

# Soon and Very Soon

Written by Tyler Morgan and Heidi Neisner.

## **Character List**

Jesus (main)

Teen/Adult Sam

Young Sam

Adult Johnny

Young Johnny

Wheelchair Johnny

Preacher

Deacon

Mom

Nelson

Jessica

Boys Counselor

Boys Director

Jesus #2

Gabe (the angel)

Pilate

Servant

Incidental church members, 5-6

Incidental students, 3-4

Incidental campers, 6 (use a few kids)

Incidental mobsters, 8

Incidental soldiers, 3

**Introduce the drama:** In the minds of the audience, paint a picture of the second coming and explain the journey through the universe on our way to Heaven. Describe what heaven is going to be like and finally what it will be like to come face to face with Christ for the first time and have a conversation with him. Set up the first scene. Explain Jonny and his reservation concerning his eternal placement.

## **Scene 1**

*In heaven, empty stage.*

**Johnny:** *(amazed, in awe, looking around, dumbfounded, looks at his legs, feels them, tests them out warily, says to himself)* Wow, I never thought I'd use these again.

**Jesus:** *(From PA area)* Johnny! My son!

**Johnny:** *(Looks up startled)*

**Jesus:** *(comes running over, bear hugs Johnny, absolutely overjoyed)* Johnny, I am so glad I found you. Have you seen the home I built for you? You're gonna love it. You'll have to tell me what you think of the 7-tier pool, custom-designed and built just for you. It's right over there on that beautiful slope. If the pool and everything isn't big enough, check out the sea of glass out there behind you. Smoothest sailing and best diving anywhere. You have to see it!

**Johnny:** *(Also excited)* Wow, it all looks so amazing. I don't even know where to begin.

**Jesus:** *(Almost gushing, overflowing with excitement)* Have you been just over there to the tree of life? This tree has the sweetest and most amazing fruit you've ever tasted. And there's the river of life, flowing straight from my Father's throne. Isn't it beautiful? Do you like it? I made it all for you. You wouldn't believe how much effort I put into working for you. It was hard to wait around before coming for you, but at least I could work on all of this to make you happy when you got here. Isn't it great!

**Johnny:** *(enthused but reserved)* Yeah, it's incredible—amazing. I can't believe I'm actually here with you ... in Heaven ...wow. What a contrast with my life on earth. How did I get from there to here? I never expected to be here. What about all of the stupid things I've done? I mean, it seems like I've messed up around every corner.

**Jesus:** *(Reassuringly)* None of those things matter anymore. You're here, with me.

**Johnny:** *(Getting more unsure)* Are you sure you didn't make a mistake? Am I really supposed to be here?

**Jesus:** You are here because I love you. I went through so much so that you could be here. Of course you're supposed to be here.

**Johnny:** Jesus, through my whole life, I turned away from you so many times. I made the wrong decisions. Even as a child, I did things that I now know hurt you. Do you remember that time in fifth grade? Even when I was in church I couldn't behave...

## **Scene 2**

*Flashback to fifth grade. Church scene. Preacher is at the pulpit, preaching. Deacon standing in the back, arms crossed, etc. Church members are seated in a couple pews, Sam, Johnny, and his mother are in the front row. Johnny is obviously bored. Sam starts whispering. Jesus watches, doesn't interact, but gets more disappointed as the scene continues.*

**Mom:** *(Whispers)* Johnny, Sam, Shh. Be quiet. We're in church.

**Young Johnny:** *(Excusing himself)* Mom, can I go to the bathroom? *(Quickly leaves with Sam before she answers)*

*Service continues.*

**Young Sam:** *(whispering)* Here's the plan. We make some airplanes with the bulletins, sneak up to the balcony, and then throw them at Pastor Johnson.

**Deacon:** *(To the boys)* Shhhh!

**Young Johnny:** Yeah, I bet we could even hit him right in the face!

*Sam and Johnny make paper airplanes where we can see, sneak up behind the tarps, lean over.*

**Young Sam:** *(Still whispering)* Let's wait until he says "Hallelujah" like he always does when he's almost done.

**Young Johnny:** Sounds good. Ready when you are.

**Pastor Johnson:** *(From the pulpit)* ....Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!....

**Young Sam:** *(Whispering too loudly)* Bombs away!

*The boys throw the airplanes and duck quickly. Deacon notices, jumps up, drags them out the back grumbling about "kids these days and the lack of respect." Sam and Johnny high-five behind his back. Jesus follows them out sadly.*

### Scene 3

*Back in heaven, empty stage.*

**Johnny:** *(Laughing, embarrassed)* I still can't believe I did that in church. That deacon sure was angry! Since it was in the house of God and all, I was positive that God would be just as angry with me as that old deacon was.

