A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

# The First Rivals

*Based on Genesis 4 · Written by Carrie Elderberry*



**SUITABLE FOR**
Ages 5 and up

**PERFORMANCE TIME**
10–12 minutes

**CAST SIZE**
6 puppets

**PROPS REQUIRED**
Red cloth to symbolize blood (Scene 2)

**MAIN THEME**

Jealousy between siblings — or between any two people — is deadly to relationships, all the way back to the very first rivalry between Cain and Abel; but there's nothing to ever be jealous about once we know God loves us completely, just because we belong to Him.

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*To print just the play on its own, print pages 5–11.*

## PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

### Synopsis

BOY and GIRL nearly come to blows competing for who GRANDPA loves more, until Grandpa arrives and gently corrects them: he loves them both the same. To help them understand sibling rivalry, he turns the stage over to a SNAIL and two CROWS, who stumble onto the aftermath of the first sibling rivalry of all — Cain's murder of his brother Abel — and piece together what happened from the blood-soaked ground. When the children return, Grandpa helps them see that jealousy is something to confess and let go of, not something to act on.

### Spiritual Concept

Cain's jealousy over Abel's accepted offering escalated all the way to murder — and Jesus later teaches that jealousy and anger toward a sibling carry the same weight in God's eyes as murder itself (Matthew 5:21–22). This play traces that thread from a squabble over a hug to the very first sibling rivalry in Scripture, then offers the antidote: God's love isn't divided up between people, so there's nothing to compete for.

### Age Suitability

Best for ages 5 and up; the sibling-rivalry framing device will be instantly familiar to anyone with a brother or sister, while the Cain and Abel story (told through animal witnesses rather than depicted directly) keeps the violence at a comfortable remove for younger viewers.

### Performance Time

10–12 minutes

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## CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

### Characters (in order of appearance)

BOY — A modern child, a bit younger than his sister, and openly competitive about who Grandpa loves more.

GIRL — A modern child, older than her brother, jealous that Grandpa might love her cuter little brother more.

GRANDPA — The children's grandfather and a follower of Jesus. Patient and direct — corrects the children's rivalry without shaming them, and helps them apply the Cain and Abel story to their own hearts.

SNAIL — Discovers the blood-soaked ground around Abel's body and, with the crows, slowly pieces together what happened. Moves and speaks slowly.

CROW 1 — Witness to the aftermath of Abel's murder — recognized both brothers from having seen them before.

CROW 2 — Witness alongside Crow 1 — shares narration duties, often in unison with Crow 1.

**Prop Options**

- A red cloth may be draped over the theater bar for Scene 2 to symbolize blood.
- The snail and crows can be stuffed toys, or even just pictures drawn on stiff paper and affixed to sticks, per the source's note.

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## PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

**Character Notes**

The snail and crows never have to see Cain or Abel directly — they piece the story together from clues (the blood, the description of the fight), which keeps the violence appropriately off-page for a young audience.

The crows' comic “blood is delicious” joke, followed by the snail's reminder that they're “just puppets,” is a deliberate tension-breaker — keep the tone light there even though the subject matter is serious.

**Staging**

A fun way to include more people, especially pre-readers eager to help, is to have a hand-held “curtain” ready for the scene change. Helpers can run up and screen the center stage for a moment while chimes are rung and the puppets switch places.

BOY, GIRL, and GRANDPA “watch” the animal scene from a side bar or from the audience, per the source's note — the same show-within-a-show device used elsewhere in this collection.

Spread the red cloth over the center of the stage bar at the start of Scene 2 and pull it off again before the people return.

**Reading the Script**

CAPS = volume/intensity.

Em dashes (the long dash, —) = the author's pacing notation, especially in the crows' back-and-forth narration.

