

NIGHT OF ALLELUIAS!

A Christmas play by Heidi Petak

SYNOPSIS

A church Christmas party turns into a caroling outing to cheer the heart of Christine's father, old Mr. Lawrence. But when their sweet melodies are met with harsh words and a slammed door, Christine reveals that her father had cut her off years ago when she accepted Christ through the witness of her husband, Jeff. The group disperses, but Jeff and Christine's three children soon draw them all back with an idea for a live nativity in the old barn that will surely soften the heart of their Grandpa. With humor, emotion, and realistic dialogue, this accompanying play to the music of *Night of Alleluias!* will inspire your congregation with a Christmas message of forgiveness, reconciliation and love.

TIME

The play script adds approximately 30 minutes to the 55-minute musical, making the total production approximately one hour and 25 minutes long.

CHARACTERS

4 men (ages 30-70), 5 women (ages 30-70), 1 teenage girl, 4 children (ages 5-11)

LEAD CHARACTERS (40-50 lines):

CHRISTINE ANDERSON- 35-40, plays Mary in the nativity, solos (47 lines)

JEFF ANDERSON- 40's, Christine's husband, optimistic, a leader, plays Joseph in the nativity, solos (46 lines)

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS (20-35 lines):

TYLER ANDERSON- 11, son of Jeff and Christine, plays a wise man in the nativity (32 lines)

JULIA ANDERSON- 9, daughter of Jeff and Christine, plays an angel in the nativity (27 lines)

EMMA ANDERSON- 6, daughter of Jeff and Christine, plays an angel in the nativity (20 lines)

MR. LAWRENCE- 60's-70's, father of Christine (24 lines)

MINOR CHARACTERS (3-15 lines):

DAVE- 30's-40's, the director of the church choir, plays a wise man in the nativity (8 lines)

ALLISON- 30's- 40's, wife of Dave, loves dramatic productions, plays an angel in the nativity (13 lines)

BRIANNA- 9, daughter of Dave and Allison, friend of Julia, plays an angel in the nativity (3 lines)

TRENT- 11, son of Dave and Allison, friend of Tyler, plays a wise man in the nativity (3 lines)

JIM- 40's, single, choir member, plays a shepherd in the nativity (6 lines)

ASHLEY- 14, daughter of Jim, plays a shepherd in the nativity (3 lines)

DONNA- 40's-50's, single, choir member, plays a shepherd in the nativity (10 lines)

LUCILLE BENSON- 60's-70's, plays an angel in the nativity (12 lines)

Extra actors may be added as desired

SET DESIGN

The stage is set with three areas: stage left is Mr. Lawrence’s home, stage right is the old barn, and center is an open area. Mr. Lawrence’s home has a few steps leading up to a small porch, a front door, a few window frames, and a door frame leading to the back of the house. The exterior framing of the home should be merely suggested to allow the audience to see clearly into the living room. The living room set should be simple to mirror the bleakness of his world.

The nativity takes place in the old barn, stage right. The barn may be constructed from red or brown wood and may either be a barn frame, or a more complete barn setting, depending upon your resources. The barn interior should include a raised platform or loft for the angels.

The center of the stage is left open for the opening scene in the Anderson home and the Christmas party. The set for the party may consist of a Christmas tree stage center, on rollers and lit during the party, then rolled back and darkened after the party. Other trees may be placed in front of it and around it for the rest of the play to suggest Mr. Lawrence’s backyard.

PROPERTIES

Prologue

Necklace

Doll

Food items for Christmas party

Box

Scene 1

Decorated Christmas tree

Serving trays

Food (fruitcake, roll-ups, etc.)

Cups

Thermos for hot chocolate

Birthday cake

Scene 2

Couch and other living room items

Scene 4

Cell phone

Tool box

Wood

Hay

Scene 5

Costumes for nativity

Mirror ball (optional)

Scene 7

Photo album

Birthday candles

Matches or lighter

Scene 8

Knife & server (for cake)

Napkins (to serve cake)

Scene 11

Fudge

Cups

Hot chocolate

Other snacks (cookies, etc.)

PROLOGUE

(Setting: It is early evening in the Anderson home. JEFF, CHRISTINE and their three children are getting ready to leave for a church Christmas party (can be a Sunday School, cell group, or community group party, depending on your church structure). A spotlight is enough to establish the family in their home. The first lines of dialogue begin around 20 seconds (meas. 10) into the Overture (where the Narration starts on the CD). When this scene opens, CHRISTINE is putting a necklace on JULIA).

