

Welcome to Bethlehem

A MUSICAL STAGE PLAY FOR CHRISTMAS

FOR ACTORS, SOLOISTS, CHOIR & ORCHESTRA

CREATED BY

Joel Lindsey, Jeff Bumgardner,
Heidi Petak & Daniel Semsen

ARRANGED & ORCHESTRATED BY

Daniel Semsen

PRODUCTION MANUAL BY

Heidi Petak

PDM PRODUCTION MANUAL

Physical - 080689365973

Digital - 080689103681



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SUMMARY

The beautifully-decorated Bethlehem Inn in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania is the perfect place to stay at Christmas. However, while people come here from all over the world during the holidays, occupancy suffers the rest of the year. With financial challenges too difficult to overcome, the General Manager and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman, may have to shut their doors for good when the calendar turns another page. Yet every crisis is an opportunity for God to create unexpected beauty. With the help of a Christmas tree lighting, an honest and sentimental monologue, a resourceful bellhop, and a teenage runaway, the Bethlehem Inn just might be able to continue doing what Bethlehem has always done best — offer hope to a hurting world.



PLOT SYNOPSIS

Guests are checking in as the energetic staff at the Bethlehem Inn welcomes them. Mr. Wiseman—the General Manager of the hotel and a wanna-be-magician—is especially welcoming, entertaining both adults and children alike with his magic tricks.

Adam, a bellhop, is annoying the rest of the staff by taking photos and videos of them (as he usually does). Regular guests during the holidays, Richard, Audrey, and their daughter Bailey, check into the hotel. Audrey mentions sadly, “They aren’t all here this year.” Bailey displays a crayon drawing of their family. Mrs. Cooper and her granddaughter, Abby, also check into the hotel. Adam records and posts a video online of Mrs. Cooper and Abby dancing.

Mr. Wiseman flirts with Mrs. Wiseman, who is the bookkeeper at the Bethlehem Inn. Soon after, she reveals to Mr. Wiseman that the hotel is in financial trouble and their accountant, Blake Westinmeyer, will be visiting soon. However, Mr. Wiseman brushes her off by focusing on his magic tricks, such as his “Tear and Repair” trick, which he hasn’t yet mastered.

Bailey approaches the front desk and asks for a chocolate for her sister, who isn’t with the family this year. Mrs. Cooper shows Abby items in the hotel lobby that bring back memories of Christmases gone by. Other guests recall their Christmases at the hotel as well.


Blake Westinmeyer pays the hotel management a visit and upsets Mr. Wiseman. A teenage runaway approaches the front door of the hotel, considers entering, but exits quickly instead.

The staff suspects that all is not well with the financial state of the hotel. Adam hints that he might be able to help.

Audrey, Richard, and Bailey decide to go to Rosie’s for lunch, even though the restaurant reminds Audrey of Megan, their teenage daughter who isn’t with them this year.

The staff expresses nostalgia about their favorite Christmas traditions back at home.

The teenage runaway returns and is welcomed by Mr. Wiseman, who had seen her on the street and invited her to come by the Bethlehem Inn. Megan introduces herself as “May” and is clearly pregnant and homeless. Mr. Wiseman unknowingly picks up Bailey’s drawing of her family and uses it for his “Tear and Repair” trick, but he fails and the torn pieces of paper fall to the floor.



Bellhop Adam rushes forward to pick up the pieces, and May asks if she can keep them. She puts them in her pocket, but unknowingly drops her glove.

Mrs. Wiseman takes May to the kitchen to give her something to eat. Mrs. Cooper haughtily expresses her concern that the hotel is becoming a homeless shelter, but Mr. Wiseman only expresses empathy for May and adds that the Bethlehem Inn is where people should feel loved. Richard, Audrey, and Bailey return from Rosie's.

Audrey picks up a glove, recognizing it as Megan's, but Mrs. Cooper takes it, believing it to be her granddaughter Abby's. Bailey discovers that her drawing of the family is missing.

Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman try to get to know May while she eats. Mr. Wiseman invites her to their annual tree lighting, but she declines the invitation.

At the tree lighting, Mr. Wiseman begins to give a speech, but a reporter rudely interrupts and asks if this will be the last tree lighting of the Inn due to financial difficulties. Mr. Wiseman is forced to reveal the news to the devastated staff and hotel guests. Mr. Wiseman gives a heartwarming speech about all that the Bethlehem Inn represents for the families who have stayed there for decades. While Adam records the speech on his camera phone, May exits and her image is caught on video. Adam uploads with his camera phone the video to the internet.

Bailey shows her parents the video of Mr. Wiseman's speech and points out the homeless teenager who exited. Audrey and Richard recognize her as their daughter and see that she is pregnant, surmising that she needs their help. They exit to go look for her.

The staff enter excitedly, exclaiming that the phones are ringing off the hook with future guests making reservations to stay at the hotel during the year. Adam realizes his video of Mr. Wiseman's speech has gone viral. Mr. Wiseman performs his "Ball and Cup" magic trick to represent hope.

Abby returns the glove that Mrs. Cooper had retrieved. May re-enters the hotel and inquires if her glove has been found. She asks Frances at the front desk to check if the Jorgensens are staying there, and Frances confirms that they are indeed guests at the Inn. Mr. Wiseman offers May a place to stay for the night, although they are at full capacity. She is offended and angry by his hint at a parallel with biblical Mary and tries to leave in a hurry. However, Mrs. Cooper steps in to block May from leaving, revealing that she was also once an unwed mother. May then reveals her real name as "Megan." Mr. Wiseman recognizes her as a former guest and speaks hope and grace to her. Mr. Wiseman offers to call her family's room and Megan agrees. Richard, Audrey and Bailey return from searching, and the family is reunited.

Richard, a doctor, offers a corporate sponsorship to the Bethlehem Inn. Bailey asks if Megan can stay with her, and then turns to ask Mr. Wiseman if he has seen her drawing of her family. Mr. Wiseman admits that he used it for his magic trick and it was torn into pieces. Megan reaches to pull the torn pieces out of her pocket only to find a glittering handkerchief containing Bailey's intact drawing. Congratulations are offered to Mr. Wiseman on finally accomplishing the "Tear and Repair" magic trick, but he gives God the credit as the "only One Who can take what has been truly torn and turn it into something this beautiful."

CHARACTERS

SPEAKING PARTS

4 women (ages 18-80)

3 men (ages 16-75)

3 girls (ages 6-17)

3 roles that can be played by either men or women (ages 16-65)

NON-SPEAKING PARTS

Any number of extra guests and staff members at the hotel

* * * * *

DESCRIPTIONS

(in order of number of speaking lines)

MR. THEODORE WISEMAN (50-70)

General Manager of the Bethlehem Inn, wanna-be magician, Betty's husband, fun-loving man who is full of faith and a little bit quirky. He has 58 spoken lines, one monologue, two solos, a handful of sung lines, and one duet with Megan.

FRANCES (18-30)

Front desk clerk who loves chocolate and is addicted to caffeine. She is confident in her job performance and has worked at the hotel for seven years. She has 41 spoken lines and a handful of sung lines.

MAY/MEGAN (15-17)

Homeless, pregnant teenager, strong-willed and self-sufficient. She has 38 spoken lines and one duet with Mr. Wiseman. *(In the event bulletin, use the name "May" for her character so as not to give away her full identity to the audience before she reveals it.)* (Note: A pregnancy belly can be purchased or rented from a costume supply shop.)

MRS. BETTY WISEMAN (50-70)

Practical business manager and bookkeeper of the Bethlehem Inn, Mr. Wiseman's wife, loves her quirky husband, concerned for the financial state of the Inn they own together. She has 28 spoken lines and a few sung lines.

ADAM (16-30)

Bellhop at the Bethlehem Inn, the coolest guy around, considers himself a social media buff (recording silly videos of the staff and posting them online). He's worked at the hotel for two years. He has 22 spoken lines and a few sung lines.

DR. "RICHARD" JORGENSEN (35-50)

Audrey's husband and father of Megan and Bailey, a regular guest during Christmastime, doctor of internal medicine, stubborn, pragmatic, loves his family. Richard has a redemption moment of compassion and generosity at the end of the musical. He has 20 spoken lines.

MRS. COOPER (55-80)

Regular Christmas hotel guest, "proper" Southern woman, Abby's grandmother. She is proud of her southern heritage, yet has a hidden past. She has 20 spoken lines and a few sung lines.

JAMIE (16-30)

Bellhop at the Bethlehem Inn, a surfer from California (can be male or female), worked at the hotel for six months. Jamie has 18 spoken lines and a few sung lines.

AUDREY JORGENSEN (35-50)

Richard's wife, mother of Bailey and Megan, a regular hotel guest during the Christmas holidays. She is nurturing, sentimental, and misses her oldest daughter, Megan. She has 18 spoken lines.

BAILEY JORGENSEN (6-12)

Audrey and Richard's daughter, loves and misses her older sister, Megan. Enjoys watching videos, playing games on her phone, and drawing pictures. She has 17 spoken lines.

ABBY (10-17)

Mrs. Cooper's granddaughter who loves her grandmother very much. This is Abby's first time to visit the Bethlehem Inn. She laughs easily and is excited about being at the hotel. She has 10 spoken lines and a few sung lines.

BLAKE WESTINMEYER (30-65)

The Wiseman's accountant (although written for a man, it could easily be adjusted for a female actor by simply changing pronouns and calling her "Ms. Westinmeyer"). Tough and unyielding, motivated by numbers and facts. Blake has 4 spoken lines.

REPORTER (30-65)

Local newspaper or radio/TV reporter (can be male or female, and actor can double for Blake, if necessary). Tenacious and insistent about getting to the truth. The Reporter has 3 lines.

* * * * *

COSTUMING SUGGESTIONS

CHOIR — black and white business or service industry attire (as if they are part of the hotel staff)

MR. WISEMAN — hat, suit and tie, nametag. He may wear something silly, like a Christmas tie that “lights-up.”

MRS. WISEMAN — black and white business attire, nametag. She may carry a clipboard and wear something “extra” that makes her stand out as the co-owner of the hotel (like a red or green scarf).

FRANCES — black and white business attire, nametag

ADAM — bellhop attire, nametag

JAMIE — bellhop attire, nametag

RICHARD — dressy winter clothing, winter coat

AUDREY — casual winter clothing, winter coat

BAILEY — cute and colorful winter clothing, winter coat

MRS. COOPER — classy and expensive Christmas attire

ABBY — casual winter clothing, winter coat, similar pair of gloves as May/Megan.