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## THE FIRST RIVALS

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*(Enter BOY and GIRL.)*

**BOY:** This day is going so slow!

**GIRL:** I know, I can’t wait ’til GRANDPA gets here.

**GIRL:** Daddy went to pick him up at the airport ages ago! Where ARE they?

**BOY:** Well, the plane got in on time. So maybe they got stuck in some TRAFFIC?

**GIRL:** Maybe. Oh! I hear the car! They are here! They’re here!

**BOY:** MY Grandpa! MY Grandpa! I claim the first hug.

*(GIRL pushes BOY.)*

**GIRL:** NO! I get to hug him first!

**BOY:** Oh no you don’t! I CALLED it.

**GIRL:** That doesn’t count. I’m the OLDEST.

**BOY:** That is NOT fair. I called it first.

**GIRL:** It’s perfectly fair. I’m older, so that means I have KNOWN him longer than you!

**BOY:** Well! So what? I can’t help that!

**GIRL:** *(gloatingly)* AND— and— and—

**BOY:** *(suspiciously)* And what?

**GIRL:** So that means Grandpa has loved me LONGER than YOU.

**BOY:** No! No! That’s not fair!… I don’t believe you!

*(BOY and GIRL start pushing each other.)*

**BOTH:** *(ad lib)* He loves me more!

*(GRANDPA enters, closest to BOY.)*

**GRANDPA:** Well.

*(GIRL and BOY freeze.)*

**GRANDPA:** This is disappointing.

*(BOY and GIRL move apart, look down.)*

**GRANDPA:** *(sad)* I did not expect THIS kind of welcome.

**BOY:** *(fake sweet)* Oh, heh heh, hello Grandpa!

*(GIRL looks down and covers face.)*

**GRANDPA:** Well! Let's see if a hug will help matters!

*(BOY hugs GRANDPA and turns to GIRL.)*

**BOY:** HA! NOW what do you say? Who does Grandpa love more? I got the first hug! Nyah nyah nyah!

**GRANDPA:** What on earth?

**GIRL:** Grandpa, I'm afraid this is all my fault.

**GRANDPA:** OK, first I need a hug from you, and THEN we need to talk. Little man, you stand on the other side of me.

*(BOY trades places with GRANDPA. GRANDPA hugs GIRL.)*

**GRANDPA:** Now. What seems to be the trouble?

**GIRL:** It was all my fault. I was teasing him.

**BOY:** Grandpa! She said you love HER more than you love ME.

**GRANDPA:** You both know the truth about that, I hope.

**BOY:** Me, it's me! Right?

**GRANDPA:** *(emphatically)* No.

**BOY:** What!

**GRANDPA:** I love you both the same.

**GIRL AND BOY:** *(big sighs)* Ohhh…

**GIRL:** It's just so hard to have to share you.

**BOY:** How can you love us both the same? We are so different.

**GRANDPA:** You are different people, but I do love you both. There is no need to feel jealous.

**BOY:** Is that what I am feeling…?

**GIRL:** Grandpa, why do brothers and sisters fight so much?

**GRANDPA:** There is a special name for that kind of fighting. It's called sibling rivalry.

**GIRL:** I know what "sibling" means. It means brothers and sisters. But what is rivalry?

**GRANDPA:** Rivalry means being jealous, pushing to be better than somebody else. Or to get more.

**BOY:** But why is it easier to share with my FRIENDS? I don't have rivalry with my friends NEARLY as much.

**GIRL:** Grandpa. I am always worried that you love him MORE, because he is littler and cuter, and a boy.

**BOY:** And I am always afraid that you love HER more, because she is bigger and smarter and prettier!

**GRANDPA:** Well, you are both wrong.

**BOY AND GIRL:** *(pause to think about that)* Oh!

**GRANDPA:** Now that we have that straightened out, let me tell you a story.

**GIRL AND BOY:** Yay!

**GRANDPA:** And actually, since this is a puppet show, let's get some other puppets out here and let them take a turn. They can tell the story better than me.

