

The Reluctant Shepherd

Written By

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SCENE 1- REGGIE'S BEDROOM

Reggie (a ninth grader who suffers from anxiety issues) sits in front of his iPad brushing his teeth with one hand and typing with the other. His brother DAVID (a senior) packs his back-pack getting ready for school.

DAVID

Reggie, you'd better hurry, mom said we're leaving in 10 mins.

CASSIE

(Reggie's mom)

Boys I told already, get down here for breakfast, we're leaving in 10 mins.

DAVID

See?

REGGIE

I have to finish this.

DAVID

Come on Reggie! You're in ninth grade, do really need to do this stuff? It's so annoying.

REGGIE

But I have to do 500 brushes and my list.

David grabs the paper with Reggie's list.

DAVID

Your list doesn't even make any sense. Some of the things are scary, like bombs and dying, and clowns, but cotton balls, and sheep? I mean really, who makes lists of everything their afraid of and go over it everyday? Who does that?

Reggie grabs the list from David

REGGIE

But if I don't do my list something bad might happen.

DAVID

Nothing's going to happen.

REGGIE

But it might, and anyway I've got to send an email to Mateo.

DAVID

Mateo? Who's that?

REGGIE

My friend in Guatemala. Remember we sent him the Christmas box?...To the orphanage.

DAVID

Oh yeah. How's he going to get an email?

REGGIE

They have internet at his orphanage.

DAVID

Whatever. Just hurry or Mom's going to freak.

David grabs his backpack and exits.

REGGIE

498...499...500.

Reggie puts down his toothbrush and speaks as he types on his iPad.

REGGIE

Dear Mateo, I hope you got the Christmas box we sent. I am in a play at my school and I'm going to be a shepherd. I'm kind of scared to be in front of people because I get embarrassed, but Mrs. Janet says it will be fun. We'll see. Hope you like all the stuff in the box. Your friend, Reggie.

Reggie grabs his fear list

REGGIE

Okay where was I? Today I will not be afraid of Clowns, today I will not be afraid of throwing-up, today I will not be afraid of snakes, Today I will not be afraid of sheep...I hate sheep.

(SONG HERE)

Reggie puts down the list and picks up a photo he has hidden in a book.

REGGIE

And today... I will not be afraid of asking Jessica Sanders to the winter formal.

CASSIE

(off-stage)

Reggie, get down here! we're leaving NOW!

Reggie looks at the photo doubtfully and looks up towards heaven.

REGGIE

Oh help.

He quickly returns the photo to its hiding place in the book, and put it in his backpack and carries it with him as he hurries out of the room.

SCENE 2 SCHOOL COURTYARD (Drop-off line)

KATHY (the drop/off line guard) wear a Day-Glo safety vest and holds a sign that reads "Please Pull Forward" as she barks commands.

KATHY

Pull-up! Pull-up! ALL-THE-WAY!!

LINDA and ANNE approach wearing pajama bottoms, and tank tops camouflaged with thick cardigans, chunky necklace and knitted hats. They see Kathy's frustration and motion with her and yell at the wayward driver.

LINDA

Little more, c'mon, you can do it!

SUE

PULL-UP! That's the first rule of drop-off! What's wrong with people? Am I right?

The last car in line drops of as a backpack laden student rushes by the woman.

KATHY

You're getting a tardy mister!

LINDA

Same thing everyday. We're already in December, and people still can't get the routine.

SUE

Today I was behind a lady with backpacks in the trunk! Can you believe it?

LINDA

Oh, I got cut off, and somebody else was going the wrong way! Somebody could get killed!

KATHY

People are so stressed out, they don't pay attention. I had one lady today drive off with the van door still open.

SUE

If people would just plan ahead then it would really help relieve all the stress. Like me. Today I woke up early, had coffee and devotions in quiet house, then I went for a 2 mile power walk, came home and got ready before I made pancakes and eggs... Ha, who am I kidding? I rolled out of bed and threw a coat over my PJ's. The hat and necklace are a trick to make people think I'm put together!

LINDA

No one knows the difference when
they just see your head and
shoulders in the car.

KATHY

Don't fool yourself ladies. We're
all on to you because most of us
are doing the same thing.

LINDA

How do people keep up?

SUE

What's a mother to do?

(SONG HERE)

KATHY

Oh, we have a straggler.

CASSIE arrives with Reggie and David and rushes to the
door.

CASSIE

I'm so sorry we're late, we had a
little... complication. (to the
boys) What time do I pick you up
today.

REGGIE

After school I have Hobbit club
then drama, so 5:30.

DAVID

Practice till 7.

CASSIE

So two trips. (sigh)

The boys head to the door, and Cassie looks defeated.

KATHY

Hey Cassie, it's okay.

CASSIE

I know...It's just...I can't

Cassie starts to choke up.

KATHY

Oh come here.

Cassie walks to Kathy's open arms as Linda and Sue come in for a group hug. Cassie begins to sob and the ladies try to comfort her as she weeps in a semi-comical way.

CASSIE

It's just so hard

LINDA

I know, I know.

SUE

Let it out.

CASSIE

It's been 3 years since Rick died, and I thought it would get easier, but it just gets harder all the time, and Reggie, he's got... problems. I don't know how to help him, so I yell because I don't know what else to do.

KATHY

It's Okay, it's okay.

The ladies continue to comically comfort Cassie as she looks at what Linda and Sue are wearing.

CASSIE

Are you wearing Pajamas?

KATHY

So much for fooling everybody.

The ladies sobbing turns into laughter.

CASSIE

You're out in public in your
Pajamas!

KATHY

Hey, we're going over to
Starbuck's for coffee. They're
doing proper Christmas cups this
year. Why don't you join us? we
could talk, and maybe pray for
you.

CASSIE

That sounds nice.

KATHY

We'll get something chocolate too.
Why not? It's Christmas time and
YOLO. Go on now, we'll meet you
there.

Cassie exits.

KATHY

I'm telling you ladies drop-off guard duty is a ministry. That poor woman, raising those boys alone. You have to minister to the widows and orphans.