MAY/MEGAN — drab-colored, layered clothing: hat, shabby and worn coat or sweater that can be pulled down low over her pregnancy belly, and gloves that are similar to the pair Abby wears.

BLAKE WESTINMEYER — business suit

REPORTER — business attire, press pass

EXTRAS — hotel guests can wear brightly colored, wintery clothing; additional staff can wear black and white employee uniforms.



SUGGESTED PROP LIST & SET PIECES

LARGE ITEMS

- ✓ Front check-in desk (with optional counter)
- ✓ 2 Loveseats or couches
- ✓ 2 Lamp tables
- ✓ 2 Lamps
- ✓ 2 Large comfortable chairs
- ✓ Dining table and 3 chairs
- ✓ Christmas tree
- ✓ 2 Rolling luggage carts

SMALL ITEMS

- ✓ Front desk phone
- ✓ Trashcan
- ✓ 2 Coffee cups
- ✓ Jingle bell (on hotel entrance door)
- ✓ Candy dish with chocolate candy
- ✓ Checkers
- ✓ Magazines
- ✓ Suitcases
- ✓ Toy soldiers
- ✓ Christmas decorations
- ✓ Plain white handkerchief (for Mr. Wiseman's magic tricks)
- ✓ Hat (for Mr. Wiseman's magic trick)
- ✓ Candy cane
- ✓ Santa hat
- ✓ Cell phones (for Adam and Bailey)
- ✓ 2 Crayon drawings of a family of four (1 to rip and 1 intact)
- ✓ Folders
- ✓ Pen and paper
- ✓ Briefcase
- ✓ Deck of playing cards
- ✓ Press pass
- ✓ Digital tablet or writing tablet (for Reporter)
- ✓ 2 Pairs girls' gloves of similar design (Abby and May/Megan)
- ✓ Cardboard sign (reads "Anything helps. God bless you.")
- ✓ Silverware wrapped in a napkin
- ✓ Glass of water
- ✓ Plate of food
- ✓ Ball and cup magic trick
- ✓ Checkbook
- ✓ Sparkling white handkerchief
- ✓ Optional: Camera operator's rig (videotaping Reporter)

OPENING SONG:

WELCOME TO BETHLEHEM (OPENER)

- * Mr. Wiseman—hat, white handkerchief, candy cane, red Santa hat, piece of paper
- * Adam—cell phone
- * Mrs. Wiseman—piece of chocolate, cup of coffee, papers, folder
- * Richard, Audrey, Mrs. Cooper, Abby—suitcases
- * Bailey—cell phone, suitcase, piece of paper with a child's crayon drawing of a family (for "Tear and Repair" trick)
- * Frances—chocolates in a candy dish, pen, paper

SCENE 1/SONG:

WE COME HERE EVERY CHRISTMAS

- * Mr. Wiseman—pack of playing cards
- * Blake Westinmeyer—briefcase, folder, papers
- * Adam—cell phone
- * Bailey—cell phone
- * Frances—chocolates in a candy dish

SCENE 2/SONG:

BACK AT HOME

- * Megan—glove, cardboard sign reading, "Anything Helps. God Bless You."
- * Mr. Wiseman—Bailey's family drawing (retrieves from table), piece of chocolate
- * Mrs. Wiseman—plate of food, silverware wrapped in a napkin, cup of water
- * Adam—cell phone, torn pieces of paper (retrieves from floor)

SCENE 3/SONG:

WHEN I THINK OF BETHLEHEM

- * Audrey—glove (retrieves from floor)
- * Mrs. Cooper—glove (retrieves from Audrey)
- * Adam—cell phone

- * Megan—cardboard sign reading, "Anything Helps. God Bless You."

SCENE 4/SONG:

EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE

- * Reporter—digital tablet (or microphone/recorder/video camera, etc.)
- * Optional—Camera Operator's rig
- * Adam—cell phone

SCENE 5/SONG:

MONOLOGUE UNDERSCORE

with **SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT!**

WE NEED A SILENT NIGHT AGAIN

- * Adam—cell phone
- * Guests—magazines, checkers

SCENE 6/SONG:

THIS TIME NEXT YEAR

- * Bailey—cell phone

SCENE 7/SONG:

HOPE

- * Adam—cell phone
- * Frances—front desk phone
- * Mr. Wiseman—ball and cup magic trick

SCENE 8/SONG:

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM MEDLEY

with **IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR**
and **ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH**

- * Abby—glove
- * Frances—bowl of chocolates, glove (retrieves from Abby)

SCENE 9/SONG:

YOU HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD

- * Frances—front desk phone

SCENE 10/SONG:

EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE (FINALE)

- * Richard—checkbook, pen
- * Mrs. Wiseman—paperwork
- * Megan—sparkling handkerchief with Bailey's intact drawing of her family

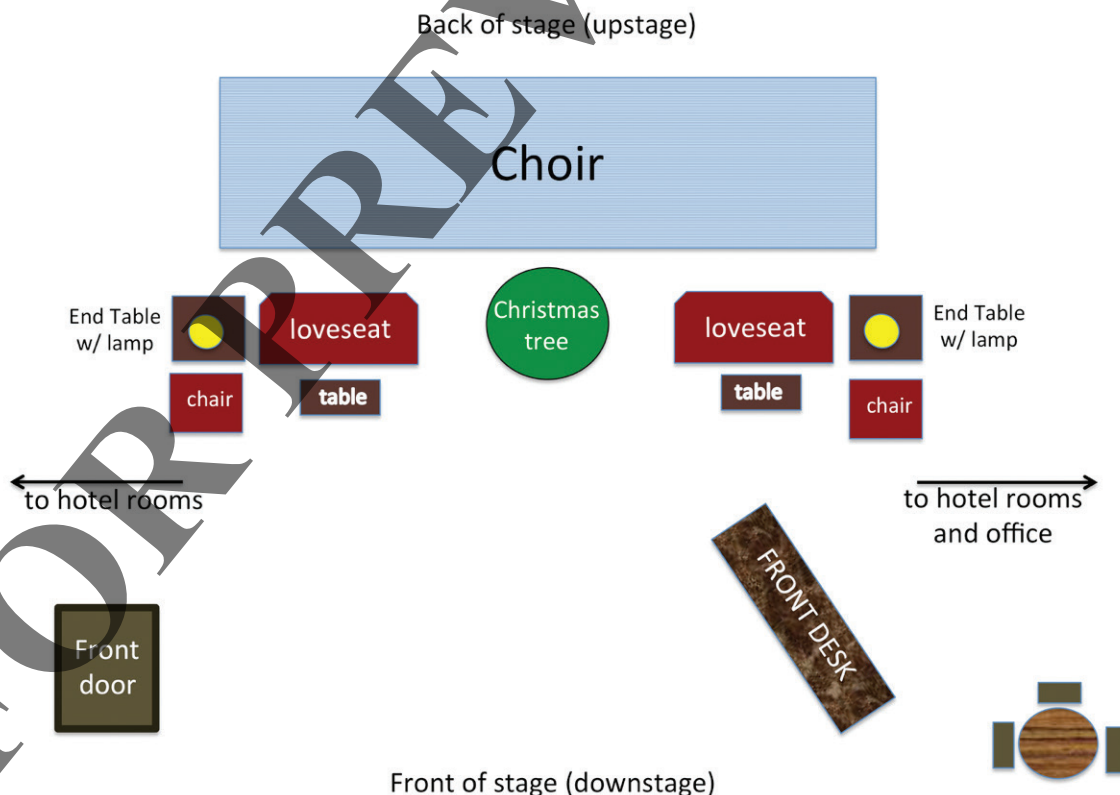
SET DESIGN

The entire musical takes place in the lobby and adjacent areas of the Bethlehem Inn. Specific playing areas are the interior of the main lobby, just outside the front door of the Inn, and a small eating area adjacent to the hotel lobby.

As always, feel free to design your set as simple or as elaborate as you would like. On stage, create multiple seating areas (like a modern hotel lobby) with loveseats/couches, elegant chairs, a fireplace, Christmas decorations, a small table with a candy dish, hall tree for coats and umbrellas... use your creativity! You can also extend this "feel" into the area where the audience enters and is seated with small tables and dishes of chocolate, a hall tree, guest book, even a "front desk" for ticket sales.

Instruct your ushers and ticket-takers to wear black and white uniforms as well as nametags as if they are on the hotel staff.

To allow your bellhops to push their carts across the stage, place your exits to the hotel rooms on both sides (stage left and stage right), so that bellhops and guests can cross both directions. Also, since we read a book from left to right, place your front entrance to the hotel on stage right (which is the audience's left) and the front desk on stage left (the audience's right), as Megan's transformation in the story begins with her first entering the door and builds to her finally reuniting with her family near the front desk, on the opposite side of the stage.



LIGHTING

Design your lighting to reflect the mood onstage: happy, upbeat songs accompanied by a brightly lit stage and quiet or somber moods accompanied by more reflective lighting, such as during the songs "When I Think of Bethlehem," "We Need a Silent Night Again," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem Medley."

For lights onstage, place lamps on the end tables in the seating areas of the hotel lobby. Add a light outside the front entrance of the hotel or a spot to highlight Megan's entrance during Scene 2.

To make the Christmas tree "lighting" scene effective, start with just a few strings of very simple, rather dim lights on the tree from the beginning of the show. When Mr. Wiseman "lights" the tree during the song "Everything Christmas Can Be," add vibrant color or dazzling special effects to the tree along with a beautiful and bright tree-topper to instantly make the tree look dramatically brighter.



AUDIO

In addition to the choir microphones, there are 13 speaking actors who require a wireless lapel or headset mic. Understandably, your church may not have access to 13 wireless microphones. Consider renting them from an audio production company, or borrowing them from a school or another church in your area.

To reduce the number of microphones needed to 12, Blake Westinmeyer and May/Megan can share a mic as they are onstage at different times. You can also reduce the number to 12 with Blake and the Reporter sharing one mic. However, if you combine the Blake and Reporter role, he/she will need to have a separate mic, as the Reporter enters while Megan is still onstage.

To create ambiance in your auditorium, consider playing recorded instrumental Christmas music for the audience before and after the show to give the entire room a "hotel lobby" feel.

Hang jingle bells on the front door of the Bethlehem Inn. Every time someone enters or exits through that hotel door, it is the audio cue for the staff to turn and say, "Welcome to Bethlehem!"