**ALL:** *(ad lib)* Let's go!

*(Exit BOY, GIRL, and GRANDPA – they can "watch" from a side bar, or the puppeteers can take them into the audience to watch from there. Stay alert! Spread a red cloth over the center of the stage bar for Abel's "blood".)*

*(Enter SNAIL, moving slowly along. It stops and retracts, then extends. It speaks slowly too.)*

**SNAIL:** This is very strange stuff… it's red… and sticky… and a little salty!

*(Enter CROWS.)*

**CROW 1:** I think the coast is clear now!

**CROW 2:** Yes, time for a feast. Caw! Caw!

**SNAIL:** Excuse me! Can you tell me what this stuff is, all over the ground?

**BOTH CROWS:** *(count 1, 2, 3)* It's blood. Yum!

**SNAIL:** But it is soaking into the ground.

**CROW 2:** There is such a lot of it, too!

**SNAIL:** But where did it come from? It did not come out of the sky, did it?

**CROW 1:** No. Look over there. Caw!

*(ALL turn one way.)*

**CROW 2:** Yes, do you see that man lying on the ground?

**SNAIL:** The man who is sleeping?

**CROW 2:** He's not asleep. Caw!

**BOTH CROWS:** *(count 1, 2, 3)* He's dead!

**SNAIL:** Oh, my. This is terrible.

**CROW 1:** There WAS another man.

**CROW 2:** And he just ran away. Caw!

**CROW 1:** They were talking—

**CROW 2:** And all of a sudden THIS one got hit really hard by his brother—

**CROW 1:** And he just fell over—

**BOTH CROWS:** *(1, 2, 3)* Dead! Caw! Caw!

**SNAIL:** But… how do you know they were brothers?

**CROW 1:** We have seen them before.

**SNAIL:** Oh dear, dear, dear. These humans are so peculiar. Whatever were they fighting about?

**CROW 1:** Well, they were brothers. Caw!

**SNAIL:** Yes?

**CROW 2:** They each had made a present, a kind of gift, for God. Caw!

**SNAIL:** But… that sounds rather sweet.

**CROW 1:** Wait, though. They did not bring the same SORTS of presents. Caw!

**CROW 2:** No, their gifts were quite different.

**SNAIL:** How so?

**CROW 1:** Well. This one—

**SNAIL:** The dead one?

**BOTH CROWS:** Yes!

**CROW 1:** And actually we know this one's name, it is Abel. Abel gave God the very BEST that he had.

**SNAIL:** But that’s good! And very wise of him!

**CROW 1:** Yes, but you see, his brother doesn’t love God. He DIDN’T give his best.

**CROW 2:** Cain is his name. We heard Abel say his name. It is Cain. And Cain did not bother to give God his best.

**CROW 1:** No, Cain was not respectful of God. A bit lazy, perhaps? A bit selfish?

**SNAIL:** That is too bad. A shame…

**CROW 1:** Yes. And God did not appreciate Cain’s gift. Caw!

**SNAIL:** You mean God did not accept it?

**BOTH CROWS:** Right.

**SNAIL:** I can see that Cain did not handle that very well.

**CROW 1:** No… Cain got super mad. Caw!

**CROW 2:** He wasn’t sorry at all. Caw!

**BOTH CROWS:** Cain blamed his brother Abel!

**CROW 1:** Cain was very jealous of Abel.

**SNAIL:** Ah, I believe we have here the very first case of SIBLING RIVALRY.

**CROW 1:** Yes, afraid so. And the very first murder because of it. Caw!

**SNAIL:** What a mess. And I don’t just mean all this blood.

**CROW 2:** These humans are going to get into a lot of trouble, until JESUS comes.

**SNAIL:** That is very true.

**CROW 1:** At least we have the promise of Jesus, to give us hope. Caw!

**SNAIL:** Yes, some day, at just the right time, Jesus will make all things right again.

**CROW 2:** Well, in the meantime, what should we do about this body? Caw!

**CROW 1:** And all this blood? Delicious!

**SNAIL:** Did you forget that we are just puppets?

**BOTH CROWS:** Oh, right! Caw! Caw!

**SNAIL:** Thank goodness!

**CROW 1:** Let’s turn the stage back over to those kids and their Grandpa. I want to see if those children understand our story. Caw! Caw!

