his stable where he kept his animals.

(Joseph grabs the Innkeeper's hand and shakes it eagerly as he nods "yes")

Joseph told the Innkeeper, "I'll take it!"

(Mary rolls her eyes as her mouth gapes open and she shakes her head "no" in disbelief)

Oh, you should have seen Mary's face! So, off Mary and Joseph went on their way, to the stable.

(Mary, Joseph & the Innkeeper exit the stage)

GRAMMIE CAT

(This section of the play has been performed in two different ways. Let your Grammie Cat decide what she is comfortable with and do it that way. Option one, Grammie Cat stands and talks directly to the congregation, encouraging them to sing along. Option two, Grammie Cat stays in character and stays sitting, singing the song with her family, holding a mic up to cat kids as they make animal noises and sing along. Written below is option one. Grammie Cat can certainly adlib and make this section her own words and style.)

Now if you thought the Bethlehem was crowded and noisy, you should have seen the stable! It was a cold, starry night, and every creature and their cousins were in that small stable, trying to stay warm.

(Grammie Cat begins her "Old Mac Donald" song. As Grammie Cat sings, the Innkeeper walks on stage and places a wood manger on center stage. Any additional Manger Animals enter stage left and sit near the manger (not next to it) leaving lots of room for Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and Wisemen as they come to the manger area. The Innkeeper can help the animals get to their places, then moves to the back of stage left and stays on stage until the end of the play.)

(Grammie Cat stands up and stretches her arms out and begins to sing a long “OOOOOOOOOOOOOOO” as she stretches. She is singing to the congregation, and points to them, gestures as if making a point when singing the words “Bethlehem’s stable” each time it is sung. The cat family sings along with large waving motions and loud animal noises)

OOOO..... Bethlehem’s stable was full that night, E I E I O...
And in that stable, there were some

(calls out “cows” without singing the word)

Cows! E I E I O...With a MOO, MOO here

(Grammie Cat stops singing, puts her hand behind her ear and says)

I CAN’T HEAR YOU! ...and a MOO, MOO there

(Grammie Cat stops singing again and puts her hand behind her ear and says)

I STILL CAN’T HEAR YOU! Here a _____

(puts hand behind ear to hear)

MOO, There a _____

(puts hand behind ear to hear)

MOO

(Grammie Cat gestures “2 thumbs up” to congregation and continues singing)

Everywhere a Moo, Moo

(Grammie Cat addressing the congregation)

Please help me sing, I think a cat’s got my tongue!

OOOO.....Bethlehem’s stable was full that night, E I E I O...

And in that stable there were some

(calls out “sheep” without singing the word)

SHEEP! E I E I O...With a BAA, BAA here

(Grammie Cat continues the song until the end. Joseph and Mary carrying the baby Jesus, come on stage and stand behind the manger as Grammie Cat is about to end the song. Grammie Cat sits down after singing and takes a big sighing breath and makes rocking arm movements as if to be rocking a baby)

I can still see Mary’s smile as she sang for the first time to her new baby boy.

MARY

(Mary starts singing as she rocks baby Jesus in her arms. At the end of her song, she lays the baby in the manger)

GRAMMIE CAT

(speaking softly and slowly after Mary places the baby in the manger)

And don’t you know, just about the time I was thinking we were finally going to get some sleep.... because the whole stable was quiet.

SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

(Shepherds and sheep enter from the back of the church jumping up and down as they make their way down the aisle and stand in front of Mary and Joseph. They keep jumping the entire time until Joseph motions for them to calm down.)

NARRATOR

Then...BANG! The doors of the stable flew open and the loudest bunch of guys I’d ever heard came busting in that stable, yelling all at once, and jumping up and down as they ran in. They told Mary and Joseph that they had been asleep that night out on the hillside with their sheep. Then an Angel appeared up in the sky, right above their heads, and told them “Don’t be afraid. I have great news for you. Today, in Bethlehem, a Savior is born, and He is Christ the Lord!” The Angel went on to tell them, “And this is how you will know you have found Him; He will be wrapped in a blanket, laying in a manger.” Then the shepherds said,

(at the word “suddenly” all the shepherds burst their arms out above their heads, and looking up, they start wildly pointing upward while they keep jumping)

Suddenly! the sky was filled with thousands of Angels! They were everywhere! The angels began praising God, and it sounded like the roar of a million thunders as they shouted, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to men.

(Joseph gesturing with his hands the “sit down” hand wave)

Joseph tried to calm down the Shepherds,

(Mary picks up the baby out of the manger and shows the shepherds)

but then Mary, picked up baby Jesus and showed Him to them.

(shepherds kneel before Jesus)

The shepherds bowed down and knelt before Jesus, because they knew, He was Father God’s very own Son.”

(Mary places the baby in the manger. The Shepherds and sheep stand up and move to the left of the manger and sit down opposite of Grammie Cat.)

GRAMMIE CAT

(Grammie Cat speaks soft and slowly)

And don’t you know, just about the time I was thinking we were finally going to get some sleep, because the whole stable was quiet again.

