

## “A Father’s Love” (2007)

### Scene 1: December 18<sup>th</sup>, One week before Christmas; Outside Jackson’s Department Store

(After Overture, **CURTAIN OPENS** on “Outdoor Scene.” *Alice and Katie enter from SL. Katie is carrying a bundle of newspapers in a bag over shoulder*)

**Alice:** Thanks for walking me to work, Katie.

**Katie:** Sure, mom. Gotta get an early start if I’m going to sell all of these papers!

**Alice:** You won’t have any trouble. You’re a great salesman, honey.

**Katie:** I learned from the best.

**Alice:** If only that were true. I’ll see you after work. I love you!

**Katie:** Love you, mom! (*yelling to crowd, selling the papers*) Homesboro Post!

#### 1. Song: Merry Christmas To You

(*Katie speaks during 3 breaks in the song – m. 32-40, m.44-46, and m.60-61*)

(*At end of song, Alice and Katie are on opposite sides of the stage. Katie is selling papers to the crowd. Alice is talking with Pastor Sam.*)

**Alice:** Hey Pastor Sam, good morning – what are you doing down here?

**Sam:** Well, hello there, Alice. I’m here to talk to a (*looking at a note*)...Mr. Seldon?

**Alice:** Maxwell?!

**Sam:** That’s right.

**Alice:** Oh...I’ll be praying for you, pastor. Maxwell is...well, you’ll see. Is there something *I* could help you with?

**Sam:** (*chuckling*) Well, I appreciate that, Alice, but I have to speak with the store manager directly. I’d like to have our church come sing some carols here next week.

**Alice:** That's a wonderful idea. We sure could use some Christmas spirit around here. This is my first Christmas working at Jackson's and I've never seen anything like it. Noisy crowds, frustrated shoppers and more money than you and I could count!

**Sam:** 'Tis the season, right? Hopefully we'll be able to remind some folks what Christmas is all about!

**Alice:** I can't wait. Hey, make sure you talk to Katie – I'm sure she'd love to join you. She started singing Christmas carols the day after Thanksgiving!

*(Cut to Katie on opposite side. Addressing crowd as **Harry** approaches)*

**Katie:** Homesboro Post! Get 'em while they're hot. *(sells papers to a few)*

**Harry:** Hello there, young lady. Great day for selling papers!

**Katie:** I sure hope so. With only one week left until Christmas, I'm going to need all the money I can get.

**Harry:** Well...money's nice. But it's not everything. Just don't let that be your focus this Christmas.

**Katie:** Yes, sir. You're right.

**Harry:** Please, call me Harry.

**Katie:** *(shaking hands)* Nice to meet you, Harry. I'm Katie.

**Harry:** You know, I don't believe I've seen you around here before.

**Katie:** Oh, no. I have my own paper route, but my bike has been broken for a few days now, so I decided to *(energetically)* "go where the people are"! And what better place than Jackson's Department Store? Do you work here?

**Harry:** *(chuckling, drawing attention to his clothes)* Hehe...not exactly. I prefer to roam around, finding where I can be of help. But I do like to come here and just watch the people. Lots of interesting people around here.

**Katie:** Sounds like a lot of fun.

**Harry:** It is. *(pause)* Tell you what...if you're going to be coming by here for a few days, why don't you bring your bicycle over and I'll see if I can help you fix it. I'm pretty good at that stuff.

**Katie:** Oh, ok. Maybe I will.

*(Maxwell and employees start down center aisle)*

**Harry:** And speaking of interesting people, I think I see a good sale headed this way. I know a little something about Maxwell and sales. Try some tough negotiation. He can't resist it.

**Katie:** *(looking off down center aisle, not aware that Harry disappears quickly)* Ok. I'll try that. Thanks Mr...Harry?

**Maxwell:** Look sharp! Step lively, minions. The store opens in a few minutes and we don't want to miss one minute of sales today. *(On stage, addressing employees)* And remember, Jackson's means quality! Jackson's means quantity! Jackson's means "make lots and lots of money or I will *fire* you".

**Dixie:** You can't fire us, Maxy.

**Maxwell:** *(frantic)* That doesn't mean I won't try! *(collecting self)* I apologize for that outburst. You may respect me again. Subordinates, gather 'round *(no one moves)* Thank you. Observe. *(motioning towards Katie)* Notice this fine example of American entrepreneurial enterprise in action. Now notice how Maxwell Q. Seldon exploits this fine example of entrepreneurial enterprise in action with shrewd negotiation. *(to Katie)* Excuse me, miss. Now, what special deal are you prepared to make me so I won't take my nickel to another merchant?

**Katie:** *(hesitant to negotiate at first)* How... much would you like to pay?

**Maxwell:** *(caught off guard)* Seriously? One nickel.

**Katie:** A quarter!

**Maxwell:** The paper only costs a nickel!

**Katie:** Thirty cents it is then.

**Maxwell:** You can't go up in price when you're negotiating! Where'd you...

**Katie:** *(interrupting)* Forty cents. That's my special V.I.P. customer rate. That's as high as I can go.

**Maxwell:** V.I.P.? FIFTY CENTS! That's my final offer!

**Katie:** Deal! *(sells paper)* Pleasure doing business with you, sir. *(exits)*

**Maxwell:** *(realizing what just happened)* Let me explain what just happened here. I was not "taken for a ride" – I was simply demonstrating the type of sales technique I

want you all to employ. Remember, we make customers buy things they never knew they wanted with money they never knew they had. It's a mission of mercy... it really is.

**Alice:** (*joining the staff, with Pastor Sam*) Good morning, Maxwell.

**Maxwell:** Ah, Mrs. Garfield. Late again, as usual.

**Alice:** Maxwell, I've been waiting for you to arrive to open the store!

**Maxwell:** That's no excuse. And who do you have here? One of your customers already returning some merchandise, no doubt.