**Jesus:** *(Reassuringly)* More than my anger, my love for you overwhelmed me. I was hurt and saddened, but I could never stay angry with you. I know I was there, because I have been with you every second, but I just don't remember any paper airplanes in church.

**Johnny:** What? You don't remember when I disrupted the whole service right in the middle of the sermon? I thought for sure that would be pretty high on the sin scale.

**Jesus:** *(Gently)* There is no sin scale. Every sin is equal in my sight. But I still don't remember that prank.

**Johnny:** Well, that certainly wasn't the only time I failed. There's something I have always felt bad about, and I know you must remember *it*....

### Scene 4

*Flashback to high school. The bell rings, kids pour out across the stage and scatter. Sam and Johnny enter through different doors. Nelson (quite a nerd...taped glasses, hair slicked, socks pulled up over pants, etc.) enters, and crosses slowly in front of them. Jesus stands watching.*

**Sam:** Johnny! Over here.

**Johnny:** Hey Sam, how was biology?

**Sam:** It was fine... Oh look, here comes Nelson.

**Johnny:** That kid is such a dork. Did you hear about that thing in gym class?

**Sam:** You mean when he fell ten feet from the climbing rope and landed right on Coach Davis? *(Laughing.)* That was hilarious.

**Johnny:** How dumb can you be?

*Nelson walks by.*

**Sam:** Hey, check this out. *(Trips Nelson, lots of books go flying)*

*Jesus runs to Nelson and kneels down. Johnny instinctively kneels to grab book. He glances back at Sam and quickly stands, obviously unsure of what to do. Jesus reaches towards him, pleading with him to help. Nelson reaches for the book Johnny is holding. Johnny looks at Nelson one last time, then turn, tossing the book the other way. As Jesus and Nelson both dive for the book, Johnny kicks Nelson. Jesus tumbles away with Nelson. Sam and Johnny laugh and walk offstage; Johnny looks back once in sorrow. Jesus is visibly disappointed, watching Johnny.*

## **Scene 5**

*Back in heaven, stage again empty.*

**Johnny:** *(Sorrowful)* As soon as I'd done it, I remembered that verse about whatever I've done for the least of these brothers, I've done to you. I saw that look in his eyes and I knew that you were watching and were disappointed in me. But I guess I just didn't care that much.

**Jesus:** Whenever one of my children hurts another, I am filled with sadness because their actions are so far outside my plan. By hurting Nelson or any other of my children, you hurt me as well. Although, I can't recall that specific incident either.

**Johnny:** *(Incredulous)* I hurt you and you don't even remember it? How can you just forget about the pain I caused you? *(Pauses)* It's not fair. You've created such a wonderful place here for your people. But how can we deserve it when we've hurt you so much? When I have hurt you so much? During the darkest days of my life, I blamed it all on you. I was so angry I couldn't see past my own pain. I lost sight of you in my sorrow.

## Scene 6

*Flashback to hospital. Jesus watching as Jessica talks to Johnny, who is in a wheelchair.*

**Jessica:** Johnny, you can't blame yourself.

**Johnny:** Jessica, who else can I blame? Sam's dead and now I will never walk again all because I fell asleep at the wheel.

**Jessica:** It was just an accident. It could have happened to anyone. You can't keep beating yourself up about it. Sometimes God lets things happen that we just don't understand. We have to trust him even when life gets tough.

**Johnny:** You know what? You're right. This is all God's fault. He had the power to stop this. He could have kept me awake at the wheel. We were working for Him, but he still didn't bother to protect us. Here I am completely paralyzed, crushed, and ruined. But what about Sam? He didn't even have a chance to make his peace with God before the end. If God is all-powerful and loving like he claims to be, how could he ignore us and just let the car crash? Why would someone who had the power to stop this let someone like Sam just die? I didn't even know where he stood with God. Now I may never see him again. You know, I don't think I'd even want to be in heaven with a God like that.

*Jesus lifts Jessica, leads her to Johnny, puts her arms around Johnny to comfort him. Johnny doesn't look back, just flings off both her and Jesus. She leaves in tears. Johnny wheels off angrily the other way.*

## Scene 7

*Back to heaven.*

**Johnny:** I was so angry. I blamed you for all of it. For my pain, for Sam's death, for not loving me enough to step in to help me. I couldn't understand how a loving God could allow so much hurt. It wasn't until years later that I began to realize that you were there the whole time. During the accident and my recovery, you never left me for a moment. You were there in spite of my anger, hatred, and blame. You stuck with me even through the darkest times. I became convinced that you acted out of incredible love, even though I couldn't understand it. And as I trusted in you, you gave me peace through it all.