WISEMEN, CAMEL & STAR

(Following the Star, the Wisemen come down the aisle with the first Wiseman holding the reins to the Camel)

GRAMMIE CAT

(speaking louder and with excitement)

But, then, outside the manger, up on the road by the inn, a whole crowd of excited people were talking to each other, and asking questions like “Who are they?” and “Why have they come here?” and “I wonder if they are going to spend any of their money in my store?” And as the crowd approached the stable, they got louder and louder, and I heard, and felt, the heavy pounding of camel’s hooves as they got closer, and closer to us.

(Grammie Cat and the cat family stomp their feet together in rhythm. Mary is concerned and startled and picks up baby Jesus.)

NARRATOR

(Joseph steps down in front of the stage to meet the Wisemen. When the Wisemen arrive, they point to the Star. The Star walks on stage and stands behind Mary and the manger. The Angel comes on stage and stands to the left of the Star. Any Additional Angels fill in the area around the Angel and the Star. Joseph comes back on stage and stands next to Mary)

Joseph told Mary to stay in the stable while he went outside to see what was happening. When he came back in, he told Mary that three wealthy wise men, dressed like kings, had traveled all the way from their country in the far east, to Bethlehem, by following a star God had put up in the sky.

(Joseph points up to the star and Mary looks up at it and looks surprised.)

They told Joseph they were looking for a baby boy, chosen by God to be, “The King of the Jews.” Then, they told Joseph the star stopped moving and shined its light down onto the roof of our stable! The three wise kings told Joseph they knew they had found Him and called Him “The King of Kings.” Joseph told Mary that the kings were asking for permission to come see Jesus, so that they might worship Him.

(Mary nods her head “yes”)

Mary said, “Yes, of course, let them in.”

(Joseph steps to the edge of the stage and waves the Wisemen to come in)

GRAMMIE CAT

So, Joseph opened the door to the stable, and in walked the three finest looking kings I had ever seen.

(Grammie Cat slows down her speech and takes her time, emphasizing words to create reverence, wonder and awe and give the Wisemen time to present their gifts.)

(The Camel stays in front of the stage to the right of the manger. The Wisemen take turns, walking up to the manger to look at Jesus. They each kneel and lay their gift in front of the manger, bow their head and hold their hands together in a pointed prayer position for a moment. After they stand, each Wisemen decides what he would like to do (i.e. lean over the manger and touch or kiss the forehead of the baby Jesus; pick up the baby and hold Him up toward heaven; or hug Him; or just hold Him out and gaze into His face.) After their moment with baby Jesus, they join the Camel.)

They were dressed from head to toe in gold chains and jewels, wearing long robes of embroidered silks and furs, and their clothes had the fragrance of expensive perfumes and spices. The stable grew quiet as we watched each king gaze into the face of Jesus, then lay presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh at Jesus' feet. We listened as they filled the stable with soft whispers of blessings and worshipped Him. *(PAUSE)* They knew, He was Father God's very own Son...their King...and their Savior...sent by Father God, to bring God's love to everyone in the whole world." *(PAUSE)* In the Bible, it is written, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

(After the last Wiseman finishes, everyone in the manger scene freezes and stays frozen until directed, by the Innkeeper to go to center stage and bow before they leave by walking down the aisle. Grammie Cat closes her book and stands up. The cat family also stands.)

Good night my cat family. I love you, and Merry Christmas."

KID CATS

(Kid cats say their good-byes to Grammie Cat all at once.)

Good-night Grammie Cat. Merry Christmas. We love you too. or meows (etc.)

(Grammie Cat sits back down on her chair. Mama Cat takes Kitty's hand as the cat family goes to center stage. Kitty stops on center stage and tugs on Mama Cat's hand to stop her.)

KITTY CAT #1

Mama, Mama, I listened to Grammie Cat's story with my heart ears! The story is not about what Grammie Cat did a long time ago, it's about what Father God did a long time ago. He gave us His Son, Jesus. I'm so happy I want to tell everybody!

MAMA CAT

I think we should do just that!

(Mama Cat starts singing "Go Tell It On the Mountain" and the cat family sings along as they walk, hop and skip down the church aisle together.)

INNKEEPER

The Innkeeper walks to center stage and waves at Grammie Cat to come to center stage. The Innkeeper holds his arms and hands out towards Grammie Cat as if to be "presenting" Grammie Cat to the congregation. The Innkeeper tells Grammie Cat to take a bow. After she bows, she walks down the church aisle and exits. The Innkeeper then motions the Shepherd and Sheep to come and take a bow, then they walk down the aisle. The Innkeeper then does the same for the Angel, then the Star, the Wisemen and Camel. Then the Innkeeper bows and walks down the aisle.

MARY & JOSEPH

Joseph and Mary with Jesus in her arms, walks to center stage and stops there. They stay in character, and they Do Not bow because they are presenting to the congregation the real star of the show, Jesus. Joseph touches the face of baby Jesus and smiles at Him. Mary kisses baby Jesus on the forehead. Music begins to play (a rendition of Mary's lullaby either played by an instrument or sung by Mary without accompaniment, or whoever did the song in the play). As they stay in character and continue to look at baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph walk down the aisle.