**Sam:** Hello, Maxwell. I'm Pastor Sam from Homesboro Baptist Church. I was wondering if I could have a minute of your time?

**Maxwell:** Oh, yes father...I'm sure the store will make its standard contribution if you'll just talk...

**Sam:** Oh, no. I'm not looking for a donation. I wanted to talk to you about our church possibly singing outside the store next week. Add a little Christmas cheer.

**Maxwell:** Listen, Rabbi, we've got plenty of Christmas cheer on every shelf and in all of our cash registers. But, if you've got your heart set on it, you're gonna have to take it up with the Big Guy.

**Sam:** (*Looks towards the sky*)

**Maxwell:** The *other* one. Jackson Jr. While *I am* the Assistant Company Owner...

**Dixie:** Assistant TO the Company Owner...

**Maxwell:** Whatever...those are his decisions. Stop by next week, Padre and present your case, ok? Stanley, get that door open! (*to the crowd, pushing in*) And the rest of you shoppers, the store will be open in a few minutes. Back...get back you wild dogs!

**CURTAIN CLOSES**

## **2. Musical Interlude – “Packages”**

### **Changes to inside the store**

**Scene 2: December 21<sup>st</sup>; Outdoor park, side stage left** (*Side Lights up after Interlude*)  
(*Harry is sitting on a park bench with a bag of bread, tossing it out. Katie enters, humming a Christmas song*)

**Katie:** Good morning, sir. Would you like to buy a... Harry?

**Harry:** Katie! Good to see you again. What are you doing out here? I thought your bicycle wasn't working too well?

**Katie:** (*with a knowing tone*) I thought so, too. But yesterday, I had it parked outside Jackson's and at the end of the day, *someone* had fixed it up.

**Harry:** Oh, is that so?

**Katie:** Yep. Must've been someone who was "good at the kind of thing". Know anyone like that?

**Harry:** Oh, alright. You caught me. I just couldn't stand the thought of you not being able to sell your papers properly. Consider it an early Christmas present.

**Katie:** Thank you so much. (*pause*) What are you doing out here?

**Harry:** Just spending some time enjoying God's creation and helping out some of my friends (*indicates bag of bread*).

**Katie:** I like you, Harry. You seem like the only person who isn't running around like a crazy person around Christmas. Must be nice.

**Harry:** I think Christmas is too special of an occasion to rush through it. Wherever I am at Christmas, I just feel like I need slow down and remember why it is and what it is we're celebrating. And to be thankful for what God has given me – regardless of how great or how little it may be.

**Katie:** Yeah. Mom and I don't have much, but I'm thankful that we have each other.

**Harry:** That's the most important thing. Never forget to appreciate your family.

**Katie:** Do you have family, Harry?

**Harry:** (*sadder*) I did, once. A long time ago.

**Katie:** My dad died in the war, about ten years ago.

**Harry:** I'm sorry to hear that. But I think he would be very proud of you. You've made this old man's Christmas.

**Katie:** Thanks, Harry. (*collecting papers and bag*) I better get going. Lots of papers to sell today. Do you live around here?

**Harry:** (*hesitant*) In a manner of speaking. I roam.

**Katie:** That's right. Well, see ya later (*Leaves a newspaper on the bench*).

**Harry:** Wait! You forgot one.

**Katie:** Consider it an early Christmas present. (*exits*)

(*Harry opens the paper and begins reading as lights go out. Exits*)

### **Scene 3: December 21<sup>st</sup>; Inside Jackson's Department Store**

(As **CURTAINS OPEN**, lights come up on interior of store. **Employees** are at stations, preparing for the day)

**Maxwell:** People, I cannot stress to you how important these next four days are. In just a few minutes, these aisles will be filled with shoppers, *begging* us to take their money. Let's see if we can't assist them, ok?

(**Pastor Sam** enters for store entrance)

**Maxwell:** (*politely, until he realizes who it is*) I'm sorry, sir, but the store does not open for another... oh, it's you. What are you doing here, Friar?

**Sam:** Hello, Maxwell. After our conversation the other day, I took your advice and made an appointment to meet with Jackson Jr.. He instructed me to meet him right now on..."the main deck"?

**Maxwell:** Main deck? THE MAIN DECK?

**Sam:** Do you know where that is?

**Maxwell:** You're standing in it right now.

(**Sam** checks his shoes)

**Maxwell:** Everyone! We have an emergency in the store! Code...something. Jackson Jr. is on his way in...NOW. All of you - front and center. (*in disgust*) Dixie, run a comb through your hair.

**Jackson:** (*loud boatswain's whistle*) AHHOOOYYY!! Jackson arriving at oh-nine-hundred hours off the starboard bow.

**Maxwell:** Great! He's early.

**Alice:** What do we do?

**Maxwell:** Quick! Display the merchandise. Look like you want to sell something.

**Sam:** But I *don't* want to sell anything. I just want people to receive...

**Maxwell:** Great. Receive (*hands Sam some merchandise*). Now everyone...sing!

(*No one can come up with anything. Alice finally starts them on "Happy Birthday"*)

**Maxwell:** (*to Alice*) Not the best choice.

**Jackson:** If this is a surprise party, there has been a gross miscalculation. Are you sure you have my correct birthdate in the Captain's Log, Dixie?

**Dixie:** September 17<sup>th</sup>, every year.

**Jackson:** Well, if anyone thinks today is September 17<sup>th</sup>, they're sadly mistaken. I have been down here since dawn, double-checking the inventory and I expect each of you to meet your quota and unload your cargo. Battle stations! *(to Alice)* To port Mrs. Garfield. No...the other port. *(to Maxwell)* Maxwell! A word, please.