JANET walks by the ladies and gives a wave before she disappears into the school.

SUE

Speaking of widows...

LINDA

I didn't know she was back. How's she doing?

SUE

It's just awful losing her husband and both of her kids in a crash while she was driving. How do you come back from something like that?

LINDA

I've heard she blames herself.

KATHY

We're going to have a coffee date with her soon, but right now we need to get.

SCENE 3 - SCHOOL COURTYARD- END OF DAY

The bell rings and the hallway fills up with students.

CASEY

Wow! That test was SO hard.

SAMARA

I know. I'm glad this day is over.
I thought it would never end.

ABBY moves away from the crowd as some of the kids (Hobbits) start to enter the all Purpose Room. CHASE and JOHN swagger through the hallway showing open disdain for the other children who seem genuinely intimidated. Chase sets his backpack down with a stack of other backpacks close to where ABBY is standing, then goes to join JOHN.

CHASE

Out of the way nerds. Crew member
coming through.

REGGIE moves through the crowd giving a fearful look CHASE and JOHN as he approaches ABBY. DAVID walks by his brother and nods to him as he joins the two other members of THE CREW (the name CHASE, JOHN, and DAVID have given themselves). The boys greet each other and move to the side of the stage where they huddle and have an unheard conversation.

The BUTTERFLIES enter and THE CREW greet them as they move downstage.

SONG HERE- Taint Scared of Nuthin'

REGGIE

Hi Abby, How it go today?

ABBY

Terrible! I had a presentation in English, but I was too scared to get up and give it so I told Mr. Phelps that I wasn't prepared, but he said he was giving me mercy and I could do it after Christmas break. How's that mercy? I still have to do it! I'd rather have an "F".

REGGIE

It's okay. We'll think of something before then. Maybe he'll let you write a really long paper.

ABBY

But even if he does I still have to be in the Christmas play. And I can't remember my lines. I don't think I can do this. I should just run away.

REGGIE

Don't say that. We just have to focus. Did you do your list today?

ABBY

Yeah, I do it every day. it's just not working for me.

REGGIE

Me neither.

ABBY

Was today a bad day?

REGGIE

Not worse than usual, a girl in chemistry had a bag full of cotton balls, ugh, that sound, but I moved tables. This isn't getting better, I'm thinking we need to expand our strategy.

ABBY

What do you mean?

In the background THE CREW cross stage behind REGGIE and ABBY as the start to exit.

REGGIE

Instead of just doing the list, I think we need to start keeping a fear journal.

ABBY

What's a fear journal?

Just before THE CREW and BUTTERFLIES exit stage, CHASE appears to remember something and waves the group ahead while he runs back to retrieve his back pack. He is just out of sight of REGGIE and ABBY and stops to eavesdrop.

REGGIE

A kind of diary where we write down all of our deepest fears, and we show it to absolutely no one but each other. Then we can help each other, and I don't know, maybe pray or whatever. It'll just be good to have a friend for support.

ABBY

I don't know if that will work but okay.

REGGIE

Good, I got this for you. It matches mine.

Reggie pulls out a journal and hands it to ABBY. CHASE is amused at the two, shaking his head.

ABBY

Wow, thanks.

REGGIE

So we're going to write down all our deepest secrets and fears, and you don't have to read all of it to me, just the parts you want to. Now write your name in it, and then write down your greatest fear.

ABBY

Are you sure this is a good idea?

REGGIE

Just try it. We need to try something.

ABBY

I hope this works.

REGGIE

Me too, because I'm going to need a lot of courage because I'm going to try and do something big.

ABBY

What?

REGGIE pulls the photo of Jessica out from the book where it was hidden

REGGIE

I'm going to ask Jessica Sanders to the winter formal.

ABBY

No way!

REGGIE

Yes, way. I need to be brave...

CHASE is visibly outraged.

REGGIE

...Because a girl like that would never go out with somebody who's afraid of everything. Can you imagine if she found out I was even afraid of sheep?

ABBY

Oh my gosh! We're late for Hobbit club.

The two rush off and CHASE stands taking in the new information.

CHASE

Afraid of sheep, huh? Interesting.

SCENE 4 - AUDITORIUM - HOBBIT MEETING

CASEY, EMILY, MAX, SAMARA, SETH, CASSANDRA, ANNIE (Alicia Hernandez) are seated in a semi-circle. Everyone in the group is wearing fake pointy ears. EMILY takes center stage as the group leader.

EMILY

Okay, the next difference between "The Lord of the Rings" movies and books I've noticed is when Bilbo Baggins leaves the shire.

CASEY

That's right! In the movie Gandalf figures out that Bilbo has the ring of power really fast, but in the book it takes him a lot longer.

SAMARA

Yeah, it takes him 17 years to figure it out, and Frodo leaves 17 years after Bilbo.

SETH

Wait! Hobbit Huddle rules state that you need to site the movie and year when pointing out differences.

CASEY

Oh yes. Fellowship of the Ring, 2001.

EMILY

So, what's the consensus? Is the book better on this with the 17 year lapse, or the movie where Frodo leaves shortly after Bilbo?

ANNIE

I think their both good.

SETH

Yes, I think Peter Jackson really thought this one out, but Tolkien has it right too.

EMILY

So, let's vote. Who thinks the movie is best on this?

No hands go up.

EMILY

Book?

No hands go up.

EMILY

Who thinks they're both good and that Tolkien and Peter Jackson are both geniuses?

All hands go up. REGGIE and ABBY enter the meeting and sit in the back as they slip on their pointy ears.

EMILY

Settled. Now Casandra wanted to bring something up.

CASANDRA

Yes, I want to point out a major discrepancy between the book and movie. Glorfindel...

SETH

Site the movie and year please!

CASSANDRA

Oh, sorry. In the book Glorfindel and was a major character and he rescues Frodo after he is stabbed by one of the Nazgul, but in the movie, Fellowship of the Ring 2001, Arwen rescues the Hobbits by summoning the enchanted water. Which is better?