VIDEO

"Welcome to Bethlehem" companion Accompaniment DVD (2-disc set) is available from Word Music & Church Resources (wordchoralclub.com) (physical product – 080689647093; digital download – 080689095689) and is a wonderful performance-enhancing tool. In addition to elements that help to create a setting of a warm, cozy and welcoming Inn decorated for Christmas, you'll also find invaluable on-screen lyric videos offered with the following options:

- ✓ Full Demonstration
- ✓ Split Trax (left channel-instrumental; right channel-vocals)
- ✓ Stereo Trax (accompaniment only)
- ✓ Click Trax (left channel-click; right channel-instrumental)

There's also a bonus sound effect (opt. SFX-Pearly Whites) on disc #2 that can be used in the performance whenever any of the characters offer up a bright smile!

It is strongly suggested that your DVD operator have the capability of monitoring the video on a separate screen. Helpful DVD cue points are listed throughout the music and dialogue pages.

ACCOMPANIMENT DVD CUE POINTS

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|---|
| 1 | WELCOME TO BETHLEHEM (OPENER) | 10 | O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM MEDLEY |
| 2 | WE COME HERE EVERY CHRISTMAS | | <i>with</i> |
| 3 | BACK AT HOME | | IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR |
| 4 | WHEN I THINK OF BETHLEHEM | | <i>and</i> |
| 5 | EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE | 11 | YOU HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD |
| 6 | MONOLOGUE UNDERSCORE | 12 | EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE (FINALE) |
| | <i>with</i> | | |
| | SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT! | | |
| 7 | WE NEED A SILENT NIGHT AGAIN | | |
| 8 | THIS TIME NEXT YEAR | | |
| 9 | HOPE | | |

DVD 2 Data Disc:

- .MP4 Files
- Opt. SFX – Pearly Whites

ORDER OF SONGS/SCENES/CHARACTERS

PROLOGUE: Mr. Wiseman, Staff

SONG: WELCOME TO BETHLEHEM (OPENER)

Mr. Wiseman, Mrs. Wiseman, Frances, Adam, Jamie, Mrs. Cooper, Abby, Choir, (Richard, Audrey, Bailey enter at end)

*** SCENE 1:**

Mr. Wiseman, Mrs. Wiseman, Adam, Jamie, Richard, Audrey, Bailey, Mrs. Cooper, Abby, Frances

SONG: WE COME HERE EVERY CHRISTMAS

Choir, Mrs. Cooper, Abby, Guests, (Scene within song–Frances, Blake Westinmeyer, Mr. Wiseman, Mrs. Wiseman)

*** SCENE 2:**

Mr. Wiseman, Mrs. Wiseman, Blake, Jamie, Adam, Frances, Richard, Audrey, Abby, Mrs. Cooper, Megan (enters and exits silently)

SONG: BACK AT HOME

Frances, Adam, Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Wiseman, Jamie, Abby, Choir, Megan (enters near end of song)

*** SCENE 3:**

Mr. Wiseman, Megan, Adam, Mrs. Cooper

SONG: WHEN I THINK OF BETHLEHEM

Mr. Wiseman, Choir, Mrs. Cooper, (Richard, Audrey, and Bailey enter near end of song)

*** SCENE 4:**

Frances, Mr. Wiseman, Audrey, Richard, Mrs. Cooper, Bailey, Jamie, Adam, Megan, Mrs. Wiseman

SONG: EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE

Guests, Choir

*** SCENE 5:**

Mr. Wiseman, Reporter, Mrs. Wiseman, Frances, Jamie, Adam (non-speaking), Guests

SONG: MONOLOGUE UNDERSCORE

with **SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT!**

Mr. Wiseman, Guests, Child solo, Choir

SONG: WE NEED A SILENT NIGHT AGAIN

Mrs. Wiseman, Choir, Guests

*** SCENE 6:**

Jamie, Frances, Adam, Mrs. Wiseman

SONG: THIS TIME NEXT YEAR

Mrs. Wiseman, Adam, Jamie, Frances, Choir

*** SCENE 7:**

Bailey, Richard, Audrey

SONG: HOPE

Choir

*** SCENE 8:**

Frances, Mr. Wiseman, Adam, Mrs. Wiseman, Jamie

SONG: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

MEDLEY *with* **IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR** *and* **ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH**

Choir, Guests

*** SCENE 9:**

Abby, Frances, Megan, Mr. Wiseman, Mrs. Cooper, Jamie

SONG: YOU HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD (DUET)

Mr. Wiseman, Megan, Mrs. Wiseman (non speaking, watches from side of stage)

*** SCENE 10:**

Mr. Wiseman, Megan, Frances, Adam, Jamie, Richard, Audrey, Bailey

SONG: EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE (FINALE)

Choir (Scene within song–Mr. Wiseman, Megan, Audrey, Bailey, Richard, Mrs. Wiseman, Adam), Remaining Cast

STAGING SUGGESTIONS

Note: All staging suggestions are written from the perspective of the actor, looking out at the audience. Upstage is the back of the stage and downstage is the front of the stage, closest to the audience. The actor's right is the audience's left, and the actor's left is the audience's right. *(If you are an experienced director, you may not need the following suggestions. They are offered as reference for those who would like them.)*

WELCOME TO BETHLEHEM (OPENER)

The Accompaniment Video sets the stage by displaying beautiful art deco images that might be seen at the Bethlehem Inn with embellishments of sunburst motifs and other elaborate period details. When Mr. Wiseman says his opening monologue, we see a welcoming entrance of the hotel followed by the lyrics of this song.

Mr. Wiseman, the staff, and the choir sing this opening song. The choir may double as hotel staff and all wear a nametag. Other adults, teens, and children can appear as Extras who are guests checking into the hotel.

While Mr. Wiseman has some tender moments later in the show, his opening monologue needs to be big, cheerful, welcoming, and "presentational," with a strong and confident stage presence that commands the attention of the room.

Since Mr. Wiseman performs several magic tricks throughout this musical, he should use the necessary costuming, correct props, and magic tricks for every rehearsal so performing the tricks becomes second nature.

Consider asking a choreographer to work with your hotel staff on movements they can do together during the chorus and bridge, and perhaps a gesture whenever they say, "Welcome to Bethlehem!"

* SCENE 1:

Suggest that Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman have flirty fun with each other during their "Well, hello, Mrs./Mr. Wiseman" exchange.

Instruct Bailey to really emphasize the word "picture," and hold her drawing up high for the sake of the audience, (as it will come back a few more times in the plot).

Ask your choreographer to work with Abby and Mrs. Cooper to create some fun dance moves that would be worthy of "going viral."

Work with Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman on the timing of their scene with his playful magic tricks and her insistence about their financial trouble. Coach Mrs. Wiseman to remember that Mr. Wiseman's quirkiness is one of the things that made her fall in love with him. In this scene, caution her not to be too condescending. Rather, portray two marriage partners trying to manage life's challenges together.

Ask Bailey to bring her drawing and phone early in the rehearsal process to practice managing the drawing, the chocolate, and her phone during the scene.

SONG:

WE COME HERE EVERY CHRISTMAS

The Guests who checked in during the opener can re-enter and join the fun during this song. Ask your choreographer to teach movements for all guests to perform together during the chorus.

Highlight Megan's silent entrance with:

1. Minimal movements from other actors during her entrance
2. Effective lighting outside the front door of the hotel, such as a spot or lamp next to the door

* SCENE 2:

Work with Richard on the layered expression of his emotions during his dialogue with Audrey. He fluctuates between angry, sad, and empathetic when speaking of his teenage daughter, Megan.

Carefully time a guest bumping into Bailey as she looks at her phone, as well as Adam overhearing Richard's line "Technology may be the death of all of us."

SONG:

BACK AT HOME

For copyright reasons, Adam sings a slightly different melody than "Do You Want to Build a Snowman?" from the movie *Frozen* in the dialogue just before "Back at Home". You will hear one option on the demonstration audio, but feel free to come up with whatever tune you'd like for Adam's line.

Consider bringing out other Guests for this song who are staying at the hotel. Invite your choreographer to teach coordinated dance movements to the Staff and Guests to perform during the chorus.

Direct Staff and Guests to clear a space around "May" as she enters. They should look clearly uncomfortable that she is there, and she should seem uncomfortable, out of place, and nervous.

* SCENE 3:

Direct Mr. Wiseman to keep his scene with May lighthearted, with energy that helps it move along. As with his other magic tricks, Mr. Wiseman must rehearse with the real props (crayon drawing, magic tricks, chocolate, etc.). May should also rehearse with gloves.

Just before the chocolate "behind the ear" trick, have May turn to leave so Mr. Wiseman can grab a piece of chocolate out of the candy dish on the front desk counter. Another option would be to hide the chocolate in his sleeve or pocket.

In an effort to hide the true identity of Megan as long as possible from the audience, list the character's name as "May" in the program. In the same way, her line, "Me...May. My name is May" should be played very subtly, not calling much attention to her spontaneous name change.

Mr. Wiseman's scene with Mrs. Cooper begins with a lighthearted feel, but ends very poignantly and tenderly with his questions, "Are you? Am I?" Coach Mrs. Cooper to remember that her critical spirit is fueled by the shame of her own past. Megan's teenage pregnancy has triggered a normally composed Mrs. Cooper emotionally; her judgmental perspective hides her secret.

SONG:

WHEN I THINK OF BETHLEHEM

Focus a spotlight on Mr. Wiseman as he explains the situation while Mrs. Cooper listens intently. Slowly raise the lights when the Choir enters at meas. 27.

* SCENE 4:

Direct your actors to move this scene along quickly, building relational tension between the different characters.

Remind Megan that she can really show her self-sufficiency, while also revealing enough emotional fragility to garner empathy from the audience. It's a delicate balance.

SONG:

EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE

The Guests, Staff and Extras can all dance to this celebratory song. Invite your choreographer to teach some group movements. Find fun ways to include the Choir in the choreography!

* SCENE 5:

The Reporter should enter confidently and burst through the crowd with his/her digital tablet (iPad, Kindle) or audio recorder. To make this character a television Reporter, add a camera person to shoot footage of the coverage. The Reporter will also need to carry a microphone if he/she is a radio or TV Reporter.

Work on the timing of Megan's exit, making sure it's not too obvious, or too subtle. Make sure she pauses briefly to look directly toward Adam's phone/video camera during her exit.

Mr. Wiseman has a long monologue during this scene. Coach him to vary his emotional expressions (which will help to vary his pacing, pitch, inflection, and volume) to keep the audience engaged.

SONG:

MONOLOGUE UNDERSCORE

with SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT!

Everyone listens intently to Mr. Wiseman's monologue and joins to sing "Silent Night."

SONG:

WE NEED A SILENT NIGHT AGAIN

This is a beautiful song that can be enhanced by peaceful lighting and staging. Consider adding a solo female dancer or a group of dancers in white.