**Maxwell:** Aye aye, sir. *(they walk around surveying the "store")*

**Dixie:** *(to Alice)* Don't sweat it honey. The boss always gets like this around Christmas.

**Alice:** I still get so confused, Dixie. Starboard, port, stern...It's been almost a year and I still can't keep them straight.

**Dixie:** It's been over five years for most of us and we still mess it up. I don't understand it. He was only in the Navy for five months during the war. Never saw a day of action. Just sat on a cargo ship in San Diego.

**Alice:** Well, he certainly runs a tight ship, here.

**Dixie:** He comes by it honest. From what I hear, Old Man Jackson was just as bad. So now, everything is done *(imitating Grogan)* "Exactly the way my father did it when he found Jackson's 42 years ago." Carrying on a legacy like that, it's amazing this place is still in business.

**Jackson:** *(returning to center stage with Maxwell)* And another thing, Maxwell...

**Maxwell:** Sir, if this is about putting the Christmas tree out front, I thought it would be best *not* to as it would block entry to the store.

**Jackson:** Well, then, if you didn't do it, who did?

**Maxwell:** I wasn't even aware it was out...Sir...

**Jackson:** And did you repair those merchandise shelves like I ordered?

**Maxwell:** That was first on my agenda today, Sir.

**Jackson:** Interesting...because it's already been done! How am I supposed to run a tight ship if my second in command has no knowledge nor control of the day to day workings of the crew?



**Maxwell:** (*stammering*) I...uh...I'm not sure...

**Jackson:** One more slip-up, Lt. Seldon and it will be back to the galley where you started. Do I make myself clear?

**Maxwell:** (*dejected*) Aye-aye, sir.

**Jackson:** (*noticing Sam*) It appears we have a stowaway.

**Sam:** Good morning, Mr. Jackson. I'm Pastor Sam. We spoke on the phone.

**Jackson:** Ah, yes. You're the one with the singers. Well, just have them stand post out of the way of the shoppers and keep it "peppy".

**Sam:** Peppy?

**Jackson:** Yes...peppy. Spirited. Full of zest. Pastor, I want people energized and in the mood to truly experience Christmas...which means lots of business for my department store.

**Sam:** I think we view Christmas from different perspectives. You see it as a season of selling; I see it as a season of receiving.

**Maxwell:** Selling...receiving...what difference does it make – as long as they come in the right order, right sir?

**Sam:** A big difference, actually. The only gift that really matters is free.

**Jackson:** A free gift? That makes about as much sense as a screen door on a submarine.

**Sam:** It's a good thing Jesus didn't share your philosophy.

**Jackson:** That's because Jesus didn't know how to market Christmas. I do. I run a successful business here, pastor, exactly the way my father did when he founded Jackson's forty-two years ago. You see, this is not a store...it's a vessel – a well-oiled machine and I'm the commander. If you don't get on board, it's every man for himself. (*to the employees*) And the rest of you! I want your sails hoisted and your rudders straight. It's full SALES ahead!

**All:** (*snapping to attention*) Aye-aye.

### **3. Song: The Green Stuff**

*During a break in the music:*

**Sam:** The green stuff?! Your only motivation is to make money? Mr. Jackson, you can't mean that. Not at Christmas.

**Jackson:** Especially at Christmas. It's the biggest sales season of the year! Yes sir, my father would be proud!

*(Resume singing)*

*During 2<sup>nd</sup> break in music:*

**Alice:** Mr. Jackson, I know this is my first Christmas here, but couldn't we use some of our "surplus" to help our community this time of year?

**Jackson:** What? Rewrite the charter? Not on my command. Are you trying to incite a mutiny?

**Alice:** Oh, no sir...I...

**Jackson:** Then get back on board. Everyone to their posts. Rough seas ahead!

*Resume singing*

*(At end of song, employees freeze. CURTAIN CLOSES)*

### **4. Musical interlude – "Green Stuff" reprise**

**Scene 4: Later that evening; Alice and Katie's house: side stage right** (*Side lights up after Interlude*)

(There is a table and some chairs in the "room". *Alice* is sitting, exhausted, with her head on the table when *Katie* walks in)

**Katie:** (*entering*) Hey mom, are you ok?

**Alice:** (*looking up*) Hey, honey. Just a little seasick.

**Katie:** Huh?

**Alice:** It was just a really long...really strange...day. How was your day?

**Katie:** Great. I sold all of my papers. It was nice having my bike back.

**Alice:** Wait, how did you fix it?

**Katie:** Harry did it for me.

**Alice:** (*with concern*) Harry? Who is he?

**Katie:** It's ok, mom. I met him outside your store a few days ago. He's really nice – kinda reminds me of Grandpa. I keep running into him and he's always out doing something to help out, wherever he is. He fixed my bike without me even knowing it.

**Alice:** Hmm. That is nice. Where does he work?

**Katie:** I don't think he works anywhere. He just "roams".

**Alice:** Must have a lot of money to be able to do that.

**Katie:** Actually, mom, I think he's homeless. (*Alice looks surprised*) He hasn't said anything about it, but...I don't know...I feel really bad for him, too, because it's Christmas and he doesn't have any family.

**Alice:** Well, do you think he might like to join us for dinner tomorrow night?

**Katie:** He might. I'll try to find him and let him know he's invited. Thanks, mom.

**Alice:** Don't thank me...thank my boss.

**Katie:** Why?

**Alice:** Let's just say, he reminded me of what the TRUE meaning of Christmas is. It would do us some good to share what God's given us with someone else this Christmas.