SETH

This is a tough one because Glorfindel is so awesome he was even a candidate for the Fellowship. Call me a purist but replacing Glorfindel isn't completely true to the text.

MAX

But Peter Jackson wanted to develop Arwen's character so it was a brilliant move to replace Glorfindel. Not to mention how cool the enchanted water horses are, and Arwen is beautiful, and the love of my life!

CASSANDRA

Let's not let our personal affinities cloud our judgment.

EMILY

Good advice. I think we're ready for a vote. Who thinks the books better on this?

Seth struggles with his decision and starts to raise his hand, but pulls it down. No hands are raised.

EMILY

Movie?

Max visably struggles but fails to raise his hand. No hands are raised.

EMILY

Both?

All hands go up.

EMILY

Settled.

SAMARA

Okay, I want to bring up something that is very controversial, and none of us want to talk about it but I've got two words...Tom...Bombadil.

CASEY

I knew somebody was going to bring this up.

SAMARA

I'm not trying to stir the pot but it's something we need to talk about.

SETH

You need to site movie and year.

SAMARA

How can I when a certain Mr. Peter Jackson chose to ignore a major cult hero, because he didn't feel the only being impervious to the ring of power advanced the story? he doesn't show up in any of the movies.

CASEY

Yes he does! The Twin Towers, 2002.

MAX

Twin Towers! Do you even like Lord of the Rings? The Twin Towers were the buildings brought down in the New York City terrorist attack in 2001! It's The Two Towers- 2002. But No! Tom Bombadil is not in that movie.

CASSANDRA

That's right. Tom Bombadil shows up for a cameo in Fellowship of the Ring 2001, and even then he's only in the extended version. It's a snub of the oldest member of middle earth.

MAX

But Tom Bombadil really slows down the story.

CASSANDRA

Then I suppose Tolkien knows nothing about story?

EMILY

Alright! everyone let's calm down. This is a hot topic. let's take a vote. who thinks the books with Tom Bombadil are best?

Half of the Hobbits raise their hands.

EMILY

Movies?

The other half of the Hobbits raise their hands.

EMILY

Both?

ANNIE raises her hand.

ANNIE

I like everybody.

EMILY

Woah! I've never seen this much division before in final vote. But I think we should all take a cue from Annie. We should just agree to disagree on this issue and keep in mind what we all have in common; That we are the lucky recipients of the work of two geniuses. So here's to Mr. J.R.R. Tolkien, and Mr. Peter Jackson, and an epic masterpiece we like to call The Lord of the Rings!

That concludes this meeting of the Hobbit's club. Next week come prepared to discuss LOTR fan theories.

SCENE 4B- AUDITORIUM- CONT"D

As the meeting ends CHASE and JOHN enter the room.

CHASE

Alright nerds time to get out!

MAX

Chase, all of us are in drama, so we just stay in here after Hobbits. What do you care? You're not even in the Christmas play.

CHASE

How dare you? I care deeply about the arts. In fact I'm here to make a contribution, so you better get those pointy ears off before you ruin the production with all your nerdism.

MAX

What kind of contribution?

CHASE

You'll see. I've already discussed it with Mrs. Janet.

MAX

You're a bully Chase.

Chase disregard the small boy. The Hobbits adjust the room and take off their ears to get ready for rehearsal. JOHN pulls CHASE to the side for a chat.

JOHN

What are you up to? Are you going to be a drama nerd now?

CHASE

No chance. But get this, one of these Hobbit's plans on asking Jessica Sanders to the winter formal. That's not going to happen because everyone knows that we, The Crew, have first dibs on any of the girls in the Butterfly group. It's like a "sacred circle" and I'm asking Jessica Sanders to the winter formal. Of course she's going to say yes, but we have to beat down any one of these nerds that thinks they can muscle in on the status quo.

JOHN

So which Hobbit dare attempt to
enter the sacred circle?

CHASE

Reggie Moore.

JOHN

Reggie? You mean David's little
brother?

CHASE

That's the one, and I have
something special planned for him.

JOHN

Does David know?

CHASE

No, and don't tell him. He has soft spot for his
little bro, so he won't be able to think straight.
But even David understands the division of nerd and
non-nerd, so deep down he would be good with this.

JOHN

I'm not so sure, he's pretty protective of his
brother since their dad died.

CHASE

That's why you can't tell him. But this is going to be classic.

JANET enters the room along with JESSICA, JULIE, and
LACEY. REGGIE looks with awe at JESSICA and he and ABBY share
knowing looks with each other.

JANET

Let's get started right away. Can I have the Butterfly Group run
their song.

THE BUTTERFLY GIRLS take their place center stage and sing a syncopated
version GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN.

In the background we see CHASE having an unheard conversation with
JANET. The conversation ends and CHASE exits but holds back with JOHN
secretly watching the rehearsal.

As the Song ends the cast and crew applaud the girls.

DAVID approaches CHASE and JOHN.

DAVID

There you guys are. Coach sent me to find you. What are you doing here?

CHASE

Oh, we're just checking out play rehearsal.

JOHN

Yeah, we're real art lovers.

JANET

That was great! You're all doing so well. Only one week! Is everyone excited?

The group responds with yes, and happy sounds.

JANET

My Mary and Joseph are looking good... and Annie, don't worry about finding a replacement doll. We found one to be Baby Jesus.

ANNIE

Good, my dog chewed the arm off mine.

JANET

Okay, wise men... are your costumes done?

SETH, CASEY, AND MAX

Yes.

JANET

And where's my shepherd?

REGGIE

Here

JANET

Exciting news, we don't have to use a stuffed lamb because we are going to have a real live lamb!

REGGIE

What?

JANET

I just found out an anonymous donor is providing a live lamb to use on stage!

REGGIE

Uhh

JANET

Isn't that cool?

REGGIE

I don't think I...umm

JANET

What's wrong?

REGGIE

I can't...do ...that

JANET

Can't do what?

REGGIE

I can't be on stage with a lamb.

JANET

Well that's silly. It'll be fun.