JULIA: Mommy, do you think Brianna will be at the Christmas party?

CHRISTINE: I'll bet she will be, Julia!

(JEFF and TYLER are putting food items for the party into a box)

TYLER: Will Trent be there?

JEFF: I think you can count on it, Tyler!

EMMA *(coming to the other side of Christine):* Mommy, will any angels be there?

CHRISTINE *(turning around and hugging her):* Yes, sweetie, because you'll be there!

(They laugh.)

EMMA: Oh mommy!

CHRISTINE: You know what? Our Sunday school class is full of angels. Or at least people who act like angels. You'll get to meet all of them tonight!

JULIA *(getting her purse):* I love Christmas parties!

TYLER: I hope somebody brings some fudge!

JEFF: Me, too! Okay, I want to see coats and hats and gloves on every one of you. It sure feels like winter out there tonight!

(The music changes mood. EMMA and CHRISTINE share a private moment while the rest of the family begins to put on their coats, hats and gloves.)

EMMA: Mommy, I wanted to be an angel this Christmas.

CHRISTINE: I know you were, Emma. Maybe next year. But for now, why don't you shut your eyes real tight and imagine what the whole sky must have looked like on the very first Christmas. Millions of angels all singing together that Jesus is born!

(Choir begins singing “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,” while EMMA puts on her coat. As the rest of the family continues to get ready, she is standing still, clutching her doll with her eyes shut tight. When the rest of the family is all ready, they begin to leave their “house.” TYLER looks back and sees EMMA still standing there with her eyes shut. He runs back, grabs her hand and pulls her to join the rest of the family. Other families are then seen, also getting ready to go, and then traveling around the stage as if en route to the Christmas party. CHRISTINE gathers her family and sings the solo “Can You Hear It?” to them. Everyone onstage sings “Alleluia” as they travel. When the first “Gloria” in the song, “Angels We Have Heard on High,” is sung, the party has begun and the group is singing together, greeting each other, and taking out their food to share. The kids are especially excited to see their friends.)

SCENE 1

(TYLER and his friend TRENT approach an older woman holding a tray. They look up, trying to see what is on the tray.)

TRENT: Is that fudge?

LUCILLE: No, this is fruitcake, my dears! And I have two pieces right here with your names on them!

TYLER (*serious*): Thank you, but they must be the wrong names ‘cuz we’re looking for fudge.

(Lucille laughs, the boys run off.)

JEFF (*in another area of the party, taps DONNA on the shoulder who is holding a tray of food*): Is that fudge?

DONNA: No, these are mincemeat roll-ups. Here! Try one!

JEFF: No, I really shouldn’t. (*patting his stomach*) Trying to watch the carbs.

TYLER (*running up to JEFF*): Dad, did you find any fudge yet?

JEFF: Not yet, son. But it’s bound to be around here somewhere. (*they turn to look elsewhere*)

(In another area of the party...)

CHRISTINE (*to Allison*): Did I tell you how much I enjoyed the pageant last night?

ALLISON: No, but you can tell me now.

CHRISTINE: I will! It was really good, Allison. Every time another character came out, I would look at their costume and try to guess how many hours and sleepless nights it took you to make it!

ALLISON: Thanks. A lot. Both hours and sleepless nights. But I loved it.

CHRISTINE: I know you did.

ALLISON: Actually, all the costumes are in the trunk of our car right now. We need to find a spare closet at the church for them.

CHRISTINE: I'll bet there's some room in the closet with the choir robes.

ALLISON: Really? That would be great.

DAVE (*overhearing*): I know there's room in that closet! I'm in charge of it!

CHRISTINE: Oh, I forgot! We have the choir king himself here at the party!

DONNA (*joining in*): And I think half the choir is here, too!

JIM (*turning around*): I'm here!

LUCILLE: Me too!

ALLISON: You know what I'm thinking?

CHRISTINE: What?

ALLISON: With all these choir people here, we should make the most of it!

DONNA: What, start practicing for Easter?

ALLISON: No, we should go caroling!

DAVE: I'm game!

DONNA: We could go here around the neighborhood!

LUCILLE: Or what about a nursing home?

ASHLEY: Everybody does that, Mrs. Benson. Can't we do something original?

JIM (*her father*): We could go to the mall and sing to your friends.