**5. Song: A Merry Christmas Is**

*(during song, after "...glorious giving and always believing that love lives all year long.."*  
*CURTAIN OPENS and Townspeople sing*

*(At end of song, CURTAIN CLOSES; Alice and Katie hug. Lights go out on side stage. Exit)*

**6. musical interlude – "A Merry Christmas Is" reprise**

**Scene 5: December 23<sup>rd</sup>; Outdoor park: Side Stage left** (*after Interlude, Side lights up*)

(*Harry is sitting on the park bench as Katie enters, humming*)

**Harry:** There's my favorite papergirl.

**Katie:** I had a feeling I'd find you here. (plop down)

**Harry:** How's business going? Making lots of sales?

**Katie:** Oh, yeah. Especially outside of Jackson's. With Christmas only two days away, the crowds keep getting bigger and bigger. And people who normally don't want a paper buy one just because someone else is!

**Harry:** (*chuckling*) Unfortunately, that seems to be what Christmas does to people nowadays. Seems like Christmas can bring out the best *and* the worst in people.

**Katie:** I think you're right.

**Harry:** But, you know, I've found that when you look around, there's a whole lot more good that goes on around this time of the year. Everyone seems more friendly and a whole lot more giving to each other. I like that because it reminds me of how much God has given me – most importantly, Jesus. Yeah...I'd say that even with the shopping crowds and all the busyness, Christmas is definitely my favorite season.

**Katie:** Mine, too, Harry. There's so much to love about Christmas. The cookies...

**Harry:** ...lights...

**Katie:** ...time with family...

**Harry:** ...getting together with friends...

**Katie:** ...singing Christmas carols...(STAND)

**Harry:** Well, I don't know about Christmas carols. But everything else is certainly wonderful.

**Katie:** Oh, no, Harry. I *love* singing Christmas songs. You can't help but be joyful when you're singing them. (*pause*) Harry, when is the last time you sang a Christmas carol?

**Harry:** (*thinking*) 1927.

**Katie:** What! Harry, that's a long time...and you're a lot older than I thought you were.

**Harry:** (*playing*) Thanks a lot!

**Katie:** Come on, Harry. You don't know what you've been missing.

**7. Song: A Christmas Carol** (*Katie sings solo; Harry joins her on 2<sup>nd</sup> Vs & Chorus; mics off & remain off when choir starts to sing*)

**Katie:** (*singing*) They remind us of Christmas past, with their sweet music that always lasts

**Harry:** (*laughing*) Christmas past! What do you know of Christmas past?

**Katie:** Well...probably not nearly as much as you do

**Harry:** (*singing*) Christmas carols, they speak to me, because their message will always be!

(*both sing Chorus 2*)

(*CURTAIN OPENS during 2<sup>nd</sup> Chorus "...more than anything"; choir joins in singing. After the song, CURTAIN REMAINS OPEN, though LIGHTS OUT on main stage.*)

**Harry:** Thank you, Katie. That was a lot more fun than I remember.

**Katie:** Told you. Hey, my mom and I want you to join us for dinner tonight and so you have to come, ok?

**Harry:** Sounds like I have no choice. I would love to.

**Katie:** Great! Meet me around six at the park?

**Harry:** See you then...and thank you.

(*Katie smiles and exits. Harry looks out, smirks thoughtfully and walks off whistling melody to "A Christmas Carol"*)

*LIGHTS OUT on Side Stage; Spotlight gets ready to come up on Jackson*

**Scene 6: December 23<sup>rd</sup>; Jackson's Department Store – interior**

*(SPOTLIGHT on Jackson, standing at edge of center stage – lines spoken with cued music)*

**Jackson:** *(following cued notes)* What a great day! *(note)* There's money in the air – *(note)* I can smell it. *(note)* Ready? *(note)* And five...four...*(note)* three...two...*(blows boatswain whistle)*

**8. Song: Christmas Rush**

*(On whistle, LIGHTS UP as Shoppers are already in the middle of shopping)*

**Return Guy:** Excuse me, but where's the return department?

***Break 1:***

**Return Guy:** Excuse me, but where's the return department?

**Alice:** Back behind the appliances, between sporting goods and lawn care. If you hit women's clothing...you've gone too far. *(to Dixie)* Look at all of these shoppers, Dixie.

**Dixie:** Don't you love it?

**Alice:** Love it? I keep getting run over – I haven't sold a single thing yet.

**Dixie:** That just means you have to push a little.

**Alice:** What do you mean?

**Dixie:** I'll show ya.

*(Singing continues)*

***Break 2:***

**Return Guy:** *(to Maxwell)* Excuse me, is this the return department?

**Maxwell:** HA! Return department...those words aren't even in my vocabulary.

**Return Guy:** But you just...

**Maxwell:** Be gone!

- Jackson:** Maxwell!
- Maxwell:** Yes sir?
- Jackson:** What was that all about?
- Maxwell:** Just wishing one of our loyal customers a Merry Christmas. *(yelling off towards Return Guy)* And a Happy New Year as well, sir! *(back to Jackson/Grogan/Herzog/Holtz)* Very busy today, Captain.
- Jackson:** Indeed. So busy that you forgot to make my morning coffee correctly?
- Maxwell:** *(defensive)* What? I didn't even *make* your coffee this morning!
- Jackson:** That's a shame. Because it was delicious!
- Maxwell:** It was?
- Jackson:** I was going to give you a promotion!
- Maxwell:** You were?
- Jackson:** Do you know who was responsible for it?
- Maxwell:** No, sir.
- Jackson:** Well, do you know who repaired my office door?
- Maxwell:** No, sir.
- Jackson:** Do you know who cleaned the warehouse?
- Maxwell:** No, sir.
- Jackson:** Do you know *anything*?
- Maxwell:** No, sir.
- Jackson:** That's becoming abundantly clear. It's also clear to me that my sales manager has no idea what is going on in my store. Shape up or find yourself another vessel to sink!
- Maxwell:** *(dejected)* Aye-aye.