REGGIE

No!

JANET

What's the matter?

REGGIE looks to ABBY for support and she looks dumbfounded.

MAX

He's afraid! Reggie's afraid of a little lamb!
You gotta be kidding!

SETH

That's hilarious!

Everyone chuckles and the girls tease him. They ramp it up and Reggie becomes more upset.

REGGIE

Stop laughing at me!

JANET

I'm sorry Reggie, we thought you were joking.

REGGIE

I don't want to be in this stupid play!

REGGIE runs off, and JANET starts to follow, but DAVID stops her and motions for her to stay with the cast and he follows his brother. ABBY follows DAVID.

ABBY

I'm sorry Mrs. Janet. I have to see about Reggie.

CHASE makes his way to JESSICA and starts an unheard conversation. JANET tries to recover from the awkward moment.

JANET

Well... I'm sure he'll be alright.

SCENE 5- SCHOOL COURTYARD- (REGGIE AND ABBY'S HIDEOUT)

Reggie runs to the end of the hallway and sits down on the floor covering his head. DAVID and ABBY catch up with him. and sit down next to him as they try and console a distraught Reggie.

REGGIE

I'm so stupid, I'm so stupid, I'm so stupid.

ABBY

No your not.

DAVID

Reg, it's okay.

REGGIE

No I'm an idiot, and now everybody knows it.
especially Jessica.

DAVID

Why do you care about what she thinks?

REGGIE

Because I was going to ask her to winter formal.
Now she'll never go with me.

DAVID

Jessica Sanders? are you sure that's a good idea?

REGGIE

I knew you wouldn't understand? You don't think
I'm good enough.

DAVID

No! I don't think that. It's just she's so popular
and...

REGGIE

..and I'm too much of a dork for somebody that
cool to consider someone like me? Thanks for the
support.

DAVID

I didn't mean it that way.

REGGIE

I know exactly what you meant.

DAVID

No you don't. I just... look I know you're upset
but I've got to get back to practice. Can we talk
later? I don't think you're a dork.

REGGIE

Sure.

DAVID

We'll talk.

DAVID exits

ABBY

I don't think David meant to say you're not good enough.

REGGIE

I know, but it's probably true.

ABBY

Reggie you can't think like that.

CHASE and JOHN have left the rehearsal where they were watching the rehearsal and have followed at a distance to spy on the distraught Reggie.

ABBY

You're my best friend, and I tell you just about everything, but I need to tell you something I've never told anyone.

REGGIE

What?

ABBY

I used to cut.

REGGIE

What?

ABBY

I used to be a cutter. See?

ABBY pulls up her sleeve to reveal small scars on her arm.

ABBY

But I don't do it anymore. Jesus helped me, but I never told anyone. So it still kind of had a hold on me. Not like I'd do it anymore, but it's just the shame. I needed to tell someone and today when you gave me the journal and told me to write down my greatest fear, I wrote about my cutting, and how I'm afraid someone would find out, and how I'm afraid I might start doing it again. I thought it would be enough to tell my journal everything, and put it in the past, but I realized I needed to tell another person, because I never want to go back.

REGGIE

You won't go back ABBY, I just know it.

ABBY

I'm not planning on it, but we have to keep reminding ourselves that we're loved. That God loves us and so we're worth something.

REGGIE

Thanks for telling me.

ABBY

But you can't tell anyone. If anyone found out I'd die.

REGGIE

Don't worry. I won't.

ABBY

So if I can get better, then I know Jesus can help you too. We're getting better together, we just have to keep reminding each other.

REGGIE

But that isn't going to help Jessica to not think I'm weird.

ABBY

Well I think you're weird, but I still like you.

REGGIE and ABBY stand up and exit as ABBY'S journal falls from her backpack. After they walk away CHASE and JOHN emerge from the shadows and Chase picks up the journal. He picks it up and scans the pages.

CHASE

Oh, this is rich.

SCENE 6- AUDITORIUM- (CONT"D FROM SCENE 4-B)

We return to the rehearsal as it winds down.

JANET

So let's keep up the good work. This is going to be great. I'll see you all at tech. Check the schedule and don't forget your costumes.

The group gathers their things and begin to leave, with the usual good-byes. JANET lingers as BERT (a handyman who volunteers at the school) starts closing down.

ANNIE hangs back and pulls on JANET'S blouse.

ANNIE

Mrs. Janet, do you think that Jesus will love me more or less because I playing his mother in the play?

JANET

Uh... I think He loves you just the same no matter what part you play...or even if you're not in the play at all.

ANNIE looks a bit confused.

ANNIE

Okay.

ANNIE runs and catches up with the other kids

JANET

Wow, That was tough,I think I just confused Annie more than helped her, and what was up with Reggie? I really thought he's be excited to have a live lamb.

BERT

Kid's are just like that sometimes.

JANET

Oh Bert, I just don't know what I'm doing. No matter how hard I try I just seem to mess everything up. Who am I kidding? I shouldn't be leading kid's, I can't even make my life work.

BERT

That's not true, and anyhow, we don't depend on ourselves, we depend on the Lord to work through us. He'll do it.

JANET

Thanks Bert, you always say the right thing, only problem is, the right thing just doesn't seem to be helping much right now.

BERT

Give yourself some time. There are no easy answers or quick fixes. After what you've been through you just have to believe one moment at a time. And don't worry about the moments you don't do so good. Keep thinking about the ones when you do. Good and bad it's all part of it.

JANET

How about you? How's the job search going?

BERT

A lot of interviews, but a guy like me has a rough go of it out there these days.

JANET

Something will turn up.

BERT

Yeah.

JANET

You scared?

BERT

Sometimes, I guess we both have to just trust the Lord. It'll be alright, at least I hope so. You need some help lugging stuff to your car?

JANET

No, I get to leave everything here.

BERT

Well, I'm going to get going then.

Bert grabs his gear and heads for the door, but stops before leaving.

BERT

Janet, It's tough what you've been through. Sometimes it seems we don't get what we hope for and get plenty of what we fear. But somehow, the Lord meets us.

