

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

THE MUSICAL

BOOK AND LYRICS BY
JAHNNA BEECHAM

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
MALCOM HILLGARTNER

BASED ON THE PLAY BY
BARBARA ROBINSON

STAGE MANAGER'S SCRIPT

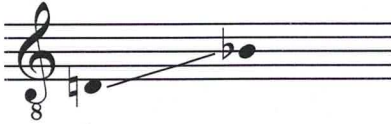
BROADWAY
LICENSING GLOBAL

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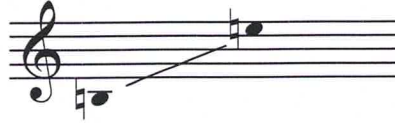
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Vocal Ranges

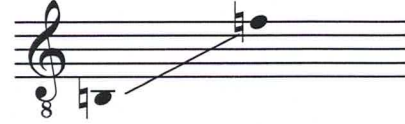
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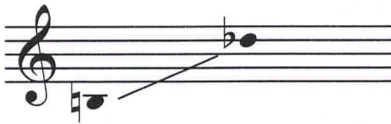
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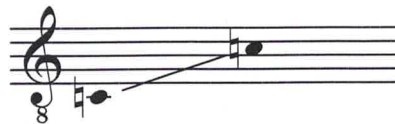
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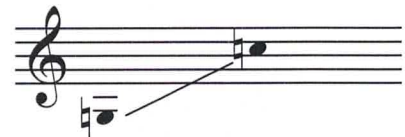
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CHARLIE



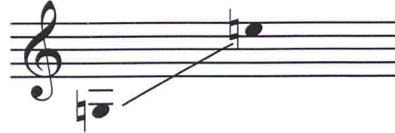
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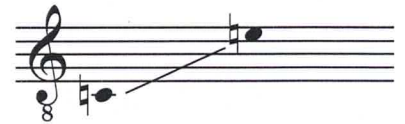
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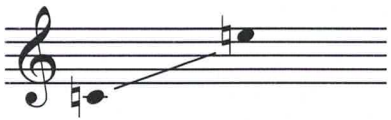
IMOGENE



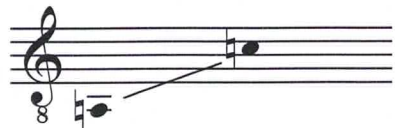
RALPH



GLADYS



BOB



CHURCH LADIES



The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical
Scenes, Characters, Musical Numbers, and Pages

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Much gratitude to Patricia McLaughlin and Adam Burke.
And big bouquets to Margie and Carolyn, daughters of the amazing Barbara Robinson.
Thank you for trusting us with the Herdmans.

Cast of Characters

The Herdman Kids

RALPH--the oldest and coolest. He's the enforcer, 13.

IMOGENE--leader of the Herdmans. She's loud, bossy, and crafty, 12.

LEROY--Ralph's backup. Very confident in the muscle department, 11.

CLAUDE--scrappy and smart, 10.

OLLIE--a bit of a naïve urchin who follows the older boys' leads, 9.

GLADYS-- little but fierce. Nothing scares Gladys, 8.

The Bradleys

GRACE--sweet, good-humored, slightly frazzled mom, 35-40ish.

BOB--easygoing dad, wry sense of humor, 35-40ish.

CHARLIE--typical kid brother, says what he thinks, 10.

BETH--Charlie's older and wiser sister. She's honest and kind, 11.

Church People

HELEN ARMSTRONG--organized steamroller. She's always in charge, 40-50ish.

REVEREND HOPKINS--occasionally befuddled, always well-meaning, 40-50ish.

Church Ladies

LUANNE--sassy, tells it like it is, 35-40ish.

BETTY--sweet southerner, calls everyone "honey," 30-40ish.

CONNIE--direct, no-nonsense type, 30-40ish.

Kids

ALICE WENDLEKEN--know-it-all. She thinks she's perfect, 11.

ELMER HOPKINS--preacher's kid, which means he needs to behave and be nice, 10.

TEDDY SHOEMAKER--wimpy kid with glasses, asks too many questions, 9.

IVY REED--Beth's earnest friend who is sometimes a goody-goody, 11.

Various kids to play angels and shepherds in the pageant and possibly other kids in lunchroom.

Setting

December 1960s, a small town in Southern Ohio.