ASHLEY: Dad! No! Isn't there like, some old person who lives way out in the boonies and never gets any carolers?

JEFF (*to Christine*): Sounds like your dad, honey.

CHRISTINE: Jeff, no. Not my dad. (*trying to smile, but looking uncomfortable*)

JEFF: Why not?

JULIA: Yeah, let's go sing to Grandpa!

CHRISTINE (*to Julia*): Sweetie, I don't think that's a good idea.

ALLISON: Why not?

CHRISTINE: Because. Just... because.

JEFF: Because he's a miserable old man. He lost his wife a few years ago at Christmas, and has been bitter about the holiday ever since.

LUCILLE: Then I think he's the perfect assignment for us!

DONNA: I'll bring him some mincemeat roll-ups!

JIM: I'll get the hot chocolate!

TYLER: Is anybody bringing fudge?

BRIANNA: What about the birthday cake for Jesus?

ALLISON: Bring that along, too. Who knows? Maybe Mr. Lawrence will invite us in and we can all celebrate Jesus' birthday together!

CHRISTINE: I'm sorry. I hate to rain on everyone's parade, but I just don't think you understand.

LUCILLE: Oh, but this is what Christmas is all about—bringing light to dark places!

EMMA (*to Christine*): Mommy, is she an angel?

LUCILLE: Honey, they don't make angels with this many wrinkles.

DAVE: So... how do we get there?

JEFF: Well, he doesn't totally live out in the boonies. In fact, it's not really all that far from here. You know the old highway that goes out past the truck stop? Just go about a mile and a half and you'll see a dirt road...

("This is the Story of Light" fades to drown out Jeff's voice as he continues to give directions. The group excitedly gets their food items together, puts on their coats, and sings together, anticipating their mission. Choreography with flashlights or candles would be an engaging visual. At some point, the group exits. Toward the end of the song, the group re-enters to gather in front of Mr. Lawrence's home. When the song ends, Scene 2 begins.)

SCENE 2

DAVE (*loud whisper*): Okay, is everybody ready? Here we go!

(They all sing the first verse of "Joy to the World" together, and then begin "We wish you a Merry Christmas." When they begin the verse "Good tidings we bring...", the outside light comes on, and Mr. Lawrence opens his door.)

MR. LAWRENCE (*angrily*): That's enough! Now get out of here! All of you!

CHRISTINE: Dad, we just...

MR. LAWRENCE: I said get out of here! Now get!

JULIA: But Grandpa, didn't you like our singing?

TYLER: We brought you some cookies!

JIM: And hot chocolate!

LUCILLE: And fruitcake!

JEFF: We just wanted to cheer you up, Dad.

MR. LAWRENCE: Don't you Dad, me! Is that what this is? A charity visit? Well, you religious fanatics can go find yourselves another charity to bless!

(MR. LAWRENCE slams the door. There is a moment of silence, then TYLER speaks.)

TYLER: Why is Grandpa so mad?

EMMA: Not mad, Tyler. Sad. He just looks mad.

LUCILLE: I think I was a little out of tune. I probably set him off.

CHRISTINE: I'm so sorry everybody. I should have known this would happen. I don't know why I let you all come out here.

DONNA: Because like Lucille said, we're all about bringing light to dark places.

CHRISTINE: Well, I should have at least told you.

ASHLEY: Told us what?

CHRISTINE (*hesitates, upset*): That I... or he... honey, could you...?

JEFF: Eight years ago I found the Lord. Or I guess I should say He found me. Christine became a Christian pretty quickly after that, and her dad hasn't wanted much to do with our family since then.

CHRISTINE: I'm so sorry. This whole mess is all my fault.

LUCILLE: Now don't you go blaming yourself, honey. Us elderly folks can be downright stubborn sometimes. I say what that man needs is a good multivitamin.

EMMA: I think he just needs Jesus.

LUCILLE: And Jesus. A good multivitamin and Jesus.

DAVE: Well, there are a few other houses right around here. (*pointing*) What do you say we head over to that one with its lights on and try it again?

JIM: I'm game!

DONNA: We're just getting warmed up!

(*Everyone prepares to leave.*)

DAVE: Alright! Let's head out!

(*They all begin to exit, except JEFF and CHRISTINE, who stay back.*)

CHRISTINE (*stopping Allison*): Allison, we need a few minutes, if that's okay. We'll join you guys in a little bit.