JANET

It's like the Christmas song.

BERT

Huh?

JANET

You know, "The hopes and fears of all the years..."

BERT

...are met in thee tonight" I know the song. It's a good one. Well, goodnight.

Bert Exits.

SONG HERE

SCENE 7- REGGIE'S BEDROOM

REGGIE sits on his bed in his pajamas looking at his iPad.

CASSIE

Reggie, time to go to sleep.

REGGIE

I'm reading a message from Mateo.

CASSIE

What?

REGGIE

Mateo, my Christmas buddy from Guatemala. The boy we sent the presents to. They let him use the Internet at the orphanage to send me a message

CASSIE

Alright, 5 minutes, but then lights out.

REGGIE

Okay mom.

INTERCUT

SCENE 7-B- ORPHANAGE IN GUATEMALA- COMMUNICATION ROOM

MATEO

My Dearest friend Reggie, Thank you for the very nice gifts. I like my new socks and rockin' sunglasses. I am eating my candy one piece every day. I hide it so the other boys won't take it from me. Thank you for the book about Jesus our Savior. I have asked Him to save my soul and help me when the soldiers come or when they shoot the bombs at us. This is very good. I like Christmas because the missionary man say's he will come and bring us cake and we will eat a goat on that day. Thank you for being my new friend. Your most beloved, Mateo.

CASSIE

Reggie! Lights out!

REGGIE

Okay!

Reggie turn out his light and talks to himself as he drifts off to sleep.

REGGIE

Eat a goat? Well that's better than some lamb. with their weird lamb eyes and that ba-a-a-ah sound they make, and their teeth. Ba-a-a-ah

Once asleep we see into REGGIE'S dream and he mutters no, no. A giant and evil looking sheep head with smoke and red eyes appears and growls at Reggie. Reggie wakes up screaming. DAVID runs in to comfort his brother.

DAVID

Reggie! Are you alright?

REGGIE

I had a bad dream.

DAVID

Lamb?

REGGIE

Yeah.

DAVID sits in bed with his brother.

DAVID

It's okay. Reggie, why do lambs scare you so much?

REGGIE

I don't know they just do. And everybody makes fun of me because they think lambs are nice, but they're not. They're scary.

DAVID

Can I tell you a secret?

REGGIE

What?

DAVID

I used to be afraid of something that everybody thought was nice too.

REGGIE

What were you afraid of?

DAVID

Heaven.

REGGIE

You were afraid of heaven? How could anybody be afraid of heaven? That's the best place in the world. I mean.. you know, anywhere, of places, it's the best.

DAVID

Yeah, well I didn't think it was. It scared me to death. It sounded freaky.

REGGIE

How'd you get over it?

DAVID

Well to be honest, I don't think I ever did. Heaven still seems kind of scary, with clouds you're supposed to stand on, and weird creatures, and angels with thousands of eyes, and wings coming out of everyplace. But the weirdest thing is it lasts forever! It just never ends.

DAVID

That's funny. But really, how'd did you stop being afraid of heaven?

DAVID

I just knew that as weird as I thought heaven was that Jesus was going to be there then everything was going to be alright.

(beat)

REGGIE

Yeah.

DAVID

You know they call Jesus a lamb in the Bible. Jesus is the Lamb of God.

REGGIE

He is?

DAVID

Yes. So you don't have to be afraid.

REGGIE

But that lamb in the play isn't
Jesus.

DAVID

But Jesus will be with you.

REGGIE

I know.

DAVID

So are you going to get up there
and be a shepherd?

REGGIE

I'll try.

DAVID

Cool. You still planning on asking Jessica
to winter formal?

REGGIE

No chance she'd say yes now.

DAVID

I think you should still try.

REGGIE

You said it wasn't a good idea.

DAVID

I just didn't want you to get shot down, but
then I thought about it and I figure why not
try? The worst she can say is no, but if she
does, her loss, 'cause I think you're a
pretty great guy, and she'd be lucky to go
out with you.

REGGIE

Even though I'm a nerd and you're in the
Crew?

DAVID

Hey, that stuff doesn't mean anything. It's
just silliness, and anybody that takes it
seriously is an idiot.

REGGIE

I hope Jessica Sanders thinks that.

SCENE 8- AUDITORIUM

The cast is gathered on the stage minus REGGIE.

JANET

Okay everybody, last time we were together we had some rough moments, but we've got to focus. It's tech run through then we have dress rehearsal tomorrow, and then it's show-time!

REGGIE rushes on stage

REGGIE

Wait! Wait! Hey everybody, I'm here.

Everyone claps.

JANET

Welcome back.

MAX

And sorry we made fun of you. We didn't know you were really afraid of lambs, but I understand; everybody's scared of something. Like me I'm scared of spiders. They really freak me out.

SETH

You're scared of spiders? That's ridiculous! They're just little bugs.

MAX

Oh yeah, well you should be afraid of this!

MAX shakes her fist at SETH jokingly.

(SONG-Everybody's Scared of Something)

The song ends.

JANET

Ok every body, let's rehearse!

SCENE 9- SCHOOL COURTYARD- WITH P.U./D.O. LINE

LINDA, and SUE chat silently while KATHY directs PICK-UP

KATHY

Pull all the way up! All the way.

THE BUTTERFLY GIRLS stand by as CHASE and JOHN enter.
The boys stop before approaching the girls.

CHASE

This is it, I'm going to ask Jessica
to the dance right now, before Reggie
has a chance.
Seize the day my friend.

The boys approach with CHASE in the lead.

CHASE

Hey, what's up?

JULIE

Hi Chase, John. Where's David?

JOHN

Why you asking Julie? You're always asking About
David. You got a thing for him?

JULIE

What if I do?

LACEY

Yeah, what if she does?

JOHN

Just asking. Doesn't matter to me.

LACEY

Maybe you're jealous.

JOHN

Naw, If I was going to be jealous about Someone,
it might be you.

LACEY, JULIE, JESSICA

Ooo-oo

JOHN

You wish.