* SCENE 6:

While this scene begins in a melancholy mood, don't let the energy drag. Encourage your actors to keep the scene moving towards the next song, which is hopeful.

SONG:

THIS TIME NEXT YEAR

The staff discusses the coming year with hopeful anticipation.

* SCENE 7:

In this scene, Bailey shows her parents the video footage of May/Megan exiting the hotel while Mr. Wiseman was giving his speech. Direct Bailey to practice with an actual video so she can get the timing right to cue and rewind the video. Audrey also

should work on realistic timing of looking at the video. Coach Audrey to silently fabricate experiences that she may have hidden from others because of shame. This will help to fuel a more nuanced delivery as she explains to Bailey why Megan might be hiding. Spend time working with Audrey in the very emotional discovery that her daughter is pregnant. Encourage the actor playing Richard to explore his motivations and reactions in discovering Megan's pregnancy and his change of heart to find and help his daughter. Highlight his looking up and asking for God's help.

SONG:
HOPE

During this song, show May/Megan out on the street corner holding her sign asking for help. She is missing one of her gloves. Instruct your actress to display hopeful reactions every time a person gives her money or food. Throughout the song, May/Megan draws attention that she is cold by blowing on her bare hand and putting it in her shabby coat pocket. As the song ends, May/Megan moves to return to the Bethlehem Inn in search of her missing glove.

Consider asking your choir members to show hope to each other during the bridge/final chorus by offering a gift to a person near them, such as a brightly colored hat or scarf. Since the choir has been dressed in black and white as hotel staff, the addition of color will be a visual treat for your audience.

*** SCENE 8:**

Like the other tricks, Mr. Wiseman should rehearse the "Ball and Cup" (or similar trick) at every rehearsal so it becomes second nature.

SONG:

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM MEDLEY
with IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR
and ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

Lower the lights and invite your choir to hold electronic or battery-powered candles during this song. Another option would be for extra child guests at the hotel to move into a Nativity formation. The adult guests can react to the children with tenderness.

*** SCENE 9:**

Really work on the relationship and building trust between Mr. Wiseman and May as they rehearse this scene. Emotion needs to build to a boiling point when May reveals her identity as Megan. May needs to be multi-layered, expressing many emotions during her lines—from self-sufficient, to angry, to brokenhearted. Remind the actress that her anger is a cry for help.

As the scene comes to a close, we need to see an obvious visual transformation in May. In order for her to sing the duet with Mr. Wiseman honestly and believably, the audience needs to see a significant transformation in a very short amount of time. Coach your actress to find extra motivation to show this change (perhaps the May/Megan character desperately misses her little sister, or is experiencing pain from her pregnancy).

SONG:

YOU HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD (DUET)

It is important that the audience knows Mrs. Wiseman is maternally supportive of this new connection between her husband and this homeless teen. To communicate this, place Mrs. Wiseman nearby and direct her to show positive facial expressions and body language while she listens to their duet. At the same time, be careful about physically

placing Mr. Wiseman and Megan too close to one another. Perhaps at the very end of the song, a warm side hug is shared between the two of them with Mr. Wiseman looking fatherly and Megan resting her head on him for a brief moment as she sings her last line. Once the song ends, Mrs. Wiseman can join them and be a motherly presence for Megan.

* SCENE 10:

If there are jingle bells on the front door of the hotel, cue Megan to turn around quickly to look at the door as her family enters. Instruct her to turn back around abruptly in shame.

As soon as Mr. Wiseman turns her to face her family and Audrey exclaims, "Megan!", Bailey runs to hug Megan. Audrey follows close behind. Megan says, "I'm so sorry," the rest of the dialogue occurs, and Richard hugs his eldest daughter after his last line.

SONG:

EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS CAN BE (FINALE)

Direct all Extras and Guests to trickle onstage into the hotel lobby during the "Finale." Suggest that their entrances have a motivation: getting a piece of chocolate, asking for an extra towel, looking at the ornaments on the Christmas tree, playing a game, hoping to watch a magic trick, etc. Instruct all Extras and Guests to be quiet and still when the dialogue occurs during the instrumental break. Rehearse the timing of the dialogue so that it fits naturally within the instrumental break. Keep the scene moving by adding energy, speeding up the pace, and tightening the space in between actor's lines. Direct Megan to make a big deal of the sparkly handkerchief, displaying

it enthusiastically before giving it to Mr. Wiseman. The handkerchief opens to an intact crayon drawing (duplicate image of the drawing that was ripped up earlier) of Bailey, Megan, Richard, and Audrey.

During the reprise of "Hope," all cast and choir dramatically finish in an epic manner.

OPTIONAL CURTAIN CALL:

If you would like to have a curtain call, use the final moments of the reprise for all cast members to join hands and bow together. To stretch out your curtain call with individual recognition, play an upbeat Christmas song.

Welcome to Bethlehem

A MUSICAL STAGE PLAY FOR CHRISTMAS

FOR ACTORS, SOLOISTS, CHOIR & ORCHESTRA

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

RUNNING SCRIPT

PROLOGUE

(The beautifully-decorated lobby of the Bethlehem Inn in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a perfect place to stay at Christmas)

[music begins to “Welcome to Bethlehem (Opener)”]

Song: “Welcome to Bethlehem”

(As the music begins, MRS. WISEMAN and FRANCES stand at the front desk of the Bethlehem Inn talking to bellhop ADAM, who stands nearby with a luggage cart. Bellhop JAMIE loads suitcases onto a cart and escorts GUESTS through the lobby. The door opens and more GUESTS enter to check into the hotel.)

STAFF: *(ms. 6) (enthusiastically greeting)* **Welcome to Bethlehem!**

(The staff attends to the GUESTS. JAMIE pushes the cart of suitcases offstage. MR. WISEMAN enters from the interior of the hotel and crosses through the guests and staff to address the audience in a grandiose manner.)

MR. WISEMAN: *(ms. 8)* **Bethlehem, Pennsylvania! It may just be a dot on the map for some, but much like our namesake city halfway around the world, for those of us who call it home, it’s the center of the universe! And at Christmastime, this inn is the centerpiece of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. We’ve got a room waiting just for you. So, welcome to Bethlehem!**

(Song continues and ends)

SCENE 1

MR. WISEMAN: **Welcome, everyone!** *(turns to MRS. WISEMAN)* **Well, hello, Mrs. Wiseman.** *(kisses her on cheek and ADAM snaps a picture with his cell phone)*

MRS. WISEMAN: *(smiling)* **Well . . . hello, Mr. Wiseman.**

MR. WISEMAN: *(to GUESTS and STAFF)* **It's so good to have you all back again! Except for you, Adam, and that blasted phone of yours.**

(MRS. WISEMAN gathers a few papers and exits to the interior of the hotel.)

ADAM: **That was a "sick" pic of you and your wife, sir.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Sick?**

JAMIE: **Sick means like . . . "good."**

MR. WISEMAN: **Ah . . . makes perfect sense.** *(to RICHARD)* **Nice to see you again, Dr. Jorgensen.**

RICHARD: **And thank you for the welcome, Mr. Wiseman. Even though we live just a few hours away, we come to Bethlehem Inn every Christmas for some good, quality, family time together, don't we?** *(hugs BAILEY who is looking at her phone)*

AUDREY: **Well, not *all of us* are here, Richard.**

RICHARD: *(with meaning)* **Oh, yes we are, Audrey.**

BAILEY: **In my picture, we're all here!** *(holding up her drawing of her family)*

MRS. COOPER: **Well, I, for one, am glad I'm here. Staying at the Bethlehem Inn has been a Christmas tradition since I was a little girl. And now I bring my granddaughter!**

ABBY: **Let's get our Christmas on, Grandma!**

(MR. WISEMAN again takes off his hat and waves his handkerchief over it. BAILEY looks inside to find nothing. MR. WISEMAN is perplexed as he looks in his hat, punches inside it, and exits. Guests and staff clap rhythmically while MRS. COOPER and ABBY dance together briefly. ADAM shoots a video with his phone of MRS. COOPER dancing. He shows the video to FRANCES.)

ADAM: *(to FRANCES)* Aw, man, this footage is “on fleek.” I think it’s gonna go viral. You know how many “grandma dancing” videos go viral every year?

FRANCES: *(flatly)* Nope.

ADAM: *(excitedly)* Me neither!

FRANCES: **You’d better get Mrs. Cooper’s permission to post that.**
(FRANCES hands a piece of paper and a pen to ADAM who gets MRS. COOPER to sign the release.)

(MRS. WISEMAN enters holding a folder and looking for MR. WISEMAN. She approaches FRANCES.)

MRS. WISEMAN: *(to FRANCES)* Where is Theodore?

FRANCES: **He’s . . . *(looking around)* . . . well, I don’t know, Mrs. Wiseman. I guess he . . . disappeared!**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(sighing)* Oh, I’m not surprised. He does want to be a magician.

FRANCES: *(laughing)* **We know.** *(pauses)* Hey, is everything all right?

MRS. WISEMAN: **No . . . I mean yes, everything is just fine. Fine! *(aggressively)* Fine!**

FRANCES: **I believe you.** Sort of. I’ll see if I can find him.

(FRANCES starts to exit just as MR. WISEMAN enters and crosses to MRS. WISEMAN. FRANCES returns to check-in desk.)

MR. WISEMAN: **Ah, Betty, dear.** *(clearing throat)* **I was just working on my “Tear and Repair” trick.** *(she groans)* **Here,** *(trying to hand her a piece of paper)* **tear this piece of paper in as many pieces as you like, and I’ll magically put it—**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(interrupting and pulling him to the side)* **Theo, honey, we need to talk. I just got a call from Blake Westinmeyer. He’s coming by.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Just to say “Merry Christmas,” I’m sure.**

MRS. WISEMAN: **No . . . to convince you we’re in trouble.** *(opening her folder*

and handing him a piece of paper) **I ran the numbers again, and he's right. Look! The revenue from Christmas occupancy alone cannot sustain us for another eleven months.**

MR. WISEMAN: **I don't want to see the numbers.** *(taking the paper, folding it and hiding it behind his back)* **And so, I will make them disappear!** *(MRS. WISEMAN sighs in frustration)* **Sleight of hand, my dear, sleight of hand!**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(begging)* **Theo . . .**

MR. WISEMAN: *(bringing his empty hands in front of him)* **It's gone. All those headaches over money—poof!**

MRS. WISEMAN: **Honey, this is serious.**

MR. WISEMAN: *(somberly)* **I know.** *(Pulling out the folded paper, moves as if to give it to her, then stuffs the paper in his mouth, pretending to swallow)*

MRS. WISEMAN: *(sadly)* **Theo, you haven't learned that trick yet.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Right.**

(MR. WISEMAN takes the paper out of his mouth and hands it back to her. MRS. WISEMAN gingerly takes it with two fingers. They exit to the interior of the hotel together. BAILEY enters and approaches the front desk.)