*(Exit all animals, pull off red cloth. Enter PEOPLE.)*

**BOY:** What a terrible story!

**GIRL:** Well, at least I am not as bad as CAIN.

**GRANDPA:** Are you so sure?

**GIRL:** Oh Grandpa! I would never kill my brother! I'm not THAT kind of bad.

**GRANDPA:** Ah, but do you know that Jesus tells us, in the Bible, that jealousy is just as bad as murder?

**GIRL:** Oh!

**BOY:** Oh!

**GIRL:** Well then I AM in big trouble.

**GRANDPA:** We are always comparing ourselves to other people, aren't we?

**GIRL:** Yeah. And we either think we are better than they are —

**GRANDPA:** So we look down on them—

**BOY:** Or maybe they have something WE want—

**GIRL:** And that's when we get jealous.

**GRANDPA:** Right. But then you can remember that God made you, and loves you just because you belong to Him—

**BOY:** The way YOU love us, Grandpa?

**GRANDPA:** GOD loves you even more, so much more than I can.

**GIRL:** Then there is actually nothing to EVER be jealous about.

**GRANDPA:** Right.

**GIRL:** But what can I do, when I DO feel jealous?

**GRANDPA:** When we find out we're doing wrong— we pray and tell God "Sorry," and we ask God to help us make it right.

**GIRL:** Well! OK! (looking up) Dear God, I am sorry I was so jealous. Please help me!

**BOY:** Me too! Me too!

**GRANDPA:** Oh good.

**BOY:** Grandpa, did you hear what the animals said about Jesus? Are all the animals really waiting for Jesus to return?

**GRANDPA:** Yes, they are! The Bible says so! Should we ask them to come back out to help with the ending?

**GIRL AND BOY:** Yeah! Oh, Crows! Oh Snail!

*(Enter Animals.)*

**GRANDPA:** Ready? 1, 2, 3:

**ALL:** You can find out more about Cain and Abel in the Bible, in Genesis Chapter 4. That is all for today! Goodbye!

**THE END**

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

### Discussion Questions

1. What were BOY and GIRL really fighting about at the start of the play?
2. Why did God accept Abel's gift but not Cain's?
3. GRANDPA said jealousy is just as bad as murder, in Jesus' eyes. Does that surprise you? Why or why not?
4. GRANDPA said there's "nothing to ever be jealous about." What did he mean?
5. What can you do the next time you notice yourself feeling jealous of someone?

### Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Genesis 4:1–8 — Cain, jealous that God accepted Abel's offering and not his own, murders his brother. (Full account — reference only.)

**Additional Scripture:**

- Matthew 5:21–22 — Jesus teaches that anger toward a brother carries the same weight before God as murder. (Summarized.)
- James 3:16 — “For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.” (NLT)

### Song Suggestions

- “In Christ There Is No East or West” — William A. Dunkerley — https://open.spotify.com/track/2qlB3ulM0gA2keL2F7ngRs
- “Let Us Break Bread Together” — The Blind Boys of Alabama — https://open.spotify.com/track/0zY53iZgOQPAfVIidrgxob
- “Blest Be the Tie That Binds” — Praise and Harmony — https://open.spotify.com/track/3bULw08J5o75ZQQ5nL7Q2f

### Ministry Context

Well suited to a series on sibling relationships, jealousy, or the fruit of the Spirit. The source's own hint suggests sharing Proverbs 14:30, James 3:16, or Proverbs 27:4 with the audience after the play to reinforce that jealousy kills love and relationships.