LACEY
You couldn't handle it.

CHASE
Why aren't you all at rehearsal with
the drama geeks?

JULIE
We're just singing and so we finished
early, and they're not geeks.

JESSICA
Yeah, they're really nice.

CHASE
You mean like that freak Reggie who's
afraid of everything?

JULIE
He came back, so he's going to face his
fear.

JESSICA
Yeah, everybody's scared of something
Chase.

CHASE
Well I'm not scared of anything. Hey,
Jessica.
Can I ask you something important?

JESSICA
Sure?

CHASE
Well, come over here so we can
Have some privacy.

JESSICA
What's this all about?

CHASE
Well, seeing as we all usually go to
dances together, you know, The Crew and the
Butterflies, I thought maybe, this time,
since
we go together anyhow, you might just want
to go with me.

JESSICA
Wait! Are you asking me out on a date?

CHASE
Well, yeah. Sort of.

JESSICA
I...I don't know what to say.

CHASE

CHASE

What? You don't want to go out with me?

JESSICA

Well, we've all been friends for so long, I never thought of you that way.

CHASE

So, are you turning me down?

JESSICA

Well no... I mean, I don't know.

CHASE

Am I not good enough for you?

JULIE

What's going on here? Chase why are Yelling at Jessica?

CHASE

I'm not yelling. She just doesn't think I'm good enough for her.

LACEY

You were too yelling. Don't yell at my friend.

JESSICA

Chase, don't be like this

LACEY

Yeah, you're being a jerk.

CHASE

I'm not being a jerk. I'm just trying to ask someone out on a date.

So, you're turning me down?

JESSICA

Can't we just go like we usually do? You know, in a group? We always have fun.

CHASE

I'm asking you out on a real date. I think that after all the time I've spent being your friend that I deserve to go out on a date with you.

JESSICA

You deserve to go out with me? What? We're you just pretending to be my Friend so you could get something?

CHASE

No, That's not what I mean. So are you going to go with me, or what?

JESSICA

Chase, we've been friends for a long time, and I still want to be your friend, but you can't act like this. So no, I don't want to go with you.

LACEY

Anyway, rumor is someone else might be thinking of asking her.
Come on, my mom's here we have to go.

The girls leave.

CHASE

Can you believe that? She turned me down.

JOHN

Dude, why are you being so weird?

CHASE

Me? She's the one.

JOHN

No, you were being like a bully.

CHASE

I'm not being a bully.
Girls are lucky to be with us.
We're The Crew aren't we?

JOHN

Yeah but...

CHASE

"Yeah, but" nothing. She's just playing hard to get, and I consider it a challenge. I won't take "no" for an answer. And let me tell you, if that nerd Reggie hasn't learned his lesson yet, I'll hit him and his nerd friend where it hurts.

The boys exit. KATHY, LINDA, and SUE have overheard the exchange.

LINDA

That boy is up to no good.

KATHY

We better keep an eye on that one.
You're right, he's up to something.

SUE

What happened? He used to be so sweet?

KATHY

Puberty!

The ladies nod in agreement.

SCENE 10- BACKSTAGE (WINGS)

JANET

Okay everybody, Great run through! We have a dress rehearsal tomorrow, and then break, then the show! Oh, I don't know why Abby wasn't here, but if anyone sees her tell her to see me to get her cues. Bless you guys!

Tech rehearsal has concluded and the cast is collecting their belongings. REGGIE is packing his back pack as a stressed out ABBY runs in.

ABBY

Reggie! Have you seen my journal?

REGGIE

No.

ABBY

Well it's missing.

REGGIE

What?

ABBY

If someone gets hold of that I'd just die.

REGGIE

It'll show up. You probably left it at home.

ABBY

No, It's not there. I haven't seen it since yesterday when we talked. Did you grab it by mistake? Check your backpack.

REGGIE looks in his backpack.

REGGIE

It's not here.

ABBY

Then it's gone. Somebody has it. This is terrible.

REGGIE

You probably just misplaced it. And anyway, even if somebody finds it they won't know it's yours

ABBY

Oh yes they will. I put my name on it

As soon as you gave it to me.

REGGIE

Your whole name?

ABBY

Yes.

REGGIE

Well, keep calm. It'll show up,
It just has to. If you get too upset you'll
never remember your lines.

ABBY

If it doesn't show up remembering my lines will be
the least of my problems. Please, help me look for it.

REGGIE and ABBY run off to look for the journal as CHASE and
JOHN emerge.

CHASE

Look at the nerds panic!
(Chase mocks Abby's panic with an imitation of her)

JOHN

Are you going to tell me what
you're up to.

CHASE

I found this.

CHASE holds up the journal.

JOHN

Is that Abby's journal?
You need to give that back.

CHASE

Are you kidding? This thing is solid gold.
I'm going to use it to show Jessica
How weird these geeks really are.

JOHN

Oh really? What are you going to do?

CHASE

I'm going to record myself reading
It and then patch in to the soundboard while
they're doing the play, while I stream it on
Youtube. Here read this.

JOHN reads a bit of the journal, and hands it back to CHASE.

JOHN

Chase, this stuff is private.
You can't put this out for public
consumption. You could really hurt someone.

CHASE

These nerds aren't like real people, they
don't have feelings like we do.

JOHN

Are you crazy? Count me out.

CHASE

So you're turning against me too?

JOHN

Well, I'm not doing this, and if David finds
out he'll kill you.

CHASE

You'd better not tell him, cause I know
few secrets about you that might get
released, so don't try me.

JOHN

I won't tell David, but I'm not going to be
part of this.
You know what? I'm gonna pray for you.

CHASE

Pray? When's the last time you prayed?

JOHN

It's been a while, but maybe it's time
I gave it a try again. I'm getting tired
of acting so tough when inside
I'm scared. And it's making me do things I
don't want to do, and we're going too far.
I act tough but I can't back it up with
anything but being mad, and it's turning me
into a jerk. Like you.

CHASE

I don't care what you think, just stay out
of my way, because tomorrow night the
nerds are going down.