BAILEY: **Excuse me!**

FRANCES: *(looking over the desk)* **Oh, hi! Can I help you?**

BAILEY: **Can I please have some chocolate? Mommy says you always have chocolate at the front desk.**

FRANCES: **Your mommy is right! Here's one for you,** *(giving a piece of chocolate to BAILEY)* **and one for me!** *(popping a piece of chocolate in her mouth).*

BAILEY: **Thank you!** *(pauses)* **Can I please have one for my sister, too?**

FRANCES: **Your sister?**

BAILEY: *(holding up her picture)* **She's right here next to me in my picture. She would've wanted some chocolate, too.**

FRANCES: **Okay. Here you go, honey** (*handing another piece of chocolate to BAILEY*) . . . **for your sister.**

BAILEY: **Thank you!**

(*BAILEY sets her drawing on a lamp table in order to take a selfie with the chocolate. MRS. COOPER and ABBY enter. BAILEY exits, accidentally leaving her drawing on the table.*)

MRS. COOPER: **Oh, Abby! Would you look at this! It's the same bowl that held the Christmas candy when I was a little girl!**

ABBY: (*dryly*) **I hope it's not the same candy.**

MRS. COOPER: **And I remember this beautiful table,** (*Music begins to "We Come Here Every Christmas." GUESTS enter the lobby from the interior and exterior of the hotel to join in this song*) **and that lamp, and oh, yes . . . those toy soldiers over there! They all have so much meaning for me.**

ABBY: (*without thinking*) **Meaning they're all really old?**

(*Realizing what she just said, ABBY covers her mouth and then giggles. MRS. COOPER pretends to be offended, but then joins in the laughter.*)

Song: "We Come Here Every Christmas"

(*ms. 41, BLAKE WESTINMEYER enters and stiffly approaches the front desk.*)

FRANCES: (*ms. 43, spoken*) **Checking in?**

BLAKE: **No.** (*with disdain*) **I'm here to see Mr. Theodore Wiseman.**

FRANCES: **Your name, please?**

BLAKE: (*enunciating a little too clearly*) **B-lake West-in-mey-er.**

FRANCES: **Excellent. I'm sure he'll be glad to see you, Mr. Westinmeyer. Wait here, please.** (*offering him a piece of chocolate*) **Chocolate?"**

BLAKE: (*with annoyance*) **No.**

(FRANCES exits and returns with MR. WISEMAN. Approaching BLAKE off to the side, MR. WISEMAN fans out playing cards, silently indicating for BLAKE to pick a card. BLAKE isn't amused as he opens a briefcase, takes out a folder, and attempts to hand it to MR. WISEMAN. Crossing his arms, MR. WISEMAN refuses to take it. MRS. WISEMAN enters, steps between the men, takes the folder, opens it, and shows the contents to MR. WISEMAN whose mood suddenly sours. The three pantomime an animated conversation until the end of the song.

(Song continues)

(Ms. 94, bt. 4, just before the end of the song, MEGAN enters the edge of the stage, outside the front door of the hotel. She nervously looks in a hotel window and even considers going in, but thinks better of it and exits offstage by the time BLAKE exits in Scene 2.)

SCENE 2

(FRANCES, JAMIE and ADAM are gathered at front desk, eavesdropping)

MR. WISEMAN: *(loudly)* So *that's* the problem . . . they *only* come at Christmas!

MRS. WISEMAN: Yes.

BLAKE: I'd say the writing's on the wall, Wiseman. And you won't be able to keep it a secret for long.

MR. WISEMAN: *(showing BLAKE the door)* Good day, sir!

(BLAKE exits. MR. and MRS. WISEMAN exit into the interior of the hotel.)

JAMIE: *(to FRANCES and ADAM)* So what does that mean . . . "they *only* come at Christmas"?

ADAM: Yeah, and "the writing's on the wall, Wiseman." What's up with that?

JAMIE: This could be way serious.

FRANCES: Sounds like Mr. Wiseman needs a new magic trick.

ADAM: A miracle is what he needs. *(trying to process it)* "They only come at Christmas" . . . must mean the Bethlehem Inn could possibly end up . . . *(suddenly looks at his phone)* Hey, maybe I could try to—

FRANCES: Maybe you could try to what?

JAMIE: Yo, wait. I've seen that look before!

FRANCES: *(shaking her head)* Yeah, me too. The last time was right before you posted the video of *me* running into the glass door!

JAMIE: *(patting ADAM on the back)* That video rocked.

FRANCES: Hey! That was painful! In more ways than one!

ADAM: *(still looking at his phone)* Ha! Check this out! The video of Mrs. Cooper dancing?

JAMIE: Yeah?

ADAM: **It has 28 likes already!** (*MRS. COOPER and ABBY cross and stand behind ADAM.*)

FRANCES: **Well, unfortunately you'll have to starve your social media addiction until *after* you help the famous guests behind you.**

ADAM: **Huh?** (*looking up*) **Oh! Of course.** (*hides his phone and turns around*) **How can I help you?**

(*MRS. COOPER and ABBY pantomime asking ADAM a question. RICHARD AND AUDREY enter in another part of the lobby. BAILEY is nearby, looking at her phone.*)

RICHARD: **Let's go somewhere special for a treat. How about Rosie's? You love that place.**

AUDREY: **Yeah, I do.** (*pause, sadly*) **But . . . Megan loved it, too.**

RICHARD: **Oh, come on, Audrey. Now we can't even go to Rosie's because it reminds you of her?**

AUDREY: **You can't tell me you don't think about your daughter.**

RICHARD: **I do. And here's what I think. I think she's a big girl who's making her own decisions now. And it's about time we get used to the fact that . . .** (*pauses, shrugs*) **. . . she doesn't need us anymore.**

AUDREY: **Are you *sure* she doesn't?**

RICHARD: **Honey, she said those very words when she left last summer.**

AUDREY: (*sighing*) **I know. You're right. She did.** (*looking down remembering, then confidently looking up*) **Okay, I'm shaking off my melancholy and we are going to have a great Christmas together. Now, let's go to Rosie's. Bailey will love it.** (*trying to get her attention*) **Bailey?**

RICHARD: **Bailey!**

(*Startled, BAILEY jumps up suddenly and bumps into another GUEST.*)

RICHARD: (*to AUDREY*) **Technology may be the death of all of us.**

ADAM: (*overhearing*) **Oh, I think it all depends on how you use it.** (*RICHARD, AUDREY and BAILEY exit. MRS. WISEMAN enters and stands with FRANCES at the front desk.*)

ABBY: Did you have a phone when you were my age, Grandma?

MRS. COOPER: Yes, attached to the wall!

ABBY: So, you couldn't go anywhere when you were talking on it?

MRS. COOPER: Now, that would've made it a "mobile" phone, wouldn't it?

ABBY: Right. *(laughing)*

FRANCES: *(to JAMIE)* As soon as I go on break, I'm gonna call my mom.

MRS. WISEMAN: *(overhearing)* Everything okay?

FRANCES: Yeah. I just miss her. Last night *(music begins to "Back at Home")* she posted a photo of her tree, all decorated so pretty. *(sighs)* You know, as much as I love the Bethlehem Inn at Christmas, I hate not being home.

ADAM: My bro said they got snow this morning. He called me and sang, "Do you wanna build a snowman?"

JAMIE: Touching. *(sniffing and pretending to wipe away a tear)* Yeah, I guarantee no one's shovelin' any white stuff where I'm from. They're surfin' sun up to sun down in Southern California.

FRANCES: *(to MRS. WISEMAN)* Mrs. Wiseman, what did you do at Christmas when you were a little girl?

MRS. WISEMAN: Well, let's see . . . I learned to bake my mama's fruitcake. *(ALL react)* How about you, Mrs. Cooper?

MRS. COOPER: Oh, yes, we made fruitcake, too. But my favorite tradition was our holiday hayride.

ABBY: You, Grandma? *(dubiously)* On a hayride?

MRS. COOPER: Young lady, don't let this gray hair fool you! Long before I was Elizabeth Alexandria Cooper, *(music changes, ms. 36)* I was little Miss Betsy Jackson from Forsyth County, Georgia! Hayrides were quite the tradition!

JAMIE: Hey, Mrs. Wiseman, you think we could like . . . get a hayride on the schedule here?

(ALL laugh)

Song: “Back at Home”

(MEGAN enters near end of song. She is obviously pregnant, bundled in a tattered coat with a hat pulled down low, carrying a cardboard sign under her arm. She has an obvious “homeless” appearance. She looks around anxiously and is visibly insecure and out of place. As the song ends, the crowd clears, making her presence very obvious to the audience. The cast goes back to busying themselves around the front desk and other areas, away from MEGAN and MR. WISEMAN.)

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 3

(ADAM can busy himself with straightening the lobby, organizing key cards, fixing a luggage cart, etc. MRS. WISEMAN can stay busy behind the front desk. MRS. COOPER is offended by MEGAN'S presence, and shields ABBY from her.)

(MR. WISEMAN enters and approaches an uncomfortable MEGAN.)

MR. WISEMAN: **Well, hi, there! You . . . you came after all!** *(reaching out awkwardly to shake her hand but MEGAN turns away, clutching her bag and cardboard sign. MR. WISEMAN quickly continues.)*
I was hoping you'd come, but *(pauses)* **I mean, even though I see you asking for help downtown most days, when I invited you to come here tonight, I wasn't quite sure you would actually show up.** *(searching for what to say next)* **Umm . . . you hungry?**

MEGAN: *(looking around nervously)* **I shouldn't be here.** *(turning to leave)*

MR. WISEMAN: **No, wait!** *(MEGAN stops)* **Don't go. What I mean is, if you're hungry, we have plenty. If you need somewhere to rest, we have the most comfortable rooms in the state. And if you need just to talk, I've been told I'm a pretty good listener.**

MEGAN: **What I need is to be invisible.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Ah . . . that's Magic Tricks 102. I'm still on 101.** *(pauses)*
Why don't we start by introducing ourselves? I'm Theodore Wiseman.