ALLISON: That's fine. I totally understand. We'll just see you when we see you.

(*ALLISON hugs CHRISTINE and exits with the rest of the group*)

SCENE 3

CHRISTINE: Kids!

(TYLER, JULIA, and EMMA return to their parents)

JEFF: Kids, we're not leaving just yet.

JULIA: Yay!

TYLER: Can we go exploring?

CHRISTINE: Where exactly do you plan to explore?

TYLER: Just right here, around the house.

JULIA: And we'll stay where we can see you!

JEFF: I want you back here in a few minutes. Don't make me come looking for you!

TYLER: We won't!

(JULIA grabs EMMA's hand and the three of them run off behind the house in the direction of where the barn is/will be on stage. CHRISTINE sits. JEFF stands behind her.)

CHRISTINE: I feel like such a fool. Why did you have to bring up my dad at the party?

JEFF: Because he needs somebody to show him some love. And if we don't do it, who will?

CHRISTINE: I don't know. But this was a complete waste of time. We've prayed for him for eight years, Jeff. You really thought a few Christmas carols would do the trick?

(Music begins for "The Promise, Part 1.")

JEFF: We have to have faith, honey. We have to believe that any day now, God is going to break through your Dad's shell and wow him. And I, for one, want to be there when He does. Don't you?

CHRISTINE: Of course. You know I do.

JEFF: Think of the people in the Bible. Like the Israelites when they were captive in Egypt, or Esther when it looked like all of her people would be wiped out, or even

Paul in prison. There are so many stories in Scripture where God told His people not to lose faith or hope, even when everything looked hopeless. And I believe that's the same message God has for you, honey, right here, right now.

(JEFF sings "The Promise, Part 1" to CHRISTINE.)

SCENE 4

(The three kids run to their parents excitedly.)

TYLER: Mom! Dad!

JULIA: Guess what we found?

EMMA: We found the baby Jesus!

TYLER: No, we didn't.

EMMA: I thought you said we did!

TYLER: No, I said we found the place where He might have been born.

CHRISTINE: What are you talking about?

JEFF: I'm afraid Bethlehem is a long way from here.

JULIA: The old barn!

TYLER: It has hay!

JULIA: And a loft!

EMMA *(wide-eyed)*: And even animals!

CHRISTINE: He's got animals in there?

EMMA: Uh huh. I saw a mouse!

TYLER: It's perfect!

JEFF *(a bit suspiciously)*: Perfect for what?

ALL 3 KIDS: A nativity!

JEFF: A nativity?

CHRISTINE: In Grandpa's old barn?

JULIA: Yeah!

JEFF: It's a good idea, kids, but not tonight.

CHRISTINE: We need to meet up with the rest of our group. They're expecting us.

JULIA: But we have to do it tonight!

JEFF: Why?

TYLER: Because Grandpa's so mad!

EMMA: Not mad, sad. Grandpa's sad.

JULIA: And a nativity might cheer him up!

TYLER: You can't be mad, I mean, sad, around the baby Jesus.

EMMA: Or an angel. Mommy, I could be an angel!

CHRISTINE: I don't know, Emma. (*pleading*) Jeff...

(The three children go a few feet away from their parents and excitedly mime to each other as if talking about what characters they want to play.)

JEFF: Who knows what will reach your dad? It might be just the thing, honey.

CHRISTINE: Right, just the thing to get us arrested.

JEFF: Arrested? For what?

CHRISTINE: Trespassing.

JEFF: Now wouldn't that make a funny news story? Mary, Joseph, a shepherd and two angels were arrested last night for trespassing.

JULIA (*sadly*): Never mind. We don't have enough people. If we're angels (*pointing to herself and Emma*) and he's a shepherd... (*pointing to Tyler*)

TYLER: I'm not a shepherd, I'm a wise man, Julia!

JULIA: If we're angels (*pointing to herself and Emma*) and he's a wise man (*pointing to Tyler*), then you guys can't play all the shepherds and the other wise men and Mary and Joseph and the rest of the angels.

JEFF: That's true. (*pause, thinking*) But... what if... what if we got everybody from the party to come back?

JULIA: Yeah!

CHRISTINE: No. I don't want to be embarrassed again. Please...

JEFF: It won't be embarrassing, it will be fun! You know that group—they're a cut up. They'll have a ball playing all the characters!

CHRISTINE: We don't even have any costumes.