*(Singing continues)*



**Break 3:**

**Return Guy:** Excuse me, is this the return department?

**All:** NO!

**Pastor Sam:** Good morning, Maxwell.

**Maxwell:** *(turning, with merchandise – excited)* Yes sir, we have...*(recognizing)* oh, it's you. What can I do for you, Bishop?

**Pastor Sam:** We've got the choir here and we're ready to go.

**Maxwell:** *(notices "choir")* Yikes. Can you tell them to dance or something – anything to distract from the singing?

**Pastor Sam:** They don't really care to...

**Maxwell:** Fine, fine. Hey, why don't you have them display some of the merchandise while they're standing around. Great, thanks.

**Pastor Sam:** That's not really what we're here for. I think we'll be fine as long as...

*(Carolers sing)*

*(Singing continues)*

**Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge, everyone continues singing their parts while Jackson speaks over top (measure 169-177)**

**Jackson:** Ladies and gentlemen, "Jackson's" has everything you need for the gift-giving season. Remember, nothing says, "Merry Christmas", like spending all you have on the ones you love. And we're here to help. For the next ten minutes, everything in the store is ten-percent off!

*Singing continues*

*(When song ends, everyone freezes and CURTAIN CLOSES)*

**9. Interlude – "The Christmas Rush Reprise" #1**

**Scene 7: December 23<sup>rd</sup>; Alice/Katie's House – side stage right** (*Side lights up after Interlude*)

(*LIGHTS UP as Alice, Harry and Katie are at the dinner table*)

**Katie:** (*in mid story*)...so mom takes the rope and, trusting her cousins, believes that since calves are much smaller than cows, they must move even slower... (*laughing throughout*) ...and then they let go of the calf...(continues to laugh)and it drags her *all* over the farm!

(*All laugh*)

**Alice:** In my defense, they told me to *never* let go of the rope...and I never did.

(*All laugh*)

**Harry:** It certainly sounds like you had an eventful childhood, Alice. (*Katie sit*)

**Alice:** You would think so, the way Katie tells it. (*begins to clean up dishes*)  
Harry, would you like some more pie?

**Harry:** Oh, no thank you, Alice. I think I've had enough to last me until next Christmas.

**Alice:** How about some coffee, then?

**Harry:** That would be wonderful.

**Katie:** Hey Harry, since tomorrow is Christmas Eve and I only have one more day to earn some Christmas money, would you like to keep me company?

**Harry:** Well, I do have some things to take care of in the afternoon, but I suppose I could pencil you in.

**Katie:** Great!

**Alice:** Speaking of which, young lady, you have a busy day tomorrow. Why don't you go get ready for bed.

**Katie:** Alright mom. (*hugging Harry*) Goodnight, Harry. See you tomorrow.  
(*exits*)

**Harry:** Goodnight. (*to Alice, once Katie is gone*) You have a wonderful daughter.

**Alice:** (*handing Harry coffee*) God has really blessed me with her. She has such a good heart.

**Harry:** And a good work ethic. I don't think I've ever met someone her age who works so hard.

**Alice:** And that's by her own choosing. Our church takes up an offering every Christmas Eve that goes to help other families in need. Katie told me that this year she wanted to be able to help out as much as she could – even if that meant working on her Christmas break.

**Harry:** She's a wonderful young woman. Alice, thank you so much for a delicious dinner and your hospitality. This has been one of the best Christmases I've had in a long time.

**Alice:** It was my pleasure. Katie has really enjoyed spending time with you. I thought she'd never find someone who seems to care about the true meaning of Christmas as much as she does. And it's been nice to have another person to share it with. I know Christmas is still hard on Katie without her father.

**Harry:** *(with sadness)* I can relate.

**Alice:** *(remembering)* That's right. Katie told me that you've also experienced a ...family loss?

**Harry:** Well, it's a little more complicated than that. I don't want to trouble you.

**Alice:** It's no trouble.

**Harry:** *(pause)* A long time ago, I was married and had a son – and for awhile, everything was good. But then, business picked up and in a short time we had become very wealthy. Life became all about money. I gave up spending time with my family to spend it at work. And this went on for years...until one Christmas Eve, my wife suddenly passed away. *(beginning to break down)* I received the news at work...I wasn't even with my family on Christmas Eve. After the funeral...somehow, work just didn't seem all that important anymore – *nothing* seemed important anymore. So, one day...I left.

**Alice:** What about your son?

**Harry:** When my wife died, I realized how many mistakes I had made, particularly with my family. I couldn't bring myself to face him. He was older and I didn't think he would even care. I left without saying goodbye.

**Alice:** How long ago was that?

**Harry:** Twenty years. *(sit)* I haven't spoken to my son in *twenty* years. *(pause)* When I left, I gave up everything: the house, the job...all of it was a reminder of what I

had put before my family. And when my family was gone, those things didn't bring me any comfort. I ran away from everything.

**Alice:** How did you end up here in Homesboro?

**Harry:** Ten years after Esther died, I found myself sitting in a church service on Christmas Eve. The preacher talked about God's love and how no matter what mistakes I've made, God's love and forgiveness is clearly seen in Jesus. I had never heard that before. That Christmas Eve, I asked Christ to come into my life. Since then, I've just been wandering around, wherever the Lord leads me and do whatever I can to help others and remind them of the blessings God has given them. I've been in Homesboro for a month now.