**Jesus:** You're right. I never left you. I have never left a single one of my children alone for even an instant. I love you too much to forget you or to turn away. Through your whole life, I was there. I sat next to you in church, I walked with you in school, I cried with you in your pain. And although I was there with you through it all, I can remember none of it. All these events that you remember—your anger and pain, your sin—though they took place, they never happened. You have never sinned; you are perfect in my sight.

**Johnny:** How can that be? It's not fair or right or just. Your kingdom is founded on righteousness, and justice is the foundation of your throne. Breaking the law destroys the kingdom, even if the law is broken by the King. Your law demands death as the penalty for sin. I have sinned. All humans have sinned. I deserve death, but instead here I am, very much alive! Don't you have a record book around here somewhere? Where you keep track of the sins of the world; keep track of my sins? They're in there; they've got to be in there. Where is it? I'll show you.

**Jesus:** *(Smiles to himself)* Okay, Johnny. I'll show you your book. Gabe *(Gabe enters stage)*...bring me Johnny's book. *(Gabe smiles to himself at the request but gets it)*

**Gabe:** *(Handing Jesus the book)* Here you go, Lord.

**Jesus:** Thanks. *(To Johnny)* This is the book that contains a record of each one of your sins. *(Hands book to Johnny)*

**Johnny:** Okay, Lord. I know they're in here. *(Opens it, slowly turns the blank pages, then starts looking through more and more rapidly)* What is this? It's all gone. There's nothing here! What happened to my sins?

**Jesus:** Johnny, do you remember the first summer you and Sam went to *[insert camp here]* camp? On Friday night, your cabin was sooo late to campfire. The drama had already started, and the only seats available were in the very front row. The boys' director was upset with you guys.... And you made such a huge disruption as you came in that the drama had to stop to wait for you to sit down.

## Scene 8

*Flashback to a summer camp campfire scene that portrays that night's drama. Biblical drama, showing Pilate and the mob, choosing who to release. Acting should be slightly sub-par, actors not really comfortable.*

**Pilate:** It is customary for me to release to you one prisoner in honor of the Passover. Who will you have me release, Barabbas the murderer, or Jesus who is called Christ?

**Mob:** *(Sporadically)* Barabbas! Release Barabbas! We want Barabbas! Give us Barabbas!

*Johnny's cabin comes in, making lots of noise, including loud footsteps on gravel. Actors notice, and awkwardly trail off. Everyone looks at each other bewilderedly and awkwardly.*

**Counselor:** *(intense whisper)* Johnny! Keep up! We're really late to campfire.

**Boys Director:** *(Frustrated)* Come on, guys, quickly.

*Boys' cabin finally sits down, in the front righthand rows, just in front of the stage. Pilate, still stunned, realizes that the scene should continue and awkwardly picks up with his next line. Servant stands by with a bowl and towel.*

**Pilate:** Will I release to you the King of the Jews?

**Mob:** No! Away with him! Give us Barabbas!

**Pilate:** What then should I do with the King of the Jews?

**Mob:** Crucify him! Crucify him!

**Pilate:** Why? I have found no guilt in him.

**Mob:** *(Yells louder)* Crucify him!

**Pilate:** *(To Jesus)* I am sorry, Jesus. Forgive me for this act; I cannot save you. *(To crowd, pointing to Christ.)* Behold, the man! I bring him forth so that you may know I find no guilt in him. Let him who he calls his Father judge you, and his blood be on your heads. I wash my hands of his innocent blood. *(Dips hands in the bowl held by the servant.)* Take him and crucify him yourselves. *(Pilate and servant exit.)*

**Johnny:** *(Standing up in the audience during crucifixion)* Wait! No! What are you doing? He doesn't deserve to die!

**Sam:** *(Following Johnny's lead)* Yeah! This is wrong. We can't let this happen.

*(Counselor forcibly re-seats Johnny and Sam. Quiets them. Soldiers grab Jesus, lay him down right there, nail him to the cross, and stand it up. Crucifixion is more symbolic than representative.)*

**Johnny:** *(Jumps up on the stage)* No! Why did we let this happen? Why did we crucify him? He didn't even deserve it. What was the point? This is so unfair. No, no, no. It shouldn't happen like this.

**Counselor:** *(embarrassed, jumps up onto stage, calms Johnny)* Johnny, Johnny. It's ok. Johnny, come sit back down. There's more. Watch and see what happens.

**Johnny:** *(Looking back at the cross)* It's just not right.

*(They sit back down together and watch "Mercy Said No" song drama. During the drama, Johnny and Counselor sneak over behind the tree. During this scene they play with sticks, rocks, bark, and other random debris.)*

**Counselor:** *(Walks toward center stage and sits on edge with Johnny)* Pretty eventful evening, huh? Man, that drama was intense.

