

# Don't Bring Me Down!



*A very different Nativity Story*

*By*

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## *Don't Bring me Down!*

This story combines elements of Cinderella with the traditional Nativity story, with a strong, positive anti-bullying message.

**Pipsqueak**, a young shepherd boy is regularly and routinely bullied by his elder brothers, aptly named Moan, Groan, Grumble and Grunt. When they leave for Bethlehem to visit the stable, Pipsqueak is left behind, but meets the mysterious Dreamseller, who grants him one wish. Arriving in Bethlehem before his brothers, Pipsqueak witnesses the magical events of that first Christmas. Moan, Groan, Grumble and Grunt arrive late, misguided by Sat Nav, and get their comeuppance.

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

There are 32 speaking parts, but some may be combined for a smaller cast (e.g. shepherds, angels, soldiers and visitors)

If this is a full school production rather than a single class performance, a choir could sit on benches at the side of the stage.

### **Suggested Songs:**

Don't bring me down (ELO)

I have a dream (Abba)

500 Miles (The Proclaimers/Peter Kay)

Meet me on the corner (Lindisfarne)

Ratatatat – There isn't any room for strangers (Traditional children's carol, verse 1)

You've got a friend (James Taylor)

Ratatatat – There isn't any room for strangers (Traditional children's carol, verse 2)

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy (Traditional children's carol)

Love changes everything (Michael Ball)

Don't stop thinking about tomorrow (Fleetwood Mac)

**Cast in order of appearance, with approximate number of lines:**

Narrators use a lectern or similar at one side of the stage

Storyteller – 8 (frustrated poet)

Narrator 1 – 19

Narrator 2 – 17

Dreamseller – 40 (hippy, mystic type)

Cynic – 10

Fan 1- 10

Fan 2- 9

The shepherds:

Moan – 29

Groan – 18

**GRUMBLE:** – 25

Grunt – 20

Larry – 5

Barry – 5

Harry – 5

Gary – 2

**PIPSQUEAK:** – 50

Gabriel – 8

Angel 2 – 4

Angel 3 – 4

Innkeeper – 29

Wife – 24

Joseph – 15

Mary – 7

The Three Wise Men:

Gaspar – 6

Melchior – 6

Balthazar – 6

Visitor 1 – 2

Visitor 2 – 2

Visitor 3 – 2

Guard 1 – 3

Guard 2 – 3

Officer – 5

Opening Song (full cast on stage) - **Don't bring me down! (ELO)**

**Act 1 – On a hillside near Bethlehem**

**STORYTELLER:** Welcome all, who gather here, to listen to my story.

This tale I tell, I promise you, could be on Jackanory.

Tradition tells that once a year, this story must be told.

Two thousand years, or more, some say it's getting really old.

But my tale, which most will know, still contains much magic.

To miss the chance to tell it now would simply be - just tragic.

**NARRATOR 1:** Stop there! Thank you, thank you. I think that's enough.

**NARRATOR 2:** Any more in verse, could make your story worse.

**NARRATOR 1:** For everyone's sake, I think you should stop there.

**STORYTELLER:** (*ignoring protests*) So on we go, my tale to tell, with no more words in rhyme

To find a rhyme for every line - I haven't got the time!

(*Storyteller is picked up and removed from the stage*)

**NARRATOR 1:** She just gets carried away

**NARRATOR 2:** If only she would ....

**NARRATOR 1:** Let's get back to the script. Where were we?

**NARRATOR 2:** Now there's one character central to our story.

**NARRATOR 1:** So we had better tell you about the Dreamseller.

**NARRATOR 2:** He's a strange character, a cross between Jiminy Cricket and the Pied Piper.

**NARRATOR 1:** A believer in daydreams, a wandering minstrel with hope in his heart.

**NARRATOR 2:** During the day he runs a positive thinking clinic at **Falmouth** Surgery (*insert local name*)

**NARRATOR 1:** At night, he has a live phone in help-line on local radio - Shepherd FM.

**NARRATOR 2:** Some people think he's a phoney - most of his wisdom seems to come from song lyrics.

**NARRATOR 1:** (*To audience*) But only the most perceptive of people can spot this.

**NARRATOR 2:** And yet in a strange way, he's a good man, and helps many people.

**NARRATOR 1:** We can see him now as his afternoon positive thinking clinic comes to an end.

(*Dreamseller sits cross-legged, surrounded by supporters*)

**DREAMSELLER:** So you see, my friends, you need to search for the hero inside yourself

Search for the secrets you hide.

