

How Far From the Stable?

Christmas 2001

Characters:

Mike Martin: Dad – goes along with his wife’s business around Christmas, and enjoys his young child’s Christmas fantasy and questions. But has a difficult time accepting his teenage son’s interest in the possibility of the reality of Jesus.

Julie Martin – Mom who is busy with the preparations of Christmas.

Brad Martin – 16-year-old son, who is encountering the possible reality of Jesus at Christmas after attending A Christmas Eve service on a date.

Kyle Martin – (or Kylie – this could be a boy or a girl) young child who loves Christmas and is full of questions. He is dressed in pajamas.

Setting: It is Christmas Eve at the Martin home. Mike is finishing a bedtime story to Kyle while Julie wraps up a few last gifts. Mike and Julie are waiting for their teenage son, Brad, to come home.

Props: Small sofa

End table

Decorated Christmas tree

Gifts

Story book of The Night Before Christmas

Scene opens with Mike and Kyle sitting on the sofa, finishing up “The Night Before Christmas.”

Mike: “And I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight, ‘Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!’”

Kyle: Wow...where do you think they were going next?

Mike: Who?

Kyle: Santa Claus... and his reindeer.

Mike: Probably back to the North Pole –so they could go to bed. Just like you’re going to do.

Kyle: Daddy. One more story? Please?

Mike: I’m not giving in. I said one story. Now up to bed.

Kyle: When I was at Jeffrey’s house yesterday, we watched a video about a little baby born in a barn or something. Do you know that Christmas story?

Mike: (Getting up and turning Kyle in the direction of his bedroom) Yeah, yeah. That’s another one. The manger story. I don’t think we have that book

Kyle: What's a manger?

Mike: Something for animals I think.

(Julie enters with a few packages in hand.)

Kyle: What's that got to do with a baby? Does Rudolph have one?

Mike: Rudolph probably has one. And the baby...

Julie: Needed to use it for a crib. There was no room for Jesus' mom to have her baby at the nearby hotel. And they didn't have hospitals. So baby Jesus was born in a stable, and his mom laid him in a manger.

Mike: Now off to bed. Don't forget to brush your teeth.

Julie: I'll be up in a few minutes to tuck you in.

Kyle: (Hugs Mike and Julie then exits..) I hope I can sleep.

Mike: Me too.

(Julie puts a few gifts on the end table.)

Mike: Almost finished?

Julie: I just have these last two.

Mike: You're getting this Christmas thing down to a fine science.
(Mike picks up a blue bow and puts it on a green and red wrapped gift.)

Julie: Could we put a green bow on that? There's no blue on that paper.

Mike: (Laughing a little and changing the bow.) It's going to get ripped off in 8 hours. Do you really think that (looking at the tag) our 16-year-old son is going to notice if the bow coordinates with the paper?

Julie: I don't know. Probably not. I've just really worked hard for a certain look. Plus, I want it to look good in the pictures...

Mike: Of course – the photo album. I have to hand it to you Julie; you have outdone yourself this year. Everything looks great. The tree, the lights, and man – I can't wait to bite into those pies tomorrow. If you need a picture of those you better get up early. Julie puts last few gifts under the tree, while Mike gets a few cookies and a glass of milk.

Julie: Looks like we did it.

Mike: Done? Great...now how about you get your kerchief and I'll get my cap, and we'll settle down for a long winter's nap?

Julie: Sound's great. But Brad isn't home yet. How about you bring your cookies and cap over to the couch and we'll just relax in front of the tree while we wait for Brad. I should really look over my list one more time anyway – just to make sure that I'm not forgetting anything.

Mike: Where is Brad anyway? Isn't it kind of late for him to be out?

Julie: He went with Jessica's family to church tonight. I guess that their church has a candlelight service on Christmas Eve. He should be home soon.

Mike: Since when is Brad interested in church?

Julie: Since he got interested in Jessica.

Mike: That's my kid.

Julie: (Looking at list) Let's see...gifts...turkey...pies...stockings...extra candles for the table. Oh and we have to remember to call your parents tomorrow.

Mike: (Puts arm around Julie.) Looks like you've managed to pull off the perfect holiday once again.

Julie: I hope I'm not missing anything.

Brad enters.

Brad: Hey. I'm home.

Julie: Hi bud. Did you have a nice time? Do you need something to eat?

Mike: How was Jessica?

Julie: A sandwich or something?

Brad: I'm good. And Jessica is fine.

Mike: So - mom says you went to church. Must be *some* girl. Not that I've been in a long time, but I used to have a hard time staying awake when I had to go to church in the morning. I can't imagine trying to sit through church in the dark - when my body thinks it should be resting. How did you pull that off?

Brad: It wasn't bad. It kind of made me think.

Mike: You went to a church that has the ability to keep the attention of a teenager?
That's something new.

Brad: I don't know. (Pause) Do you think that the baby in the manger story might have really happened?

Julie: My grandmother thought it did.

Mike: You two aren't going to get religious here are you? It's a fantasy. A fantasy that gives people an excuse to go nuts once a year. The baby in a manger... Rudolph... singing angels... and a partridge in a pear tree. They are all right out of the same fairy tale.

Brad: I'm just asking. I mean is there a chance that this one part - the baby Jesus part - could have actually happened?

Mike: I say no. But so what if it did? Does it matter?

Number one: I can't imagine that anything that happened 2000 years ago could possibly have anything to do with my life.

Number two: A baby? We've had two. From what I can remember babies cry, wet their diapers, and wake their parents up in the middle of the night. You'd be hard pressed to convince me that I ought to give much thought to *any* baby at this stage of the game.

Brad: Yeah. You're probably right. But, what if this baby Jesus was more than just an ordinary baby?

Mike: You're not going soft on me here, are you Brad? Is Jessica feeding you this religious stuff?

Brad: Dad. You always taught us to think. To investigate. To make informed decisions. I'm just asking questions about history. That's not "going soft", is it?

Mike: (Relenting, but not happy about it.) No. You're right. I've always said that you ought to be able to choose your own path in life. And... I guess if your path takes you to some ancient stable.... I won't stop you. Just don't expect me to be joining you any time soon.

Brad: OK dad. (Leans down to hug mom. Takes a few cookies.) Goodnight. Oh, Mom, everything looks great.

As Brad exits, Kyle enters.

Brad: (tossles child's hair) What are you still doin' up?

Kyle: Mom, you didn't come up. I can't sleep.

Lisa: Oh...I'm sorry. Come and sit here for a minute.

Kyle: (Sits on couch between Mike and Lisa.) Do you think that we can go to the North Pole for our vacation next summer?

Mike: The North Pole? That's pretty far away. Plus it's freezing. I was planning on something a little closer.

Kyle: Oh. Well, how about the stable? Is that close to Nevada?

Mike: No (laughing), we're a long way from the stable.

Lisa: In more ways than one I'm afraid.
Blackout.