JEFF: What about Allison? Didn't she do all the costumes for the pageant last night?

CHRISTINE: Yeah.

JEFF: Well maybe she knows where they all are.

CHRISTINE: I know where they all are.

JEFF: Where?

CHRISTINE (*sighing*): In the trunk of their car.

JEFF: See, that's perfect!

EMMA: That's perfect!

JEFF: Let's see. We're gonna need a manger.

EMMA: My doll will make a perfect baby Jesus.

JEFF: I think so too, Emma. Tyler, was there any old wood in the barn?

TYLER: Yeah, a whole pile of it!

(The three children gather excitedly to make plans.)

JEFF: And I've got my tool box in the back of the truck, so we're set! This is perfect! (*taking out his cell phone*) I'll call Dave's cell phone. They can all head right back over here! (*stopping and touching Christine's shoulder tenderly*) Wait. Honey, I need to know you're okay with this. Are you willing to give it a try?

CHRISTINE: I guess so. But I don't expect anything to come of it, really.

JEFF (*encouraging*): Remember, honey, we have to have faith.

CHRISTINE: I know. I'll try, okay?

JEFF: I think that was a yes! (*dials cell phone. Music begins for "The Song the Silent Night Sings."*) Dave! Hey...we're still here. We've got an idea. What would you think of coming back here and doing a different kind of caroling? (*pause*) I'm talking about a nativity! The kind of thing that could make this whole night burst into song. Oh, if Mr. Lawrence sees Bethlehem come alive in his yard, there'll be no way he can stay inside! (*pause*) Great! Thanks, Dave. (*hangs up, then, to Christine and the kids*) Everybody, we're goin' to Bethlehem!

(While the choir sings, "The Song the Silent Night Sings," Jeff exits and re-enters with his toolbox, and he and Tyler begin to put together the manger. Christine and the girls start to arrange the hay. The group begins to come back in during the first chorus and everyone scurries excitedly to create the nativity scene. Mr. Lawrence occasionally looks out his window, still angry that the people are still there. At the end of the song, he stomps furiously into another room offstage.)

SCENE 5

ALLISON: Look at this place! You guys are brilliant. I want every one of you signing up to help with next year's pageant. Okay! Now for the fun part. Costumes! Whoever wants to look like they walked right out of Bethlehem, follow me!

(They all follow her enthusiastically, except JEFF and CHRISTINE who remain in the barn.)

JEFF (*to Christine*): How you doin', honey?

CHRISTINE: Okay, I guess. I just keep wondering how this night is going to turn out.

JEFF: Why are you so worried? The worst that can happen is that your dad yells at us again and we all go home. Or he calls the cops and has us arrested and we have a funny story to tell for years to come.

CHRISTINE: That's not the worst that can happen.

JEFF: What? He pellets us with Geritol tablets?

CHRISTINE: I think you underestimate him. He's a very angry man.

JEFF: Oh, come on, honey. You don't really think...

CHRISTINE (*interrupting*): I think all these emotions have been building up in him for years. He could do anything! Ever since Mom died, it's just gotten worse. You saw him; he's like a time bomb waiting to explode.

JEFF: Christine, come here, honey. (*he pulls her to him*) You know what? I don't know what's going to happen tonight. Nobody does. But I trust in the Lord who brought us here. And I know deep down, you do too.

CHRISTINE: I do. You know I do.

JEFF: As much as you can feel my arms around you right now, God is holding you close to His heart. You're His precious daughter.

CHRISTINE: I know.

ALLISON (*calling from offstage*): Jeff, I've got a costume for you!

JEFF (*calling*): I'll be right there! (*to Christine as music starts for "The Safest Place."*) Everything's gonna be okay, okay?

CHRISTINE: Thanks, honey.

(*JEFF exits, leaving CHRISTINE alone in the barn. She sings "The Safest Place." During the musical interlude before "Fairest Lord Jesus," JEFF enters the barn excitedly, dressed as Joseph. Technical note: If possible, this would be a good place to use a mirror ball that would fill the room with "stars".*)

JEFF: Honey, you've got to come out here and see these stars! (*pulling her outside by the hand*) I've never seen the sky look so incredible! (*once outside, they both look up*) Look at that!

CHRISTINE: Oh, wow!

JEFF: Have you ever seen so many stars? You know the sky had to have been filled with stars on the night Jesus was born. And just think...He was the one who had named every one of them!