**Alice:** I'm sorry to hear all of this, Harry. But, I'm so thankful that you have a relationship with Christ.

**Harry:** Oh, me too. It's been the only thing that's kept me going all of these years.

**Alice:** Have you thought about contacting your son?

**Harry:** Only every day.(pause) I've tried to write to him a few times, but after all I've done to him, I don't even know what to say. How can I expect him to forgive me after all of these years?

**Alice:** Start by remembering that God has forgiven you – and we've all done far worse to God than you've done to your son. At Christmas, we come face to face with the truth that God loves us. Maybe it's time to let your son know that.

### **10. Song: That's When You'll Know You're Home**

*(As song is ending)*

**Harry** Thanks for dinner, Alice

**Alice:** Harry, will you ok tonight? Do you have somewhere to go?

**Harry:** I have a place. But thank you for asking. I better get on my way. Thank you for everything. Merry Christmas.

**Alice:** Merry Christmas. *(Harry exits and Alice sings again)*

*(LIGHTS OUT at end of song)*

### **11. Interlude – “That's When You'll Know You're Home” Reprise #1**

**Scene 8: December 23<sup>rd</sup>, night; Jackson's Department Store - interior**

*(After Interlude, CURTAIN OPENS; HALF-LIGHTS UP on stage – minimal lighting to indicate nighttime and closed store. Store is more “decorated” for Christmas. Harry is center stage working on putting up decorations and whistling/humming Christmas songs. Harry notices that Alice is unlocking store doors and entering. Harry hides behind her “counter”. Alice is visibly surprised by how the store now looks and is checking the place out, moving towards center stage. She now stands where Harry had been working)*

**Alice:** Hello? Is anyone here?

**Harry:** *(appearing)* Hello, Alice. What are you doing here so late?

**Alice:** *(very startled)* Harry! You scared me to death! I a gift for Katy and came to ... wait...wh-what are you doing here?

**Harry:** *(hesitantly)* Welcome to my humble abode.

**Alice:** You live here?

**Harry:** Well, in the attic. It's not much, but no one ever goes up there, it's warm and I have free reign of the store at night.

**Alice:** *(looking around and putting it together)* Are you the one who's been fixing this place up?

**Harry:** I do what little I can around here to help. It's not much, but I enjoy it.

**Alice:** *(indicating decorations)* But, this isn't little, Harry – this is going to be noticed!

**Harry:** Everyone will be so busy with the shoppers tomorrow, no one will think too much about it. Besides, this place really needed some Christmas spirit.

**Alice:** You've certainly added that. But if you get caught, you could get into a lot of trouble.

**Harry:** You're right. I can't stay here forever and not expect someone to find me. I guess it's time to move on.

**Alice:** Wait. It's Christmas. You're fine tonight and with the holiday, no one will find you. Stay here for now, but when we get past Christmas, Katie and I will help find you a more suitable place to live.

**Harry:** Alice, I don't want to put you in the middle of this.

**Alice:** Nonsense. It's the least I can do. (*starts to exit*) Just stay here and we'll work something out. And Harry...(*Pointing to a wall*) You missed a spot. A wreath would look great there.

**Harry:** I have just the one. Thanks, Alice.

(*Alice exits as Harry resumes working. Music swells. CURTAIN CLOSES*)

**12. Interlude – “That’s When You’ll Know You’re Home” Reprise #2**

**Scene 9a: December 24<sup>th</sup>, afternoon; Jackson's Department Store, interior**  
*(After Interlude, CURTAIN OPENS)*

**13. Song: "The Christmas Rush Reprise" #2**

*(near end of vs. 1, Maxwell runs onstage-SR-with Harry in tow)*

**Maxwell:** Stop!

*(Song is interrupted and Police enter)*

**Jackson:** Maxwell! Why is the *policeman* here?

**Maxwell:** I called him.

**Jackson:** There better be a very good explanation for this.

**Maxwell:** A very good one, sir. I have only your and the company's best interests in mind. *(indicating Harry)* I found this ... vagrant... hiding out in the attic.

**Jackson:** The attic? What was he doing up there?

**Maxwell:** From the looks of things, sir, he has been living up there... and for quite some time.

**Alice:** *(frantic)* I'm sure it's not what it looks like.

**Maxwell:** I assure you, it is. That's why I called the police, sir. This situation must be dealt with seriously.

**Jackson:** I agree. Officer, arrest this man.

**Alice:** NO, Wait! Mr. Jackson, don't you think that's a bit harsh?

**Maxwell:** Harsh? He is a criminal! He's trespassed, probably stolen and who knows what else he's done when he was alone in the store?

**Alice:** *He's* the one who has been fixing and decorating this place!

**Maxwell:** *(Pause)* Alice...how do you know that?

**Alice:** Well...I...

**Jackson:** Mrs. Garfield...were you aware that this man was living in the store?

**Alice:** Yes.

**Jackson:** *(to the Police)* Officer, take this man away. *(to Alice)* Mrs. Garfield...you're fired.

**Harry:** That won't be necessary. I'm not pressing charges.

**Maxwell:** Who are you to press charges?

**Harry:** I'm Harold Jackson. I own this store.

*(Everyone responds with surprise)*

**Jackson:** *(pause)* Dad?

**Harry:** Hello, son. It's been a long time.

**Jackson:** *(to Police)* I'm sorry to trouble you, Officer. We have everything under control. *(To crowd)* Ladies and gentlemen, Jackson's is closing early today. Please make your final purchases at this time. *(All exit, leaving only Jackson, Harry, Maxwell, Alice, Dixie and Pastor Sam on stage)* What are you doing here, Dad?

**Harry:** Well, I came back to see you.

**Jackson:** Why?

**Harry:** I owe you an apology. Son, after your mother died...I had no idea how to go on living. I've made a lot of mistakes in my life...a whole lot. I didn't appreciate my family when I had you, I let this store become my life, I passed a terrible love of money on to you...but my biggest regret...is leaving you.