MEGAN: **I'm Me—** *(begins to say the first part of her real name, then thinks better of it)* . . . **May. My name is May.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Well, May, it's an honor to meet you. You look somehow familiar. Have we met before?**

MEGAN: *(looking away)* **Yeah . . . maybe in a past life.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Oh, I, I don't believe in all that.** *(trying to lighten the mood)* **But I have been working on my "Tear and Repair" trick.** *(looks around for a piece of paper, spies BAILEY's drawing of her family and picks it up)* **Here . . . tear this piece of paper into as many pieces as you like.**

MEGAN: *(looking at the drawing)* **But it's some little kid's drawing.**

MR. WISEMAN: **No worries. Tear it right up!** (*MEGAN takes off her gloves, tears up the picture and hands him the pieces. He hides his hands behind his back.*) **You know, sometimes we think something is just too torn up to be put back together. But . . . then we see that . . .** (*MR. WISEMAN brings his hands out in front of him. Instead of an intact drawing, the pieces of paper fall out of his hands, floating to the floor in front of MEGAN.*) **. . . ah, we were right! The trick needs a little work, doesn't it?**

(*ADAM runs over to pick up the pieces off the floor.*)

MEGAN: **Yeah.** (*looking around nervously and taking a few steps towards the door*) **I should go.** (*turns to leave*)

MR. WISEMAN: **Wait!** (*desperately*) **Oh, my goodness. May, you have something behind your ear.**

MEGAN: **What?**

MR. WISEMAN: **Would you look at that . . . it's a . . .** (*reaching behind her ear and then revealing a piece of chocolate*) **. . . it's a piece of chocolate! How did *that* get there? And not just any chocolate, but our famous homemade chocolate from the Bethlehem Inn! (*offering*) Would you like it?**

MEGAN: **Uh, no. Actually . . .** (*remembering how hungry she is*) **yes. Thanks.** (*quickly eating the candy*)

MR. WISEMAN: **You *are* hungry, aren't you? I don't blame you. After all, you *are* eating for two.** (*MRS. WISEMAN enters*) **Mrs. Wiseman! Take this young lady to the kitchen for some of your culinary magic!**

(*As ADAM crosses to throw the pieces of paper in the trash, MEGAN and MRS. WISEMAN are crossing the stage as well.*)

MEGAN: (*quietly, to ADAM*) **Hey, can I have those pieces?**

ADAM: (*handing her the torn pieces of paper*) **Sure.**

(*MEGAN puts the torn pieces of the picture in her coat pocket. As she crosses with MRS. WISEMAN, MEGAN accidentally drops one of her gloves. No one notices. They cross to an area on the side stage with a little table and three chairs. MEGAN sits. MRS. WISEMAN exits and then re-enters bringing MEGAN a plate of food. MEGAN eats during the following dialogue. MRS. COOPER enters, sees MEGAN, and approaches MR. WISEMAN.*)

MRS. COOPER: Mr. Wiseman, I am *quite* concerned.

MR. WISEMAN: Well, here at the Bethlehem Inn, *your* concern is *my* concern. So tell me Mrs. Cooper, what is your concern?

MRS. COOPER: That young lady . . . it looked to me like she just walked in off the street. If I had known you were running a homeless shelter, I would have thought twice about bringing my granddaughter!

MR. WISEMAN: Mrs. Cooper, let me ask you a question. When you saw that young girl, what did you *see*?

MRS. COOPER: Sir?

MR. WISEMAN: Just go along with me. Tell me, what did you *see*?

MRS. COOPER: Well, I saw a troubled sort who has no respect for the law . . . or for authority of any kind. If she did, she would have listened to her teachers, obeyed her parents, and she wouldn't be in, in, well . . . *(pauses, whispering)* the "condition" she's in.

MR. WISEMAN: I see. Hmm . . . do you know what *I* see when I look at her? *(music begins to "When I Think of Bethlehem")* I see a girl who needs to feel loved. I see someone who is facing some *very scary* circumstances right now, and probably has a lot more questions than she has answers.

MRS. COOPER: Well, I—

MR. WISEMAN: *(interrupting her)* I also see every mistake *I've* ever made. And for whatever reason, I either got away with it or had someone come alongside me to help me through it. So, Mrs. Cooper, it begs the question . . . who's gonna come alongside her and help her through this? Are you? Am I?

Song: "When I Think of Bethlehem"

(Towards the end of the song, RICHARD, AUDREY, and BAILEY enter the hotel lobby and listen for a few moments.)

MR. WISEMAN: *(spoken)* The Bethlehem Inn should be a place where everyone feels loved. Even you, Mrs. Cooper.

MRS. COOPER: *(spoken) (offended)* Even me? What do you mean, even me . . . ? *(music ends)*

SCENE 4

FRANCES: **Excuse me, Mr. Wiseman, don't forget . . . tree lighting in five minutes!**

MR. WISEMAN: *(looking at his watch)* **Oh, my! You are right!**
(to MRS. COOPER) **Excuse me, ma'am.** *(MR. WISEMAN exits.)*

AUDREY: *(picking up a glove)* **Whose glove is this? I know this glove.**
(excitedly) **It's Megan's, Richard. It's Megan's glove!** *(looking around frantically)* **She's here somewhere!**

RICHARD: *(putting his hand on her shoulder)* **Audrey, don't. You think you see Megan and her stuff everywhere. When is enough, enough?**

MRS. COOPER: *(approaching AUDREY)* **Excuse me, I think you have one of my granddaughter's gloves.**

AUDREY: **This is your granddaughter's glove?** *(holding it out)*

MRS. COOPER: **Yes. She must have dropped it.** *(taking the glove, crosses away from AUDREY)*

AUDREY: *(crestfallen)* **Oh.**

RICHARD: **See?**

BAILEY: *(retracing her steps)* **Then after I got the chocolate, I came over here, took a selfie, and must have set my drawing right here on this table.** *(looking all around the table)* **My drawing! It's gone! Mommy?!**

RICHARD: *(annoyed)* **Ugh . . . I'm going to our room.** *(exits)*

AUDREY: *(to JAMIE)* **Uh, excuse me . . . has anyone turned in a little drawing of a family?**

JAMIE: *(to FRANCES)* **Hey, Frances, has anyone turned in, like, a drawing?**

FRANCES: **Not that I know of.**

AUDREY: **Let's go back to our room, honey. Maybe you left it there.**

(AUDREY and BAILEY exit into the interior of the hotel.)

ADAM: *(to FRANCES, holding up his phone)* 67 likes!

FRANCES: **Would you put that thing away?! The Bethlehem Inn is in serious trouble, Adam! Maybe you could spend your time thinking about how you could *help*.**

ADAM: **I *am*!**

FRANCES: **Well, it sure doesn't look like it.**

(Focus shifts to MR. WISEMAN, sitting with MEGAN and MRS. WISEMAN at the little table on the side stage. MEGAN occasionally looks around nervously.)

MR. WISEMAN: *(to MEGAN)* **So, how are you staying warm at night?**

MEGAN: **I've got a blanket.**

MRS. WISEMAN: **And food?**

MEGAN: **I try not to think about it.**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(interrupting)* **I don't know how you *don't* think about food. When I had a bun in the oven I could have eaten a horse a day and still been hungry.**

MEGAN: **Yeah. *(taking a bite)***

MR. WISEMAN: **Do you know where your family is?**

MEGAN: **No, not really. *(quickly)* And they can't see me like this.**

MRS. WISEMAN: **So they don't know you're . . .**

MEGAN: **. . . pregnant? No. And they won't.**

MR. WISEMAN: **And the father of the baby?**

MEGAN: **Promised me the world. And I believed him. Stupid, I know.**

MRS. WISEMAN: **We want to help you.**

MEGAN: **Thanks *(pause)*, but . . . I got myself into this mess. And I have to get myself out.**

MR. WISEMAN: **I understand.** *(standing)* Well, you're always welcome here. And hopefully when you come back, I'll have figured out my "Tear and Repair" trick. *(cheerfully)* And now, I'm about to magically light our Christmas tree, if you'd like to join us.

MEGAN: *(shaking head)* That's okay.

MRS. WISEMAN: **Might be the last time we do a tree lighting here at the—**

MEGAN: *(interrupting)* Thanks, but I've got to get back to work.

MR. WISEMAN: **Work?**

(MEGAN holds up her cardboard sign.)

MRS. WISEMAN: **Okay, but please, rest here for awhile.**

(MRS. WISEMAN and MR. WISEMAN exit. MEGAN stays seated as she continues eating. Every now and then, she puts her head in her hands to rest.)

(music begins to "Everything Christmas Can Be")

(During this song, MR. WISEMAN "magically" turns on the Christmas tree lights with grand gestures. All staff and guests come out on stage.)

Song: "Everything Christmas Can Be"

SCENE 5

MR. WISEMAN: **Thank you all for coming to our annual Christmas tree lighting, here at the beautiful Bethlehem Inn! (*GUESTS applaud*) We have made every effort to make this a memorable moment for you and your families, as we share the greatest of all celebrations with you: the Gift of our Savior, given to us. With that in mind, we take great pride in giving back through this Christmas tree lighting, as we show the love we have for this community and for our friends who have joined us here this year from all over the country. Like the many years before—**

(NEWS REPORTER enters quickly and interrupts, taking notes on a digital tablet)

REPORTER: **Mr. Wiseman! Mr. Wiseman! Is it true that the Bethlehem Inn is currently facing financial difficulties?**

MR. WISEMAN: *(stunned)* **Well . . . I—**

REPORTER: **And is it true that because of these difficulties this will probably be the last Christmas tree lighting of the Bethlehem Inn?**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(indignant)* **Now, just where did you hear *that*?**

(GUESTS and STAFF seem confused, asking questions of each other)

REPORTER: **And is it true that after Christmas, you'll have to close the doors of the Bethlehem Inn?**

(GUESTS and STAFF noisily discuss)

MR. WISEMAN: **Wait! Wait! Everyone, please! Please! As much as I've wanted to deny it, it's true. I'm sorry, (*GUESTS gasp*) but this will probably be our last Christmas together . . . at the Bethlehem Inn. (*GUESTS and STAFF react*)**

FRANCES: **And you were going to tell us...when?**

JAMIE: **You were just gonna post it on, like, the front door one day?**

MR. WISEMAN: **No. It's not like that. I . . . I planned on talking with each of you.**

(ADAM begins recording MR. WISEMAN's speech on his phone. As GUESTS move to hear him better, MEGAN crosses quietly, making her way quietly towards the door. As she crosses, she is caught in the frame of ADAM's video. As before, she is bundled in her coat and has her hat pulled down low. She turns to look towards the phone camera briefly as she crosses. RICHARD, AUDREY, BAILEY, and the other guests do not notice her as she leaves.)