(*The choir sings "Fairest Lord Jesus" as JEFF and CHRISTINE continue to look up, amazed.*)

SCENE 6

(*Music begins for "Glory to God in the Highest."*)

CHRISTINE: Looking at all those stars makes me wonder why I ever doubt Him. I should know by now that the God who is the Ruler of all Nature is big enough to take care of me and all my problems.

JEFF: Yes, He is. And your biggest problem right now is that you don't have a costume! We'd better go find Allison. *(they move quickly to exit)*

ALLISON *(entering excitedly)*: Christine, I've got your costume, come with me! *(to everyone offstage as she exits)* Okay everybody, take your places! Here we go!

(As the words to the song begin, the nativity comes to life. Characters enter and begin acting out their parts to go along with the lyrics. During the song, CHRISTINE enters playing Mary and JEFF, as Joseph, stands by her side. EMMA, dressed as an angel, puts her doll in the manger. Those dressed as angels dance and sing enthusiastically during the chorus. Mr. Lawrence is drawn again to the window, but this time, he opens it a crack to hear the music. After the end of the song, Scene 7 begins.)

SCENE 7

DAVE *(as a shepherd)*: Wow! I feel like I'm really in Bethlehem!

DONNA: I do too!

TYLER: I feel like I'm really a wise man!

BRIANNA: I like being an angel!

JULIA: Me, too. See, Mrs. Benson, you *can* have wrinkles and be an angel!

DONNA: Then what am I doing over here as a shepherd?

EMMA: I wish Grandpa would come out here and see me being an angel.

JULIA: Mommy, can we do this every year?

CHRISTINE: We'll see, Julia.

JEFF: We might not be able to play these characters in Grandpa's barn every year, but you know what? Every time we see a nativity now, we can remember this night and then try to imagine what that first Christmas night must have been like. It was a night of miracles! And the most amazing miracle of all was that God sent His Son Jesus to be born as a baby.

EMMA: God was once littler than me then, wasn't He?

JEFF: You're right! Can you believe it? And then years later, Jesus was the one who would give His life for our sin. Now that was a miracle! What were some other miracles in the Christmas story?

JIM: The huge bunch of angels that sang to the shepherds; now that was a miracle for sure!

DONNA: I think it was a miracle that Mary made it through labor without any pain meds! *(beat)* Sorry, that one probably wasn't on your list, was it?

JEFF *(smiling)*: No.

(Music begins for "One Star, One Holy Night.")

TRENT: How about the star that the wise men followed?

JEFF: Yeah, the star that led them straight to the baby Jesus. Can you imagine how bright that star must have been? It probably lit up the whole city of Bethlehem! You're right, that star was a miracle, too. I don't think there ever was or ever will be another star that reflects the glory of God quite like that Christmas star.

(JEFF sings the solo and CHRISTINE joins him for the duet in, "One Star, One Holy Night." The others join in on the chorus. Inside the house, Mr. Lawrence has taken out an old photo album and is looking through it. It is clear he is beginning to soften. When "The Birthday of a King" begins, TRENT (dressed as a wise man) carries the birthday cake for Jesus to a small table near the manger. ASHLEY lights the candles during the song. At the end of the song, they gather around the manger.)

DAVE: Ready? One, two three...

(They all sing the traditional version of "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and blow out the candles.)

SCENE 8

(The group cuts the cake, serves it on napkins and begins to eat it. Meanwhile, EMMA slips out of the barn unseen by anyone and crosses to Mr. Lawrence's front door. She knocks. He walks into the front room, but stops when he hears Emma's voice.)

EMMA: Grandpa! Grandpa, it's me, Emma. Can you please come out here? I'm an angel tonight! *(she knocks again)* Grandpa? Are you in there? I've never gotten to be an angel, and tonight I get to, so I was hoping you would come out here and see me. *(pause)* I know you're really sad, Grandpa. But since I'm an angel, I can help cheer you up! Grandpa? Can you hear me? You must be really busy in

there. I'll just wait for you out here, okay? *(she sits down on the porch with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands)*

(The group has begun to clean up the napkins when Christine pulls Jeff aside.)

CHRISTINE: Honey, I've been thinking about something. Have I ever thanked you for introducing me to Jesus?

JEFF: Oh, I'm sure you have.

CHRISTINE: Well, I don't remember doing it. No matter what happens with my dad, even if we never reconcile, I want you to know how thankful I am for you. Thank you. Thank you for being the one to lead me to Jesus.