Search for the hero inside yourself

Until you find the key to your life.

**CYNIC:** That's easy for you to say.

**DREAMSELLER:** You can walk my path, and wear my shoes, but I tell you: Things can only get better.

**FAN 1:** Oh, that's wonderful and so full of meaning. Is this what you do all day?

**DREAMSELLER:** I'm just sitting watching flowers in the rain, hearing the power of the rain, making the garden grow.

**FAN 2:** Oh, what poetry. And such a deep insight into, well, just everything.

**CYNIC:** He sounds crazy to me. You know, crackers, a sandwich short of a picnic.

**FAN 1:** That's very cruel.

**DREAMSELLER:** You were the one who tried to hurt me with goodbye, you think I'd crumble, you think I'd lay down and die. Oh no, not I, I will survive.

**CYNIC:** The lift doesn't go right to the top. There's a light on, but there's no one at home.

**DREAMSELLER:** Listen - can you hear the drums, Fernando?

**CYNIC:** Drums? And I'm not called Fernando.

**DREAMSELLER:** If you've got a problem, I don't care what it is. If you need a hand, it would sure do me good, let me help.

**FAN 2:** Well, I feel that someone is watching me.

**DREAMSELLER:** Well the night has a thousand eyes. And a thousand eyes can't help but see if you are true to me. So remember when you tell those little white lies, that the night has a thousand eyes.

**CYNIC:** What sort of an answer's that? She's asking for some help, and you come up with that?

**DREAMSELLER:** I'll be there for you, When the rain starts to pour, I'll be there for you, Like I've been there before, I'll be there for you.

**FAN 1:** But I feel so lonely.

**DREAMSELLER:** Reach out, reach out and I'll be there.

**FAN 2:** But you won't know where I am.

**DREAMSELLER:** When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high, and don't be afraid of the dark.

**FAN 1:** I believe that with your help I can change my life.

**CYNIC:** Don't be taken in! The man's a crank!

**FAN 2:** Don't be so dismissive! This is helping so much.

**FAN 1:** Have you any final words of wisdom?

**CYNIC:** Final, as in the end? Does this mean we can go now?

**FAN 2:** Yes, what do you want us to do?

**DREAMSELLER:** Make me smile (Come up and see me) make me smile

**FAN 1:** But where do you live?

**DREAMSELLER:** Wherever I lay my hat, that's my home.

**FAN 2:** Is there anything you need?

**DREAMSELLER:** All I need is the air that I breathe.

**FAN 1:** Any last words of advice?

**CYNIC:** Does this mean we can go now?

**DREAMSELLER:** If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair.

**CYNIC:** I told you he's mad. This is a complete waste of time.

**FAN 1:** But problems are never easy. I need things to change.

**DREAMSELLER:** Love changes everything.

**FAN 2:** But that takes time. It's not easy.

**DREAMSELLER:** When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

**FAN 2:** Oh, Mr Dreamseller, you're so positive. I think I can see the future!

**FAN 1:** I have a dream.

**DREAMSELLER:** Now that's the way I like it! I have a dream too!

**Song: (I have a dream - Abba)**

**NARRATOR 1:** We must move on.

**NARRATOR 2:** Yes, this is still a traditional story.

**NARRATOR 1:** So we have Mary and Joseph,

**NARRATOR 2:** Not forgetting baby Jesus.

**NARRATOR 1:** A stable in Bethlehem, some Wise Men too

**NARRATOR 2:** And don't forget the threat from King Herod.

**NARRATOR 1:** But this year, we look at the Shepherds

**NARRATOR 2:** And tell the story from their point of view.

**NARRATOR 1:** The shepherds lived on the hillside not far from Bethlehem

**NARRATOR 2:** They spent their lives looking after the sheep

**NARRATOR 1:** Protecting them from wild animals

**NARRATOR 2:** And eating lots of lamb for dinner.

**NARRATOR 1:** Oh, I do love shepherds' pie!

*(Enter Gary, Larry, Harry and Barry)*

GARY, LARRY, HARRY and BARRY *(sing, in the style of a barbershop quartet)*

We're poor little lambs who've lost our way, Baa! Baa! Baa!  
We're little black sheep who've gone astray, Baa-aa-aa!