(Possible Exposition Song)

END OF ACT 1 INTERMISSION

ACT 2**SCENE 11- BACKSTAGE - (NEXT DAY)**

During Dress rehearsal several cast members are backstage waiting for their cues

Janet is playing stage manager from back stage as the narrator is going through the cues on stage. While waiting Bert enters with the live lamb.

BERT

Here's Lamby!

BERT places the lamb in a holding pen right next to REGGIE.. REGGIE tries to overcome his fear and approach the lamb by he can't quite get himself to touch it.

JANET

Okay, this is where "Mary Did you Know?" comes in, and the music cues right here. And right after that my angels get on stage and all of the nativity scene people take their place while the narrator cues the reveal. Let's go...

JANET assists angels on stage, as the nativity players take their place. ANNIE hands JANET a note as she takes the stage

ANNIE
Here, this is for you.

JANET
What's this?

ANNIE
Read it.

JANET
I will, as soon as we're done.

ANNIE
No now! Please.

JANET
Okay, now, but you need to get on stage.

ANNIE takes her place on stage, and JANET opens the note.

JANET

(reading)

Dear Janet, I wanted to say thank you for helping us do this play and letting me be in it as Mary. Mary was special and I get to be her and it made me feel special too. At first I didn't think I could do it, because I don't do anything too good but you told me I could ask Jesus to help me. My dad moved out of our house in September and I got very sad, and I thought I would be like other kids at school whose parents are divorced, and do bad stuff and have a bad life, but when you let me be Mary, I knew I didn't have to be like that, and that I could pray and ask Jesus to help me. I asked Jesus to bring my daddy back and that he would meet Jesus like me. My dad said he would never come to church but guess what? He and my mommy are talking with the pastor at Starbucks's, and daddy said he will listen about Jesus, and maybe come back to us. Please pray hard that my dad will

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

be a Christian and come back to us
and come and see me in the play
tonight. Thank you for telling me
about Jesus, and letting me play Jesus's
mom and saving my life.

Happy Christmas,
Annie.

JANET wipes the tears away, and folds up the note and looks at
the stage.

JANET

You bet I will .
(beat)

(Turning to Reggie)

Okay Reggie, I'm going to go help
arrange the angels on stage, as
soon as you hear your cue, bring
the lamb and take your spot.

REGGIE approaches the lamb and as his cue gets closer he tries
to get the lamb but his fear overcomes him.

REGGIE

I can't!

REGGIE runs away. From the stage you hear a lull in the
action.

JANET

(From the stage)
Reggie! That's your cue. Reggie!
Come out now.

JANET comes back stage and looks for Reggie. He is gone and the
lamb is alone in it's pen.

JANET

Reggie?

JANET
Reggie's gone. Has anyone seen him?
this is all my fault. I shouldn't
have pushed him.

The cast and helpers start to look for him and call out. In the confusion CHASE creeps in makes his way to Bert's soundboard. He begins to sabotage the sound with his video, when CANDACE confronts him.

MAX
Not so fast.

CHASE
Out of my way twerp.

MAX
Get away from that Board.

CHASE
You can't stop me.

From the wings DAVID, KATHY, LINDA, SUE, and JOHN approach CHASE as THE BUTTERFLY GIRLS (who are looking for Reggie) stop to see what's going on.

DAVID
No but we can.

CHASE
John, you traitor! You told me you weren't going to tell David.

JOHN
I didn't, I told the only person
I ever saw stand up to you; Max.

MAX
That's right! I'm small but mighty.
I told Mrs. Kathy, and she told everyone else.

KATHY
Now hand over that bag.

DAVID takes the bag from CHASE, and hands it to LINDA as she and SUE open it and look for the journal. Finding it she hands it to CANDACE.

SUE
Take this back to Abby.

DAVID
You're in big trouble now. Just wait
till I get hold of you later.

KATHY
David, you're not going to do anything.
We're going to deal with this officially,
Or maybe will turn him over to Candace when
she gets back. That would be a lot worse.

CANDACE runs off with the book. LINDA pulls an old stuffed animal from the pack.

LINDA
What's this doing in here?

JOHN
You still carry Mr. Snuggles around?

CHASE
No.

JOHN
Then why is he in your bag?

CHASE
I just have it in case I get scared.
Give him to me.

CHASE hugs his beloved childhood toy. THE BUTTERFLY GIRLS and most of the HOBBITS surround him and laugh.

KATHY
How the mighty have fallen.

JULIE
Don't worry Chase, you can still hang out with us.

LACEY
But only if you're cuddling Mr. Snuggles.

JANET enters from the stage.

JANET

Please everyone we still have to find Reggie.
The group begins to call out for him again.

SCENE 12- SCHOOL COURTYARD- REGGIE AND ABBY'S HIDEOUT

Reggie sits alone on the curb. From inside he hears people calling for him.

REGGIE

Just leave me alone. I'm not going
back in there with that thing.

Reggie draws back from sight and pulls out his iPad from his robe.

REGGIE

The only sheep this shepherds going
to deal with are on minecraft.

REGGIE starts playing his video game, and the iPad chimes with a message alert.

REGGIE

Who's that? It's probably them
looking for me. Well, I'm not
coming back in.

REGGIE checks his message.

REGGIE

Hey, It's Mateo!

REGGIE plays the video message.

INTERCUT

SCENE 12B- MISSIONARY MAN'S HOME

MATEO

Hello Reggie my friend! I give you a Christmas greeting. I am at a new place because the gang came and started shooting at us in the orphanage and we were running. Everyone was afraid but I was brave because I prayed, so I knew that God was with me. I grabbed my Christmas box and started running and I saw one of the soldiers and he pointed his gun at me. But I made a mean face looked at him with my rockin' sunglasses and said " You can't hurt me because God is with me and even if you kill me, I'm going to heaven. So you can't win! He got confused and I ran right past that guy. He fell down and I ran and ran, I was going to the refugee camp, but it was not good there. But then I saw the missionary man and he put me on a

truck and he brought some of us to his house so we could live here. This is a better place than I have ever lived in, and we had Christmas dinner like in America. I eat so much, meat, potato, pie! My belly is so full man I am telling you.