JEFF: It was my privilege, honey.

TYLER *(approaching his father):* Dad, Trent got to give his gift to Jesus, but I haven't given him mine yet. Aren't we gonna do that part of the nativity where we all give our gifts and worship baby Jesus?

JEFF: Sure, son. *(pause, thinking, then)* Hey! Why don't we do this? We'll all sing a worship song together, and you wise men can give your gifts while we sing.

TYLER: Okay! *(running to get in place)*

JEFF *(music begins for "Here I am to Worship"):* Hey everybody, let's get back in our places. Tyler reminded me that the wise men haven't all given their gifts to Jesus. Come to think of it, we can all offer the Lord the gift of worship during this song.

CHRISTINE: I was just thanking Jeff for being the one to lead me to Christ. This Christmas, I want to remember what it felt like when I first realized I was completely forgiven and unconditionally loved.

(CHRISTINE sings the opening solo for "Here I am to Worship." She kneels during the chorus. MR. LAWRENCE looks out the window, stands thinking for a moment, then sits on the couch with his head in his hands. At 2:47 into the song, EMMA rises and knocks at MR. LAWRENCE's door again. When he hears EMMA's knock, he rises from the couch, startled.)

EMMA: Grandpa! Please come out! We all just want to love you!

(From meas. 46 – 53, the guitar solo, MR. LAWRENCE is wrestling internally, wanting to go to the door, but is held back by his pride. Finally, when the choir comes in at meas. 53, he dashes to the door and opens it. He scoops EMMA up in his arms and holds her tightly until meas. 61, when he puts her back down. She takes his hand and pulls him out the door. They stand together on the front porch looking at the nativity. He seems

nervous and uncertain, but EMMA squeezes his hand and looks up at him reassuringly. As the choir fades out at meas. 69, JEFF sees EMMA and MR. LAWRENCE. He puts his hand on CHRISTINE's shoulder. CHRISTINE looks up and sees her daughter and father standing on the porch. She rises. Right before the choir enters at meas. 72, EMMA pulls MR. LAWRENCE down the front steps and they cross together to CHRISTINE. When CHRISTINE realizes her father's intent to reconcile, she takes a few steps toward them. The characters are all watching now without singing. Only the choir sings. On the last half of the chorus (meas. 77), MR. LAWRENCE starts to embrace CHRISTINE, and she returns the embrace. They continue holding each other until the end of the song.)

SCENE 9

MR. LAWRENCE (*awkwardly*): Christine. Christine. I'm... I'm so... sorry. Can you ever forgive this stubborn old man?

CHRISTINE: You know I forgive you, Dad.

MR. LAWRENCE: I don't know why I didn't do this a long time ago.

CHRISTINE: That's okay. You're here now. I want so much for things to be right between us.

MR. LAWRENCE: Every time Emma knocked at my door, I asked myself if I wanted to go through another year alone.

CHRISTINE: You're not alone now. We're all here.

MR. LAWRENCE (*seeing Jeff*): And you. Aren't you the young man who stole my daughter's heart?

JEFF: No, sir. She was the one who stole mine.

MR. LAWRENCE (*shaking his hand, smiling*): I'm not surprised. (*turning his attention to the group*) And I think I have some grandchildren around here somewhere, don't I?

(All three kids run to him and attack him with hugs.)

JULIA: Yes, me!

TYLER: Me, too!

EMMA: Grandpa!

MR. LAWRENCE (*to Emma*): Oh, I already know you, squirt. (*to Jeff and Christine*) This one's got the stubbornness of her Grandpa.

JEFF & CHRISTINE (*laughing*): We know!

MR. LAWRENCE: You've had quite a production going on out here tonight. I should charge you a rental fee for my barn. Did you do all this for some church project or something?

JULIA: No, we did it for you, Grandpa!

MR. LAWRENCE: Oh, now come on.

TYLER: We did! It was all for you!

MR. LAWRENCE: For me? Why?

EMMA: Well, from the way you acted earlier, we thought you needed some cheering up.

MR. LAWRENCE: Well, I've never seen anything like it. Especially not in my barn.

(Music begins for "The Realms of Glory Medley.")

TYLER: Hey, Grandpa, then this is the second nativity that's been made just for you! God made a nativity for you, too, on the very first Christmas.

EMMA: And there was a real baby in the manger that night.