**Jackson:** It took you twenty years to realize this?

**Harry:** No. But it took me twenty years to find the courage to tell you. After I left, I heard about God's forgiveness and love for me, despite everything I had done. I accepted Christ and I'm trying to do the best I can to live my life in a way that honors the Lord. I know the Lord has forgiven me for what I've done...I was just afraid that you wouldn't.

**Jackson:** *(sarcastic)* Why would that be? Could it be because you left your son with your responsibilities or that you didn't even stop to think about me *once* before you left? And now you show up here hoping that I would say everything's ok so you don't feel so bad?

**Harry:** That's not it at all. Son, I've been living in the attic of the store and hanging around Homesboro just to have a chance to see you. I did what I could around the store to try and help you, even if you never knew it was me. *(pause)* I came back



because I don't want to see you waste your life, like I did, worrying about things that have no significance, instead of what really matters. I love you and I'm so sorry for everything that I've done to you.

**Jackson:** (*cold, unapologetic*) I'm sorry, too. I'm sorry that you came back here for nothing. For twenty years I've lived without you and I've been fine. But I'm glad to see you're doing well and in good health. So, thank you for coming by. Now, if you don't mind...get out of my store.

*(Alice and Dixie exit SL with Harry. Maxwell exits stage right. Jackson goes to lock "front door" while Pastor Sam stays center stage)*

**Pastor Sam:** Well, that could've gone better.

**Jackson:** Excuse me?

**Pastor Sam:** That whole conversation. I am sure this isn't the reunion your father hoped it would be.

**Jackson:** Believe me, I didn't enjoy it as much as I appeared to.

**Pastor Sam:** Oh, I can imagine that was difficult. I won't pretend to know the kind of hurt you've experienced through your relationship with him.

**Jackson:** Imagine living with the hurt of being alone, abandoned with no one to help you.

**Pastor Sam:** I agree, that's not a situation I would like to experience, and I'm truly sorry that you've had to. (*Pause*) At the same time, imagine being a parent, living with the knowledge that you've made mistakes and causing the child that you love the pain you've gone through. That must have been a tough road for your father.

**Jackson:** Maybe. But that was his choice.

**Pastor Sam:** Well, we all make choices. Does that mean when we make bad ones, there's *never* any hope for making it right?

**Jackson:** I don't know. After twenty years, I don't think I'm able to forgive him.

**Pastor Sam:** Oh, you're able to. You just may not *want* to. And that's *your* choice.

**Jackson:** But why come back now? After all of this time? Why today?

**Pastor Sam:** Seems to me that this is what Christmas is all about.

**Jackson:** How do you suppose?

**Pastor Sam:** The way I see it, Christmas is all about a father trying to reconcile with his kids. Except, in this case, it was the children who left the Father. See, just like your dad, we all had messed up in our relationship with God and were going about wasting our lives. But God has so much love for us that even though we had turned our back on Him, He still came after us to fix that relationship. Jesus is that “fix”. At Christmas, we’re celebrating the fact that God took the first step and sent Jesus to pay the price for sin – yours and mine - that was keeping us from a relationship with Him. But love won’t force its own way. Each of us has to respond to the gift that He offers – the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

**Jackson:** (*sincere*) That’s a good sermon, preacher.

**Pastor Sam:** Thanks. It’s one of my favorites.

**Jackson:** I’m just not sure what to do with it.

**Pastor Sam:** Well, I think you need to remember that, just like your father, you’re not perfect. And if God, who *is* perfect, is able to forgive us, then forgiving each other really isn’t that tall of an order.

**Jackson:** (*considering*) You might be right, but after twenty years...that’s just something you don’t get over.

**Pastor Sam:** Maybe it would help to realize how much it took for your father to come back and take responsibility for your hurt and his mistakes. That’s not something I see too often, even in my line of work. If you ask me, there has to be something a whole lot bigger than a guilty conscience to get him to do that. Your father is not the same man who left you twenty years ago. (*pause*) Think about it. (*starts to exit*) I’ll see you at the service.

**Jackson:** Oh, Pastor, I have a lot to do this evening. I wasn’t planning on coming to church tonight.

**Pastor Sam:** You may not have been *planning* to come, but you’ll be there.

**Jackson:** (*defensive*) Oh, I will?

**Pastor Sam:** Yes. Because I’m going to pray that the Lord makes you miserable until you get this thing right with your father. Church can be a great place to start.

**Jackson:** You’re allowed to do that?

**Pastor Sam:** It’s one of the perks of the job. I’ll see you then, Jackson.

**Jackson:** See you later, Sam. (*Pastor Sam exits. CURTAIN CLOSES*)

#### **14. musical interlude – “A Merry Christmas Is” reprise #2**

**Scene 9b: December 24<sup>th</sup>, afternoon; Park bench, side stage left**

(After Interlude, LIGHTS UP on **Harry** sitting on park bench. **Alice** walks on carrying two cups of coffee.)

**Alice:** Hey, Harry. How you holding up?

**Harry:** I've been better, that's for sure. But, God is still good.

**Alice:** That's right. Here, I picked you up some coffee. Thought it might help.

**Harry:** Thank you. That's very kind of you.

**Alice:** Well, kindness is in short supply today. I'm sorry Mr. Jackson spoke to you the way he did. You didn't deserve that.

**Harry:** I'm not sure I agree with you there, Alice. After all I put him through, I actually expected much worse.

**Alice:** Still, I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do to help?

**Harry:** Just pray for him. I knew this wasn't going to be easy for me, but it has to be so much harder on him – having to think about all of the hurt...having to deal with it all over again...I would give anything to take it away.