**NARRATOR 2:**

Let me introduce four of the shepherds, all brothers.

**NARRATOR 1:** Their names give a clue to their personalities.

**NARRATOR 2:** There's Moan, ... Groan, ... Grumble ... and Grunt! *(Each enters in turn)*

**MOAN:** It's a real pleasure to be here. Not.

**GROAN:** I should still be in bed! Who on earth gets up at this ungodly hour?

**GRUMBLE:** I hate it when everyone is so cheerful. Misery is much more fun.

**MOAN:** There are no reasons to be cheerful.

**GRUMBLE:** It really annoys me to see anyone being happy.

**MOAN:** As if we haven't enough to worry about.

**GROAN:** This Census – what a waste of time.

**MOAN:** Another wonderful government initiative.

**GRUMBLE:** Everyone returning to where they were born.

**GRUMBLE:** Just to be counted.

**MOAN:** And what will be the result?

**GROAN:** We'll all have to pay more in taxes to the Romans.

**GRUMBLE:** I wish the Romans would go home and leave us in peace.

**MOAN:** Come the revolution, we'll see them off.

**GRUMBLE:** Well at least we don't have to travel, seeing that we were all born here.

**MOAN:** But that means they'll visit us here at home.

**GROAN:** So we'll have to make everything clean and tidy for the Tax Inspector.

**GRUMBLE:** But we don't clean ourselves, do we?

**GRUNT:** Oh no. Health and Safety wouldn't let us.

**MOAN:** I don't do dusting.

**GROAN:** I don't do cleaning.

**GRUMBLE:** I don't do sweeping. I might put my back out.

**GRUNT:** They're not our jobs. You don't need to bark, when you've got a dog. Where's Pipsqueak?

**NARRATOR 1:** Pipsqueak was the youngest of the brothers.

**NARRATOR 2:** Pipsqueak wasn't his real name.

**MOAN:** Let's introduce him to everyone.

(Larry, Harry, Barry and Gary bleat like sheep when they speak)