JULIA: The baby Jesus.

TRENT: And there were wise men.

BRIANNA: And shepherds.

EMMA: And lots and lots of angels!

TYLER: And God did all that just for you!

JULIA: See how much God loves you, Grandpa?

(During the song, all the characters greet MR. LAWRENCE. Then, they reenact portions of the nativity along with the lyrics. Shepherds act out their part during "Shepherds in the fields abiding." During "Come and worship," different characters kneel before the manger. Emma kneels during the a cappella chorus at meas. 50. Mr. Lawrence can't bring himself to kneel yet. One of the angels sings the solo to "Angels We Have Heard on High." Emma runs to join them.)

SCENE 10

MR. LAWRENCE (*sitting*): I tell you what, this is one Christmas I'll never forget.

JULIA (*sitting with him*): We could come back and do this every year, Grandpa!

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, you could. But then, you would rack up some pretty steep rental fees on this old barn, wouldn't you?

TYLER, JULIA, and EMMA: Grandpa!

TYLER: You wouldn't really charge us to use it, would you?

MR. LAWRENCE (*chuckling*): No, in fact I might just pay you to do it! I think the whole neighborhood needs to come out and see this.

JULIA: It could be our Christmas tradition!

EMMA (*leaning against him*): Grandpa, I think we're going to make lots of memories together from now on.

MR. LAWRENCE (*sighing*): I hope so, squirt.

TYLER: Why wouldn't we?

MR. LAWRENCE: Well, I've wasted a lot of years being stubborn. And now, I'm not sure how many I have left.

JULIA: Yeah, because you're really old, aren't you Grandpa?

CHRISTINE: Julia!

MR. LAWRENCE: She's right, Christine. I am old. We're just going to have to make the most of the next few years.

EMMA: But Grandpa, if you ask Jesus in your heart, we'll have millions and millions of years together in heaven. 'Cause Jesus is in my heart, too!

JULIA: And mine!

TYLER: And mine!

JEFF: None of us know how long we have left here. Who knows, maybe the Lord will come back tonight and take us all to be with Him in heaven?!

KIDS: Yay! That would be awesome! (*etc.*)

EMMA: And then we won't have to be apart at all, Grandpa! Not even for a minute!

JULIA: But Jesus has to be in your heart first.

TYLER: Yeah, that's the only way we can all be together in heaven.

MR. LAWRENCE: That... that sounds really nice. But... you know me, I've never been much for religion.

CHRISTINE: It's not about religion at all, Dad.

(Music begins for "The Promise II.")

JULIA: It's about Jesus.

EMMA: And God knocking at the door of your heart like I was knocking at the door of your house!

TYLER: He's coming back soon, Grandpa. Please answer the door.

EMMA: Please, Grandpa?

(Choir member sings the solo in "The Promise II." At meas. 27, MR. LAWRENCE bows his head. He slips off the bench onto his knees. The grandchildren all go to their knees beside him. JEFF and CHRISTINE move in close as well. They stay in this position until the end of the song and into the next.)

SCENE 11

MR. LAWRENCE: Well, it looks we've all got a good million years left together!
(rises to his feet)

(The kids rise and hug him.)

EMMA: I'm so happy, Grandpa!

MR. LAWRENCE: Me too, squirt. Now why don't you all come in my house and warm up. One of my neighbors brought me some fudge today. And after all you've done, I can at least share my fudge.

TYLER *(high-five to Jeff):* Yes!

JEFF *(high-five to Tyler):* Yes!

(Music begins for "Night of Alleluias!")

MR. LAWRENCE (*chuckling*): When you all showed up singin' at my door tonight, I never could have guessed it would all turn out *this* way.

CHRISTINE (*smiling*): Neither could I. But I'm glad it did. (*giving him a side hug*)
Merry Christmas, Dad.

MR. LAWRENCE: Merry Christmas, Christine.

(Everyone follows MR. LAWRENCE to his front door and enters his home. The lights of the nativity dim, except for a spot on the manger. The group members pour hot chocolate into cups and eat snacks together. All of them greet MR. LAWRENCE warmly. At the key change at meas. 70, CHRISTINE quietly slips out the door and runs to the manger. The lights in the house dim. At the next key change at meas. 74, she falls to her knees in worship. At meas. 82 she returns to the house and enters the door. She and her father hug each other again until the end of the song when the lights fade to black in the house. The spot on the manger remains lit.)

END