**Alice:** I know you would. I will be happy to pray for him – and you. Would you like to come over to the house before the service?

**Harry:** Thank you for the invitation, but I think I'm just going to spend some time here for awhile. Would it be alright if I met you and Katie at church?

**Alice:** Of course. We'll see you this evening (*exits*).

**Harry:** See you then. (*praying*) Lord, I am overwhelmed with how good You are to me and I just want to thank you again for forgiving me of all the hurt I've caused in the past. I pray that you'll help Jr. forgive me as well. But Lord, even if that doesn't happen in my lifetime, *please* do whatever it takes to bring him into a relationship with You. Let him know that he can have peace with You through Your Son, Jesus and that I love him. Thank You, Lord, for everything.

(LIGHTS OUT)

## **Scene 10: Christmas Eve Service; Outside Jackson's**

(CURTAIN OPENS: "Choir" is on stage, with "Townspeople" on either side; during song, Jackson enters and stands by Nativity)

### **15. Song: O Come, Let Us Adore Him**

(Following song, *Pastor Sam* takes center stage, addressing audience)

**Pastor Sam:** We come this evening to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus. Normally, when we celebrate a birth, we give gifts to the one we're honoring, yet at Christmas, it's important to remember that the gift...the *greatest* gift ever given...was given to you and me. I consider it the "greatest gift" because nothing else has ever had the impact on our world or the significance in our lives than Jesus Christ – and God the Father offered Him to us, even though we never could deserve Him.

If Jesus had been just another good person, we would have no reason to celebrate Christmas. But Scripture tells us, in the book of John, that Jesus was so much more than that. Jesus has always existed, from the beginning, with God the Father and that the entire world was created through Him. John 1:14 is the reason that we celebrate tonight: "The Word (that is, Jesus Christ) became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth".

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came so that we could have peace with God...and peace with each other. He came so that we might know just how much God loves us that He would go to any lengths to bring us back into a relationship with Him. He came to reveal a love that can forgive and a power that is sufficient to save us from our sin.

At Christmastime, we celebrate the beginnings of our salvation – the birth of our Savior Jesus, who came and lived among us. Tonight, we remember how Christ came.

### **16. Song: God Has Come** - music intro begins

**Katie:** (coming center stage, with Bible)

Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was while they were there, that the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ, the

Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.”

*(Choir sings **God Has Come**; at m. 82... ”yonder breaks...”, Jackson moves across stage and hugs Harry.)*

*(Following song, **Pastor Sam** resumes center stage)*

**Pastor Sam:** Thank you for joining us this evening as we remember and celebrate our Savior Jesus. Because of Him, we can have the peace of knowing that our sins are forgiven and we have the victory over death because of the life, the love and the power of Jesus Christ. The apostle John tells us that, “The true light, who gives light to everyone, has coming into the world.” This Christmas, that light has come to brighten our darkness, to heal broken relationships and to give hope and direction for the road ahead. Jesus is the Light of the World!

### **17. Song: Look to the Light**

*(After song, CURTAIN CLOSES)*

### **18. Interlude: “Look to the Light” Reprise**

## **Scene 11: Christmas Day; Outside Jackson's**

*(After Interlude, CURTAIN OPENS; Townspeople are onstage. Pastor Sam is center stage, holding a note. Alice and Katie run on from SR)*

### **19. Song: Rejoice, He Is Born**

**Alice:** Hey, Sam, Merry Christmas.

**Pastor Sam:** Merry Christmas! What are you all doing here?

**Katie:** We got a note this morning asking us to be outside the store this morning.  
*(shows the note to Pastor Sam)*

**Pastor Sam:** I got the same one... what's going on?

*(Harry and Jackson walk on from SL)*

**Harry:** Merry Christmas! Thank you all for coming.

**Alice:** Are these notes from you?

**Jackson:** Indeed we did. Christmas is a time for counting your blessings...

**Harry:** *(to Katie)* Katie and Alice, you both showed me incredible kindness and encouraged me in ways you will never know. I had forgotten the joy of being a part of a family who loves each other. Please accept this as a small token of my appreciation.  
*(yelling offstage)* MAXWELL!

*(Maxwell and Dixie come in together pushing a brand new bicycle)*

**Katie:** A brand new bike! Thank you so much, Harry! *(hugs Harry)*

**Jackson:** This way, your mom doesn't have to worry about keeping up with your old. One. And it's the newest model the store carries. Maxwell helped us pick out the horn.

**Dixie:** And didn't even charge commission.

**Maxwell:** What can I say? I'm generous, good-hearted guy.

**Alice:** Who knew? Thank you, both. This is much too generous.

**Harry:** Well, when we thought about how good God has been to us, we realized that you have been our greatest blessing.

**Alice:** I know I speak for all of us when I say that we feel the same way about you. Even you, Mr. Jackson.

**Jackson:** Please, Alice, call me Harbiforth.

**Maxwell:** Why do you think I go by Harry?

*(Church Bells chime)*

**20. Underscore: I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day**

**Pastor Sam:** Are those...the church bells? Harry, did you fix those?

**Harry:** *(indicating Jackson)* We both did.

**Jackson:** Last night, we had a lot of catching up to do...and it never would've happened without you, Sam. It's the absolute least we could do to say thanks. *(shakes hands)*

**Harry:** And we were so moved by the love you all have for others that the best way we knew to honor it was to give back in kind.

**Jackson:** Sam, please accept this *sizeable* check on behalf of Jackson's for the community offering Katie worked so hard to support.

**Katie:** Mr. Jackson, Harry...thank you so much. This has been the best Christmas in a long time.

**Harry:** *(putting arm around Jackson and Katie)* It certainly has.

**21. Song: Carol Celebration**

*(After song, CURTAIN CLOSES, then reopens)*