Acknowledgments

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical opened November 25, 2016 at Children's Theatre of Charlotte in North Carolina. It was directed by Adam Burke, choreographed by Ron Chisholm, and music-directed by Mike Wilkins. Tom Burch designed sets, Magda Guichard designed costumes, David Fillmore designed lights, and Jason Romney, sound. Hazel Doherty was stage manager. The production featured the following cast:

GRACE BRADLEY	Ashley Goodson
BOB BRADLEY	Bobby Tyson
CHARLIE BRADLEY	Bennett Harris
BETH BRADLEY	Arella Flur
RALPH HERDMAN	Colin Samole
IMOGENE HERDMAN	Carlyn Head
LEROY HERDMAN	Rixey Terry
CLAUDE HERDMAN	Will Giannuzzi
OLLIE HERDMAN	Isa Long
GLADYS HERDMAN	Charli Head
HELEN ARMSTRONG	Allison Snow Rhinehardt
CONNIE	Tiffany Bear

LUANNE	Olivia Edge
BETTY	Tracie Frank
REVEREND HOPKINS	Dan Brunson
ALICE WENDLEKEN	Ryann Losee
IVY REED	Laurel Farr
ELMER HOPKINS	Wilson Moroz
TEDDY SHOEMAKER	Luke Linkel
ENSEMBLE	Lydia Farr, Allie Joseph, Max Joseph, Andrew Henriques, Julianna Kantor, Haley Vogel

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical

Book and Lyrics Music and Lyrics

Jahnna Beecham Malcolm Hillgartner

(At 50 percent of author title:)

Based on the Play by Barbara Robinson

Orchestrations and Vocal Arrangements by Deborah Wicks LaPuma

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever:

The Musical

by Jahnna Beecham & Malcolm Hillgartner

BASED ON THE PLAY BY BARBARA ROBINSON

**ACT I
SCENE 1**

THE CHURCH

(REVEREND HOPKINS is at the pulpit...the CHURCH LADIES are in the choir loft behind the minister being conducted by HELEN ARMSTRONG...the audience is the congregation... lights dim and we hear the music introduction...CHURCH LADIES sing as lights come up)

TRACK 1

#1 OUR PERFECT LITTLE TOWN

CHURCH LADIES

WHEN IT'S CHRISTMAS IN OUR PERFECT LITTLE TOWN
WHEN THE CRISP WHITE SNOW COMES TUMBLING DOWN
EACH CHILD HAS A SMILE
NO ONE EVER FROWNS
AND EACH BELL THAT IS KNELLED
MAKES THE SWEETEST SOUND
AND OUR CHRISTMAS STAR GLEAMS LIKE A CROWN
WHAT COULD BE MORE PERFECT THAN CHRISTMAS
IN OUR PERFECT LITTLE TOWN?

REVEREND HOPKINS

Thanks to Helen Armstrong for writing that holiday melody for the choir and for arranging last night's potluck supper. And now I'm told Mrs. Armstrong's Sunday school class has something to share with the congregation. Helen?

HELEN

Thank you, Reverend Hopkins. This week I've asked some of our youngest boys and girls to tell you their favorite thing about Sunday school. Ivy?

(spotlight on the STUDENTS)

IVY

My favorite thing about Sunday school is the good feeling I get when I go there.

HELEN

Very nice, Ivy. Teddy?

TEDDY

I like hearing all the stories.

HELEN

I like that, too. Elmer?

ELMER

My favorite thing about Sunday school is seeing my friends.

HELEN

Good. Alice?

ALICE

My absolute favorite thing is the annual Christmas pageant.

HELEN

That's my favorite. Charlie?

CHARLIE

Ma'am?

HELEN

What is your favorite thing about Sunday school?

CHARLIE

The best thing about Sunday school is there are no Herdmans there.

HELEN

What did you say?

CHARLIE

No Herdmans.

(music intro begins)

TRACK 2

#2 THE HORRIBLE HERDMANS

REVEREND HOPKINS

(laughing nervously)

Now Charlie, we must be careful what we say about others.

IVY

Yeah, if the Herdmans ever found out, you know what they'd do.

ELMER

PUT WORMS IN YOUR SANDWICH

BETH

ANTS IN YOUR PURSE

TEDDY

FLATTEN YOUR TIRES

ALICE

AND MUCH MUCH WORSE

REVEREND HOPKINS

Those are terrible things to say.

CHARLIE

(protests loudly)

But they're all true! The Herdmans are the worst kids in the history of the world!

KIDS

(conspiratorially)

THE HORRIBLE HERDMANS ARE THE ROTTENEST KIDS
JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU HEAR ABOUT THE THINGS THAT THEY DID
THEY HIT AND THEY STEAL AND SMOKE SMELLY CIGARS
THEY OUGHTA BE ARRESTED AND PUT BEHIND BARS

THERE'S NOTHING THAT THOSE KIDS WON'T DO
NOTHING THEY WON'T DO TO YOU
DON'T FIGHT, YOU'RE ALWAYS GONNA LOSE
THEY'LL FIND YOU AND THEY'LL POUND YOU
'TIL YOUR FACE IS BLACK AND BLUE

REVEREND HOPKINS

They can't be that bad.