But don't eat something called a cranberry. Ech! The missionary man told us that Jesus has also the name Emmanuel. It means God with us and that is what Christmas is that God came to be with us. God is with me and he helped me to not be afraid of the bombs and the gangsters. He saved me! Hallelujah!
Merry Christmas to you Reggie.

REGGIE turns off his iPad.

REGGIE

(Praying)

Jesus, I don't know why I'm afraid of everything, but ever since my dad died, I just am. I think what I'm really afraid of is... dying, and that maybe after that, there's nothing, something worse than nothing, and I might never see my dad again. If you can make Mateo stare down a gangster with a gun and believe in heaven then maybe you can help me.

ABBY come around the corner and spots REGGIE.

ABBY

There you are! Everybody's looking for you.

REGGIE

Oh, I was just about to come back in.

ABBY

Guess what, they found my journal.

REGGIE

That's great.

REGGIE and ABBY walk together toward the backstage area.

ABBY

You still afraid of that lamb?

REGGIE

Nah?

ABBY

Well, I'm petrified that I'm going to forget my lines.

REGGIE

Don't be afraid Abby. God is with you.

SCENE 13- BACK STAGE

As REGGIE and ABBY return to the backstage area and are spotted by CASSIE and DAVID

CASSIE

Reggie! Are you alright?

CASSIE and DAVID hug REGGIE

REGGIE

Yeah mom, God did something and I'm not afraid anymore because, (beat) because God is with us, and He loves us, and perfect love casts out all fear, and even if we die, we'll be alive, and dad's...well, he's alive, and we'll see him again.

DAVID

In heaven?

REGGIE

Yeah, so you don't need to be afraid.

CASSIE

Are you really alright?

REGGIE

Mom, it's over, I'm going to be Okay!

The family release their embrace and pass CHASE holding Mr. Snuggles and rocking back and forth. JOHN sits beside him trying to comfort his friend. DAVID looks at CHASE with disappointment. JANET approaches and sees the broken CREW.

JANET

Hey you guys, I hate to see friendships end because somebody made a mistake, or even did something horrible. I've been learning a lot about forgiveness and moving on lately, and I think you guys have been friends forever. Maybe you could give each other some grace.

The CREW agree and fist bump in reconciliation.

JANET

And if you're not too cool for us since your seniors now, we could use some help. I just lost a soloist and if you still remember the song you guys did last year, I could use a replacement.

The CREW show giddy excitement.

REGGIE runs into JESSICA.

JESSICA

There you are Reggie, we were looking all over for you. You Okay?

REGGIE

I'm fine, and I was wondering if you'd like to go with me to the Winter Formal, that is if you don't mind going with someone who has sheep fear issues.

JESSICA

I'd love to, and full disclosure, I'm not afraid of sheep, but I'm terrified of llamas, and emus. Who even knows the difference?

SCENE 14- AUDITORIUM (STAGE HAS FALSE WALL HIDING THE NATIVITY SCENE)

EMILY

In the days of Herod, the King of Judea, here was a certain priest named Zacharias. He and his wife Elizabeth were both well advanced in years, but they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren.

INTERCUT

SCENE 14B- BACKSTAGE (WINGS)

BERT and JANET watch as the play proceeds.

BERT

It's going great, and we have a full house.

JANET

And, we got our shepherd back, and I think I'm getting my hope back.

BERT

Still feel like you're not making a difference, and that you mess everything up?

JANET

No, The Lord does far more than we could ever think or imagine.

BERT

Yes He does. Oh, I have a clean up crew lined up for after the play but I can't stay and lock up tonight, so here's my key. I have to be up early for work.

JANET

You got the job you were telling me about?

BERT

Nope, a better one. Hey, you know these kids Are never going to forget this don't you.

SCENE 14 - AUDITORIUM (STAGE HAS FALSE WALL HIDING THE NATIVITY SCENE) (cont'd)

EMILY (cont'd)

So it was that while he was serving the Lord, it fell to him to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, fear fell upon him, but the angel of the Lord said, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for you wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and be filled with the Holy Spirit, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and will go before Him in the power of Elijah to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

O'COME O'COME EMMANUEL (song)-

SAMARA

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betroth to a man named Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary and having come in the angel said to her "Rejoice highly favored one, the Lord is with you. Highly favored are you among women." But when she saw him she was troubled, and the angel said to her, "Be not afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will Reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end.

Mary did you Know (song) - THE CREW and BUTTERFLIES
CASSANDRA

And it came to pass in those days [that] a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed

and everyone registered to his own city. Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

SCENE 14C- (cont'd)

The FALSE WALL is removed revealing the Nativity Scene with full pageant cast, including REGGIE with the lamb.

CASSANDRA (cont'd)

Now there were in the same country
shepherds living out in the fields,
keeping watch over their flock by night.
And behold, an angel of the Lord stood
before them, and the glory of the
Lord shone around them, and they
were greatly afraid. Then the angel
said to them,

ABBY approaches REGGIE

ABBY

Do not be afraid.... Do not be
afraid...do not be
afraid...

REGGIE

Don't be afraid Abby!

Abby smiles as she remembers her lines!

ABBY

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I
bring you good tidings of great joy
which will be to all people.
11 "For there is born to you
this day in the city of David
a Savior, who is Christ the
Lord. 12 "And this [will be] the
sign to you: You will find a Babe
wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying
in a manger."

ABBY and REGGIE high five.

ABBY

Nailed it!

CASSANDRA (cont'd)

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, goodwill toward
men!"

THE CAST SINGS "O Little Town of Bethlehem,"

Annie looks out into the audience and stand to her feet and waves.

ANNIE
Hi Daddy! Look at me I'm Mary!
Welcome home!

The CAST sings "Joy to the World"

SCENE 14D- MISSIONARY MAN'S HOME- (intercut with main stage)

Mateo joins in with the song.

THE END