But first, I was really hoping we could save the hotel, and I wouldn't have anything to talk to you about. You all know as well as I do that the Bethlehem Inn is more than just a pretty building or a Christmas tree lighting or my attempts at magic tricks. The Bethlehem Inn is...well, *(pauses)* it's family.

When most people think of Christmas, *(music begins to "Monologue Underscore")* they think of being with the people they love, reliving their favorite traditions, and making unforgettable memories. They think of the smell and taste of their favorite foods and hum the familiar notes of their favorite Christmas carol. They can almost see that special gift their mom and dad gave them as a child, some of which have been handed down to their children and to their children's children. And when they hear the laughter that echoes in these walls from years gone by, they can't help but smile.

Dozens of nervous young men have dropped to their knee right here in this lobby in hopes they would hear a "yes" to their proposal, and to this day, "yes" has been the answer every time. We watched families spend their very first Christmases together here. And we've been there as they struggled through their first Christmas without the one they loved. *(RICHARD pulls AUDREY close.)*

I guess what I am trying to say is, the Bethlehem Inn has been more than just a hotel to these families. When they think of Christmas, they think of all the memories they've made in these halls.

Look around you at these children. They're *our* children. That's why we take such care to make staying here extra special. From the greeting when you first walk through these doors to the turn-down service when you return to your room at night, we are family. The Bethlehem Inn is family. And I'm heartbroken at the thought that we won't have the opportunity to make even more families a part of our own.

(Ms. 38, Child begins singing “Silent Night! Holy Night!” and others begin to join.)

(song ends and segues directly to “We Need a Silent Night Again.”)

Song: “We Need a Silent Night Again”

(During the beginning of this song, ADAM is on his phone uploading the video clip of MR. WISEMAN’s speech to the internet.)

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

SCENE 6

(JAMIE, FRANCES, and ADAM are gathered around the front desk. GUESTS may stay onstage, playing checkers, reading magazines, etc.)

JAMIE: **So, what are we gonna do? Nobody's hiring in this town, especially right after the holidays.**

FRANCES: **Uh, yep. *(sarcastically)* Merry Christmas to us.**

ADAM: **This isn't just a job, it's my life! Mr. Wiseman's like a dad to me!**

JAMIE: **Boy, I never saw this one comin'.**

FRANCES: **I'm kinda sorry we found out when we did. Maybe it would have been better to go through the holidays not knowing this was about to happen.**

(MRS. WISEMAN enters and approaches the trio.)

JAMIE: **Well, that's that . . .**

(music begins to "This Time Next Year")

MRS. WISEMAN: **Yes, maybe "that's that." But if I've learned anything in my life, it's that I'm not in control. God is. Now His plan might not be what I thought I wanted, but His plan is good. My job is to trust Him.**

JAMIE: **Easy for you to say, Mrs. Wiseman. You don't have student loans or a car payment.**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(quietly)* **No, I just have a hotel that I love.**

ADAM: *(music changes, ms. 9)* **But you guys, the story isn't over yet! Hey, who *knows* what could happen in a few minutes or hours or days? Who knows where we could all be this time next year?**

Song: "This Time Next Year"

SCENE 7

(As the GUESTS and STAFF are finishing up the song, BAILEY is looking at her phone. She jumps up and excitedly tries to get her parents' attention.)

BAILEY: Mom! Dad! I want to show you something.

RICHARD: Not now.

AUDREY: Honey, please put your phone away.

BAILEY: But it's really important. Look! *(showing them)* So, I'm following the Bethlehem Inn online and somebody posted a video of Mr. Wiseman giving his speech a little bit ago. See?

RICHARD: We were here, Bailey. We don't need to watch the speech again.

BAILEY: Wait! But look, in the beginning of the video. Look close in the background. See when the girl walks behind him and looks this way? *(pauses)* See? Here, I'll go back. *(pauses)* Now . . . there! I paused it. Look at her face. I'll zoom in. Look! Doesn't it look just like . . .

AUDREY: Like who?

BAILEY: I know this is crazy. But doesn't it look just like Megan? *(looking up)* Doesn't it?

RICHARD: No, it looks like a homeless girl. Your sister is not homeless. She's got that boyfriend now, and I'm sure she's fine. Somewhere. *(quietly to himself)* At least, I hope she's fine.

AUDREY: Let me see that! *(taking the phone, AUDREY covers her mouth in surprise when she recognizes MEGAN in the video)* Richard, do you think it could—

RICHARD: *(interrupting her)* Honey, if she were here, we would know.

AUDREY: Unless she didn't want us to know.

BAILEY: Why wouldn't she want us to know?

AUDREY: I don't know, honey. Probably *(pauses)* . . . shame. It's the biggest reason why we hide from each other. *(pauses)* Wait!

(suddenly thinks of something) Oh, Bailey, let me see that video again. Can you go back to the beginning? *(taking a moment to view the video, then turning to RICHARD)* Honey, look closer. Doesn't it look like— No . . . please, God. She's, she's . . . *(begins to cry)* . . . she's going to have a baby.

RICHARD: *(prayerfully looking up)* Oh, Lord! Help us!

BAILEY: If she needs help, I want to help her!

RICHARD: *(quickly putting on his coat)* And so do I. If she left during Mr. Wiseman's speech, she couldn't have gotten far.

BAILEY: Can I come, too?

AUDREY: Of course, honey, we're a family. And we always will be.

(RICHARD, AUDREY, and BAILEY exit to the hotel exterior.)

(music begins to "Hope")

Song: "Hope"

SCENE 8

(After song ends, FRANCES and ADAM enter quickly to address the rest of the STAFF.)

FRANCES: **We need everyone who's trained on the phones to head to the back office . . . and quick!!**

MR. WISEMAN: *(putting on his managerial hat)* **What's going on?**

ADAM: **I don't know, but the phones are ringing off the hook!**

MRS. WISEMAN: **Is there an emergency?**

FRANCES: **I guess you could call it that, but people are calling to book rooms for weddings and family reunions and for all kinds of things! Can you believe it? *(laughing with glee)***

JAMIE: **Are you serious?**

ADAM: *(looking at his phone)* **Whoa! Whoa! WHOA!!**

MRS. WISEMAN: **"Whoa" what?**

ADAM: *(holding up his phone)* **Check this out! I posted Mr. Wiseman's speech from the Christmas tree lighting, and it's already got 12,132 likes. *(STAFF reacts with excitement)* And . . . 217 people have shared it! It's going viral!**

FRANCES: **It's like magic, Mr. Wiseman!**

ADAM: **Oh, it's not magic; it's social media!**

MRS. WISEMAN: **It's not social media . . . it's a miracle!**

MR. WISEMAN: *(laughing)* **Adam, you and your blasted phone! *(hugging ADAM)***

MRS. WISEMAN: *(to JAMIE and FRANCES)* **If we have a full calendar, guess what?**

JAMIE: **What?**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(with joy)* **We're still in business!**

FRANCES: *(looking up from a phone call)* **Oh, we have a full calendar all right!**

(MR. WISEMAN resumes his role as a magician as dramatically he takes out a large, colorful ball and cup magic trick. Initially, the cup is empty.)

MR. WISEMAN: **One minute you think you're out of hope . . . empty . . . washed up . . . not a chance for things to turn around this time. *(dramatically showing the STAFF an empty cup)* And then . . . *(putting the lid on the cup, he takes it off to reveal a ball inside)* . . . BAM! There it is—Hope!**

ADAM: **We *are* at the Bethlehem Inn, after all. Isn't Bethlehem where hope started in the first place?**

MR. WISEMAN: **That's true. *(music begins to "O Little Town of Bethlehem Medley")* Hope to keep a hotel afloat is one thing. Hope for our drowning souls is quite another. I remember being empty, washed up, not a chance for things to turn around . . . no way back to a holy God after the mess I had made of my life. But He sent His perfect Son, Jesus, into our broken world, into my broken life, into a little town called Bethlehem. And it's through Him that every one of us has hope.**

Song: "O Little Town of Bethlehem Medley"

SCENE 9

(ABBY enters and approaches the front desk holding out the lost glove to FRANCES.)

ABBY: Excuse me, my grandma thought this was my glove, but it's not. Looks a lot like it, but I have both of mine right here.

FRANCES: Alright sweetie, thank you. I'll put it in my drawer. I'm sure the rightful owner will turn up soon, with how cold it is outside tonight. *(offering candy)* Would you like a piece of chocolate?

ABBY: Umm . . . maybe. How old is it?

FRANCES: Just made it yesterday.

ABBY: Then, yes, I'll take a piece. Thanks. *(taking chocolate from the candy bowl and eating it)*

FRANCES: And so will I! *(cheerfully pops a chocolate in her mouth)*

(MEGAN enters, still looking around nervously, and approaches the front desk.)

MEGAN: Excuse me. I think I left my glove here. Did anyone turn one in?

FRANCES: Why, yes! It's right here. *(handing her the glove)*

MEGAN: *(turning to leave)* Also . . . umm . . . could you please tell me if the Jorgensens are staying here? A Richard, Audrey, and a little girl named Bailey?

FRANCES: Hmm . . . let me check. *(checking)* Yes, they sure are! Would you like me to ring their room?

MEGAN: No! Please, don't! I mean . . . no, thank you. *(briskly crossing to the door to exit, nearly running into MR. WISEMAN)*

MR. WISEMAN: May! You came back!

MEGAN: I just came back to get my glove. I must have dropped it.

MR. WISEMAN: Please don't spend the night outside. It's cold, and it's not safe. I'm sure we have a room available . . . on the house. *(to FRANCES)* We have a room available tonight for this young lady, don't we, Frances?

FRANCES: I'm sorry, sir. But we are completely full tonight.

MR. WISEMAN: *(sighing)* Well, let's see . . . since there's no room in the Inn, we just might have a stable out back. *(seeing FRANCES' shocked expression)* Oh, I'm just kidding. We'll come up with something. And not a stable, I promise.

MEGAN: Wait . . . is that what this is? I'm some kind of *(pauses)* "stand-in" for Mary?

MR. WISEMAN: No, no, please. I'm so sorry. I was just . . .

MEGAN: *(interrupting)* No, I get it. I'm a charity case, and you'll get extra gems in your crown someday if you help me. I already told you, I don't need your help. I don't need *anyone's* help! *(turning quickly to run for the door; MRS. COOPER stands in her way.)* Get out of my way!

MRS. COOPER: *(blocking MEGAN)* I can't do that.

MEGAN: Why not?

MRS. COOPER: Because *(pauses)* I . . . because I see myself in you, young lady. Believe me, I haven't wanted to. But years ago, I *was* you! Scared. Pregnant. Running for the door. And I want to tell you that beyond that door is just more pain.

