

F1 (Jenny)  
M1 (Todd)  
F3 (Darla)

## AWAY IN A MANGER

by Craig Pospisil

*The Nativity display in the mall. Todd sneaks into view. He looks both ways down the mall corridor. A look of relief come to his face.*

TODD. The coast is clear!

*Jenny enters. She carries a large shopping bag from a store in the mall.*

JENNY. "The coast is clear"?

TODD. It means no one's around.

JENNY. I know what it means, but who actually talks that way?

TODD. I'm sorry, do you want to debate the way I talk or do you want to return stolen property before we get caught?

JENNY. Sorry. I'm just tired because we've been sneaking around all afternoon. I want to return the baby Jesus.

*Jenny slips the pilfered figure of the baby Jesus from the shopping bag.*

TODD. Great. Because now that Santa's Workshop is closed...the coast is clear.

JENNY. And thank god for that.

*She does a double take on the baby.*

Or...thank you. I didn't think it would be so hard.

TODD. Yeah, between dodging shoppers and Darla DiNardo, head of security.

JENNY. Don't even mention my mother's name. Let's do this.

TODD. Great.

JENNY. Here.

*She tries to hand Todd the baby Jesus, but he pushes it back at her. It goes back and forth like that.*

TODD. Go ahead.

JENNY. You took him, you put him back.

TODD. Yeah, I took him, so you return him.

JENNY. Todd! Just do it!

*While Jenny and Todd play hot potato with Jesus, Darla appears.*

*She carries some shopping bags with wrapped gifts.*

DARLA. Oh, one of you put him back already!

JENNY. Mom?!

TODD. Mrs. DiNardo! We were looking for you! Jenny and I, we found him—I mean, this. I mean, Jesus. He was at the movie theater. We went to see, ah, the new superhero movie, and there he was. Sitting right in the middle of the row. All alone. No one around. No idea how he got there. So, we wanted to report it, but we couldn't find you, so we thought we'd just bring him back ourselves. You know, like a...good Samaritan sort of thing.

DARLA. You get points for trying, Todd. But no. You're busted.

JENNY. How'd you know it was us?

DARLA. We've got security cameras everywhere. I spotted Todd's little act of blasphemy hours ago.

TODD. Am I in trouble?

DARLA. Well, you stole something. Am I s'posed to turn the other cheek?

JENNY. Funny, Mom.

DARLA. He started it with the "good Samaritan" thing.

TODD. Are you going to call the cops?

DARLA. Why'd you take it? Was it a dare? A school prank?

JENNY. No, Mom, he—

DARLA. Oh, I'll get to you. But I'm talking to Todd. *(To Todd.)* So?

*Todd thinks for a moment. How to explain?*

TODD. I did it for love.

*Jenny smiles. She takes Todd's hand. Darla wasn't prepared for this.*

DARLA. Oy. Okay, I don't understand, and I'm pretty sure I don't want to, so...put him back and let's get out of here.

TODD. Put him back?... That's it? We're cool?

DARLA. Yeah, we're cool. I mean, you're both grounded for a month, but we're cool.

TODD. Well... Hallelujah!

JENNY. Yeah, it's a Christmas miracle.

DARLA. I'm glad we're all agreed. Now, let's go.

*Jenny steps over to the Nativity scene, kneels and places the baby in the cradle.*

JENNY. Is it weird that I'm gonna miss him?

*Todd goes down on one knee beside Jenny and puts an arm around her. They hold the position, gazing at the baby, and look almost like Mary and Joseph looking at their infant. Darla stands nearby with her packages.*

*RJ comes through on his cell phone. He carries his shopping bag of gifts in the other hand.*

RJ. No, I'm telling you, I think we can do something good with this mall. I...

*Spotting this tableau, he stops.*

Ah...hold on. I think I'm having a vision.

*RJ stands near Darla. With their bags of gifts, they might be the wise men.*

*From the opposite side, Gerald and Ellie enter. He's carrying a fishing pole. She has a bag with a white wooly coat spilling out over the top. They see the others gathered and stop, caught by the vision. Ellie puts down her sheep-like looking bag and kneels, watching. Gerald stands with the fishing pole like a shepherd's crook.*

*The Nativity scene is complete, and a warm light bathes the stage, almost emanating from the baby Jesus. It grows brighter and brighter, then...blackout.*

**End of Play**