**LARRY:** We could get him, Haaaarry.

**HARRY:** Good idea. Laaaarry!

**BARRY:** Is that you Haaaarry?

**LARRY:** No, it's me, Baaaarry.

**HARRY:** We're going to get Pipsqueak, Baaaarry.

**BARRY:** He won't like it, Haaaarry.

**LARRY:** Better huuurry, Haaaarry.

**HARRY:** Let's go, Baaaarry.

**BARRY:** I'm with you, Laaaarry.

**LARRY:** No worries, Haaaarry.

**BARRY:** Where've you been Gaaaary?

**GARY:** I've been for a haircut. I've been to the baaaarbers!

**GROAN:** Laaaaadies and Gentlemeeeee, our little broooooother,

**GRUNT:** Not only the youngest

**GRUMBLE:** But also the least important

**GROAN:** Ladies and Gentlemen! I give you the most insignificant

**MOAN:** The most worthless apology for a human being

*(Larry, Harry and Barry drag Pipsqueak onto the stage)*

**ALL:** It's Pipsqueak!

**PIPSQUEAK:** That's not my proper name!

**GRUNT:** But name-calling is all part of the strategy to keep you in your place.

**PIPSQUEAK:** You're always putting me down!

**GRUMBLE:** You should know your place, we can't help being superior.

**PIPSQUEAK:** You're horrible, you lot. You're always picking on me!

**MOAN:** But what else would we do for fun?

**GROAN:** How else can we entertain ourselves?

**GRUNT:** One of the real pleasures in life is making sure you're miserable.

**MOAN:** And we're really good at misery.

**PIPSQUEAK:** Well, with you four as brothers, what else can I be?

**GRUMBLE:** Oh, you flatter us.

**PIPSQUEAK:** But it's all the time. Snide remarks, dirty jobs, there's no limit to your meanness.

**MOAN:** It doesn't come easy, being so horrible.

**GROAN:** It does when you've had years of practice!

**PIPSQUEAK:** Oh, I wish someone could help me.

**GRUNT:** It's no good wishing – there's just us, a thousand sheep and not a soul for miles.

**PIPSQUEAK:** I'll get even one day – just you wait and see!

**GRUMBLE:** Ooh, the tension is killing me, I can't wait!

**MOAN:** (pushes Pipsqueak) What do you think you can do, Pipsqueak? Do tell me.

**PIPSQUEAK:** I'll think of something.

**MOAN:** Did you count all the sheep, Pipsqueak?

**PIPSQUEAK:** Yes. As usual. I count them three times a day. Every day. Always the same.

**GRUNT:** And you're sure they're all there?

**GROAN:** Every single one? You counted 70 heads?

**PIPSQUEAK:** No, I counted 280 legs, and divided by four.

**MOAN:** As it's getting dark now, we'll take turns watching the sheep.

**GRUMBLE:** We'll all go to sleep, and you can take the first watch.

**PIPSQUEAK:** How long will that be?

**MOAN:** Until daybreak of course.

**PIPSQUEAK:** I'll be on watch all night?

**MOAN:** That's right! Got it in one!

**PIPSQUEAK:** There you go again, picking on me. It's just not fair.

**GRUNT:** Who said anything about being fair?

**GRUMBLE:** We like the idea, so just get on with it.

**MOAN:** That's how it is, and how it always will be.

(4 brothers lie down and go to sleep, Pipsqueak on guard)

*(Stage darkens; lights flash and enter Gabriel, and two more angels.)*

**GABRIEL:** I am Gabriel. I come with God's message. You must listen to me.

**BROTHERS:** What was that?

**ANGEL 2:** Do not be frightened.

**MOAN:** I'm scared. I want my mummy.

**GROAN:** I'm scared too. I want my teddy.

**ANGEL 3:** There is no need to be afraid.

**GABRIEL:** We come to you with an important announcement from God.

**ANGEL 2:** Listen to what Gabriel tells you.

**ANGEL 3:** We have some wonderful and exciting news.

**MOAN:** It had better be good, waking us up. I'd only just got off to sleep.

**GRUMBLE:** I don't like this at all.

**GRUNT:** This is all a bad dream.

Pipsqueak: Oh, for goodness sake! You wimps! Will you all just SHUT UP and listen!

**GABRIEL:** Today, in the Holy City, a baby has been born.

**ANGEL 2:** You should visit him; he is a very special baby.

**PIPSQUEAK:** We will do as you say.

**ANGEL 3:** You will find the baby in a stable.

**GABRIEL:** But hurry, because he won't be there for long.

**ANGEL 2:** We have to go now.

**ANGEL 3:** We have many more people to tell about the new baby.

**PIPSQUEAK:** Goodbye, and thank you.

**GABRIEL:** You are a very polite little boy, unlike your brothers.

**MOAN:** I suppose we had better go to Bethlehem.

**GROAN:** If we must. But what about the sheep?

**GRUMBLE:** We can't just leave them on their own.

**GRUNT:** Pipsqueak will have to stay behind.

**PIPSQUEAK:** But I want to go. I was invited too! Why should it always be me?

**MOAN:** Because you're nobody, whereas we're all somebody.

**GROAN:** That's the difference.

**GRUMBLE:** So get used to it, and get on with it.

**GRUNT:** You're staying, and that's that. No arguments, do as you're told.

**MOAN:** We should set off now.

**GROAN:** But we can't find our way in the dark. Which way is Bethlehem?

**MOAN:** Don't worry. I've got one of these.

**GRUMBLE:** What's that?

**MOAN:** It's called Sat Nav, and it will guide us to Bethlehem.

**GRUNT:** How does it do that?

**MOAN:** You just type in 'The Stable, Bethlehem' and it will take us right there.

**GRUMBLE:** Are you sure? Do you trust it?

**MOAN:** It would be better if we had the postcode, but the angel didn't tell us.

**GRUNT:** But how does it know?

**MOAN:** Something called global positioning by satellite.

**GRUMBLE:** Technology! What will they think of next?

**GROAN:** 'Bye, Pipsqueak. Look after the sheep. It's a pity you can't come too.

**MOAN:** I bet it's a long way.

**GROAN:** I don't like walking.

**GRUMBLE:** I would walk a few miles.

**PIPSQUEAK:** Will you lot stop moaning! Stay here, and I'll go!

**GRUNT:** Oh, no. Even if it hurts, we're going. And you're staying.

**PIPSQUEAK:** Well, I would walk 500 miles to see baby Jesus.

**(I would walk 500 miles – Peter Kay version is the best!)**

Choreography like the Peter Kay video should make this riotously funny!

*(Exit brothers following Sat Nav)*

*END OF SCRIPT SAMPLE*