MEGAN: I can do this on my own. I *have* to do this on my own!

MRS. COOPER: Oh, I know. I thought I had to do it on my own, too. But I see now that there were scores of people in Forsyth County, Georgia who would have given their eyeteeth to help me.

MR. WISEMAN: *(stepping forward)* And I'm one of those people right here, right now. Would you let me help you, May?

MEGAN: *(angrily)* My name isn't May, okay? And I don't know why I keep ending up back here where I don't want to be, but I do. *(pauses)* Because you invited me, that's why! I came here because *you* invited me. *(breaking down)* And I know you. And you know me, Mr. Wiseman. The Bethlehem Inn is where I spent every Christmas since I was little. I . . . *(sighing)* I love this place. I always have. And I miss it. But . . . I don't belong here anymore. It's all too . . . perfect. I . . . *(sighing)* I just don't belong here anymore.

MR. WISEMAN: *(with sudden realization)* **Megan Jorgensen! I remember you now. You know, Megan, you might think you don't belong here, but this is *exactly* where you belong. The Bethlehem Inn isn't for people who have it all together. It's for people who need to be loved! And that's me, and you, and Mrs. Cooper.**

MRS. WISEMAN: **And me.**

JAMIE: **Me, too.**

FRANCES: **Yeah, I need a lot of love. And coffee.**

(MEGAN pauses, looking with confusion at the STAFF.)

MEGAN: **Why do you want to help me so bad? I'm just a big mess.**

MR. WISEMAN: **Because we're all a big mess. And that's why we *all* need Bethlehem. *(music begins to "You Have Changed the World")* I needed to be reminded tonight that even though it looks like everything has fallen apart, God is always at work behind the scenes, making something beautiful out of our mess. You know, it's okay to feel a little lost sometimes, but it's not okay to feel like you'll never be anything more than your mistakes. That's the beauty of Christmas. You know the story—an unwed mother, an unexpected pregnancy; turns out the thing was planned all along.**

MEGAN: **You really think so?**

MR. WISEMAN: *(with assurance)* **I really do.**

Song: "You Have Changed the World"

SCENE 10

(As “You Have Changed the World” ends, MRS. WISEMAN enters.)

MR. WISEMAN: *(turning compassionately to MEGAN)* You know, your family is staying here this Christmas.

MEGAN: I know. *(looking down with shame)* But they wouldn’t want to see me. I burned that bridge last summer.

MRS. WISEMAN: Oh, but you never know. *(gently)* They just might be some of the people who would want to help you. *(music ends)*

FRANCES: I know your little sister misses you. She even came to the front desk and got a piece of chocolate for you.

MEGAN: *(smiling in surprise)* She did? *(nodding)* Yeah, she knows how much I love your chocolate. *(laughs)*

MR. WISEMAN: Should we ring their room?

MEGAN: I don’t know. *(pauses and looks up for support)* You’ll be here, right?

MR. WISEMAN: I’m not going anywhere.

MEGAN: Okay . . . you can call their room.

FRANCES: *(calling)* It’s ringing.

(MEGAN is facing the front desk watching FRANCES when RICHARD, AUDREY, and BAILEY enter through the front door.)

ADAM
and JAMIE: *(welcoming the Jorgensens)* Welcome to Bethlehem!

(MEGAN turns around to see her family enter and immediately turns back around, ashamed.)

RICHARD: Thanks. *(taking off his coat and approaching MR. WISEMAN)*
Mr. Wiseman, we have reason to believe that earlier this evening, our daughter, Megan, was here.

AUDREY: She really needs our help, and now she’s out there somewhere in the cold.

BAILEY: **Can you please help us find my sister?**

MR. WISEMAN: **I believe I can.**

[music begins to “Everything Christmas Can Be (Finale),” found on page 159. MR. WISEMAN crosses to the front desk and stands next to MEGAN. He puts his hand on her shoulder. She slowly turns around to face her family.]

MEGAN: *(with apprehension)* **Hi.**

AUDREY: **Megan!**

(RICHARD, AUDREY and BAILEY run to embrace her.)

MEGAN: **I’m so sorry.**

BAILEY: **For what?**

MEGAN: **I’m going to have a baby.**

RICHARD: **No, honey, we’re *all* going to have a baby.**

[Choir begins singing “Everything Christmas Can Be (Finale)”]

Song: “Everything Christmas Can Be (Finale)”

(During the instrumental break starting at ms. 47, RICHARD approaches MR. WISEMAN.)

RICHARD: *(ms. 49)* **Mr. Wiseman, I can’t thank you enough for being so instrumental in bringing my daughter back to us. As a token of my appreciation, *(taking out his checkbook)* do you accept corporate sponsorships?**

MR. WISEMAN: *(taken back)* **Corporate sponsorships? Well, I . . .**

MRS. WISEMAN: *(stepping forward)* **Yes, we do, Dr. Jorgensen! In fact, I can help you set that up right over here. *(MRS. WISEMAN leads RICHARD to the front desk.)***

BAILEY: *(to MEGAN)* **So you can stay with me in our room? It’s perfect because I drew you in my picture, but then I lost it. *(turning to MR. WISEMAN)* Mr. Wiseman, have you seen my drawing of my family? I’m sure I left it on that little table. It had me, my mom, . . .**

MR. WISEMAN: *(interrupting)* Oh, the drawing! That was yours! Yes, now, let's see, I picked it up here and gave it to . . . uh, May . . . I mean, Megan. And then . . . oh no, it was part of my "Tear and Repair" trick which, as I recall, I had only mastered the "tear" part of the trick up until that point. The "repair" failed miserably.

MEGAN: *(regretfully)* Mr. Wiseman asked me to tear it up, and I did. I'm sorry, Bailey.

MR. WISEMAN: And it floated to the floor in a million pieces.

ADAM: *(jumping forward)* But then I picked up the pieces and I . . . I handed them *(to MEGAN)* to you.

MEGAN: *(to BAILEY)* And I took them because I thought they might be yours and I put them *(remembering)* . . . in my pocket! *(putting her hand in her coat pocket)* And here they . . . *(pulling out a beautiful, sparkling handkerchief with BAILEY's drawing of the family intact)* Wait! How did . . . ? Mr. Wiseman! *(looking up)* You did it! Look at this!

MR. WISEMAN: I did? *(inspecting the handkerchief)* How did I . . . ? *(laughing)* Oh . . . no, my friends. This wasn't *my* doing. There is only One Who can take what has been truly torn and turn it into something this beautiful!

(MR. WISEMAN hands the magic handkerchief to BAILEY, who dances over to show it to AUDREY and RICHARD. The family tightly hugs MEGAN.)

[Choir finishes singing "Everything Christmas Can Be (Finale)"]

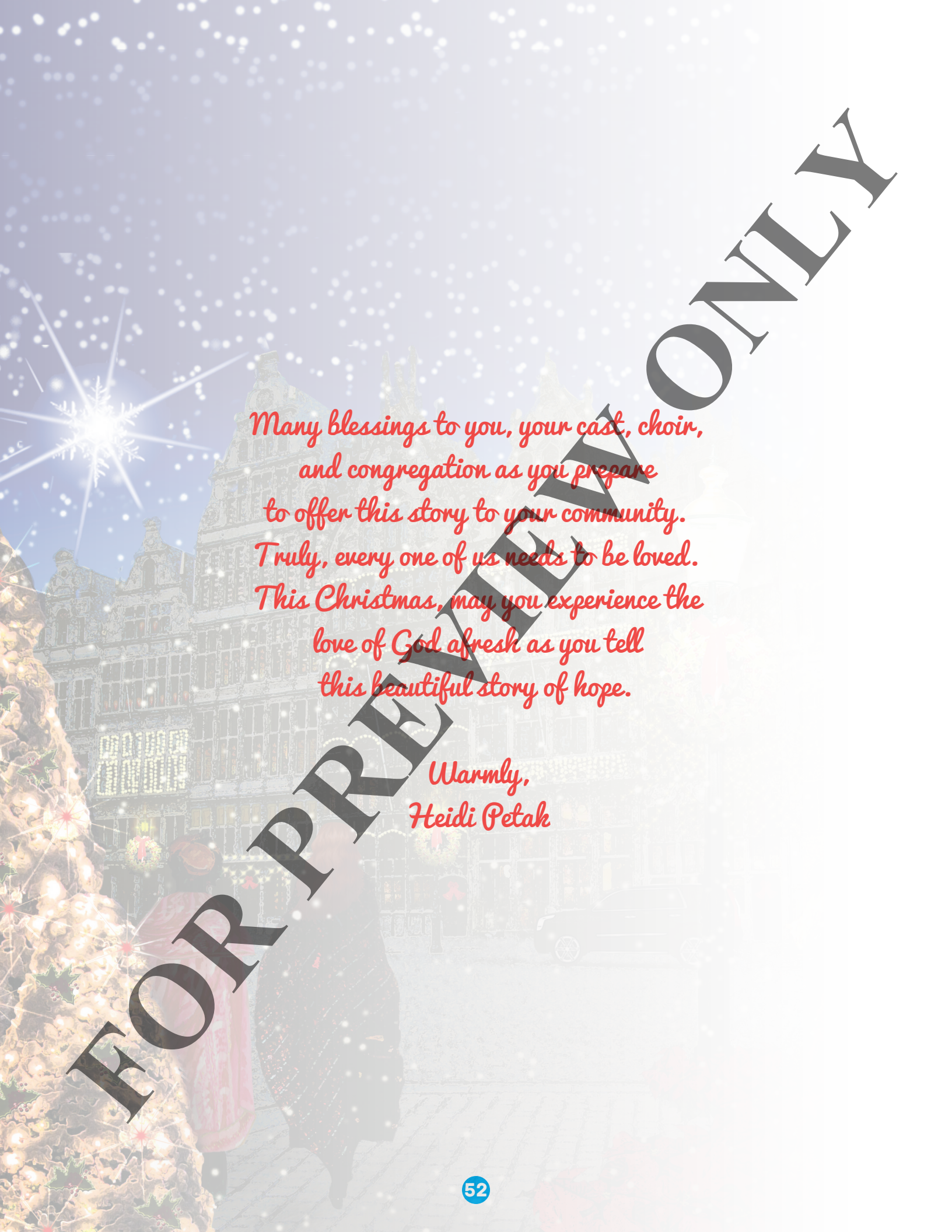


NOTES

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*Many blessings to you, your cast, choir,
and congregation as you prepare
to offer this story to your community.
Truly, every one of us needs to be loved.
This Christmas, may you experience the
love of God afresh as you tell
this beautiful story of hope.*

*Warmly,
Heidi Petak*