**Johnny:** (*Almost in shock*) I know. Wow. I don't know exactly what to say. I can't really put it in words. It just...It really seems real.

**Counselor:** That's the thing, Johnny. It is real. Christ's love for you is real. Christ came to this earth and lived a life here in this sinful world. He lived for such a short time and died a horrible and vicious death.

**Johnny:** (*Interrupting*) But why? It doesn't make any sense. Why would he give up Heaven to come here? To just end up being killed?

**Counselor:** He chose to be the sacrifice because he loves us. With a love that is... it's just so ... amazing. God's love for us is so intense. So powerful. So...so...it just doesn't make sense. There is so much. There's so much love. He is absolutely crazy about you. He just loves you. Ridiculously, completely, incredibly. He loves you more than you will ever know here on earth.

**Johnny:** (*Trying to understand*) So, he came here to be with us. Because he loves us. I understand that part. But why did that mean he had to die?

**Counselor:** He stands in place as a perfect sacrifice for each one of our sins. The rules state that the wages of sin is death. Once we have sinned, which we all have, someone has to die in order to pay the penalty for the sin. Jesus chose to die for sins that were not his so that he could make each one of us clean and pure. The way that he always intended for us to be. Johnny, Christ loves you. I know I already said that, but that's what it all comes down to. He loves you so much that he chose a death here on earth over an eternity in heaven without you. He desperately wants you to be with him forever.

**Johnny:** (*Awkwardly*) Ok. Now if Jesus wants us to be in heaven, with him, forever, what do you ... What could someone ... How would I ...?

**Counselor:** End up in heaven?

**Johnny:** (*Sigh of relief*) Yeah. What do I have to do?

**Counselor:** Johnny, that's the beautiful thing about salvation. It's a gift. There's nothing that you can do to deserve salvation. All you have to do is accept what is already yours by giving your life into his hands, and allowing him to change you, to make you new again.

**Johnny:** So I just ... accept it?

**Counselor:** Yep. It's that simple. Johnny, do you want to accept that gift? Christ is here with us right now. (*Christ steps out of the shadows towards them*) He's yearning for you, he's hoping that you will choose him in this moment. Johnny, all you have to do is ask, and the gift is yours.

**Johnny:** (*Decidedly, firmly*) Ok.

*Johnny and Counselor bow their heads and close their eyes. Jesus lays his hands on them and looks at Johnny as the lights fade.*

## **Scene 9**

*Ending in heaven.*

*Johnny and Jesus reenter center stage.*

**Jesus:** Johnny, your counselor couldn't say it enough, and neither can I. I love you. I've loved you since the very moment I created you. I have always dreamed of when you would be here with me. I love you so much that I chose a death there on earth over an eternity here in heaven without you. I desperately want you to be with me for all eternity. Because you chose to let my blood stand in your place, your sins are gone, blotted from the record. And though those things took place, they never happened. Your book was wiped clean. And now you're here with me.

**Johnny:** That was the first time in my life I had ever *really* chosen you. It wasn't something I did because my parents told me to. It wasn't something I did because other people were doing it. I chose to accept your gift of irrational love because it was what I was searching for. That day was a turning point in my life. I accepted you and was baptized soon after. But it wasn't all perfect after that. I still messed up; I still did the wrong things. Though I had committed my life to you, I kept trying to take it back and run it my way.

**Jesus:** But no matter what you did, my love for you never changed. I have always loved you, and I've been leading you toward this place and this moment. Johnny, you are exactly where I've always wanted you to be—here in the place I've created for you forever. Eternity has just begun and I'm going to spend the rest of it showing you how much I love you.

*They start to walk off together. Jesus has his arm around Johnny. Johnny stops.*

**Johnny:** Lord, what about Sam? I'm here in this beautiful place with you, but I can't help but wish he could be here too.

**Jesus:** *(Pausing for effect, before smiling)* Sam has a gorgeous, 6-story mansion just over the hilltop *(points)*. He wants to see you. You should go visit him!

**Johnny:** Really!?! *(grabs Jesus and hugs Him)* Thank you, so much.

**Jesus:** I love you, Johnny.

*Johnny rushes off stage. Jesus turns and walks slowly then slowly turns to the audience.*

**Jesus:** Soon and very soon—I am coming for you, my child. Soon and very soon—we will be face to face. I am dreaming of that moment where we will be together, forever. I yearn to be with

you and to show you all the ways I love you. But, first you must choose to let my blood stand in your place. I want to wash you clean, just the way you were always meant to be. All the things in your life that trouble you—your pain, your guilt, your sin. I want to take it all away and make you clean and perfect.

Soon and very soon, I am coming to take you home. And soon and very soon we are going to be together again.....Soon and very soon...

*Turns slowly and walks off back stage as lights fade out*

***THE END***