KIDS

SIX OF THE HERDMANS ARE LIKE SIXTY OF US
THEY BULLY LITTLE CHILDREN THEY SPIT AND THEY CUSS

BOYS

THEY PULL DOWN YOUR GYM SHORTS

GIRLS

LOOK UP YOUR DRESS

KIDS

WHEN THEY LEAVE A CLASSROOM, IT'S ALWAYS A MESS
WHY US?
WHAT DID WE DO TO THEM

KIDS (CONT'D)

WHY US?

HOW WILL WE GET RID OF THEM
HELP, PLEASE, THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY
TO RUN THE HERDMANS OUT OF TOWN
TO SOMEPLACE FAR AWAY

REVEREND HOPKINS

NOW, CHILDREN THAT'S TOO MUCH
THOSE KIDS CAN'T HELP THEMSELVES
THEIR MOTHER WORKS SO HARD, SHE'S NEVER HOME
THEY'RE ALL ALONE

(REVEREND HOPKINS turns to HELEN in hopes she'll stop the children's complaining...instead she leads the CHURCH LADIES in agreement)

HELEN

You're so right.

THOSE POOR LITTLE DEARS
THEY'RE A TERRIBLE CREW

CHURCH LADIES

THE PLACE THEY LIVE IN'S NOT A HOUSE
IT'S MORE LIKE A ZOO

HELEN

BLESS THEIR HEARTS
MUST THEY RUN WILD IN THE STREET?
WHY CAN'T THEY BE POLITE?
WHY DO THEY CUSS, LIE, AND CHEAT?

CHURCH LADIES

BLESS THEM THEY'RE A ROWDY BUNCH
DEAR LORD, TELL THEM IT'S NOT NICE TO PUNCH
PLEASE, PLEASE WILL SOMEONE CALM THEM DOWN
BEFORE THOSE LITTLE HERDMANS MAKE A MESS OF OUR TOWN

KIDS & CHURCH LADIES

YES, OH YES
THEY REALLY MAKE A MESS
YES, OH YES
IT'S SUCH A MESS

*(the church now opens to reveal the town and the HERDMANS...
IMOGENE is pushing a grocery cart filled with stolen Christmas
decorations and HERDMANS are riding on the cart and running
alongside it)*

IMOGENE

Wee! Ride 'em, cowboy!

OLLIE

Wait for me, Imogene!

IMOGENE

Yer slower than molasses!

RALPH

Another Rudolph!

CLAUDE

Gimme the nose!

LEROY

No! Give it to me!

RALPH

Cut it out!

GLADYS

That nose is mine!

OLLIE

(jumps on the cart)

Go fast, Imogene!

HERDMANS

WE'RE THE HORRIBLE HERDMANS
AN UNBEATABLE SQUAD

IMOGENE

I'm Imogene!

RALPH

I'm Ralph!

LEROY

I'm Leroy!

CLAUDE

I'm Claude!

RALPH, IMOGENE, LEROY, & CLAUDE
HERE'S OLLIE AND GLADYS

OLLIE & GLADYS
WE'RE SMALL BUT WE'RE MEAN

HERDMANS
(without GLADYS)
JUST ONE BITE FROM GLADYS CAN SURE MAKE YOU SCREAM

CHURCH PEOPLE & KIDS
AND NOW THAT IT'S CHRISTMAS
LOOK WHAT THOSE KIDS HAVE DONE

HERDMANS
WE LASSED ALL THE REINDEER IN THE TOWN
AND PULLED THEM DOWN

RALPH
I WRAPPED UP ELMER HOPKINS

Dad!
ELMER

RALPH
LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE
IN A STRING OF RED LIGHTS

Help!
ELMER

Elmer!
REVEREND HOPKINS

LEROY
RALPH, GRAB THE CANDY CANES
WE'LL HAVE A BIG SWORD FIGHT

(they sword fight with candy canes while ELMER struggles to get loose...GLADYS runs on with Frosty's snowball "head" and a carrot...the other two snowballs are being tossed around by the other HERDMANS)

GLADYS

I PLUCKED OUT FROSTY'S EYES
STUCK A CARROT IN HIS CHEST

*(the CONGREGATION surrounds the HERDMANS as they sing
to each other in the street...REVEREND HOPKINS tries to untie
his son, ELMER)*

KIDS, CHURCH LADIES & PARENTS

SOMEONE OUGHTA MAKE A CITIZEN'S ARREST

REVEREND HOPKINS

YES, OH YES, A CITIZEN'S ARREST

KIDS, CHURCH LADIES & PARENTS

YES, OH YES, A CITIZEN'S ARREST
THE HORRIBLE HERDMANS HAVE RUINED OUR TOWN

*(CLAUDE and OLLIE roll out shopping cart with plastic Santa in
clown mask and wig)*

CLAUDE & OLLIE

WE DRESSED UP THE SANTA TO LOOK LIKE A CLOWN

PARENTS

THEY'RE A NATURAL DISASTER

KIDS & PARENTS

A PLAGUE

CHURCH LADIES, KIDS & PARENTS

A STAMPEDING HERD

*(HERDMANS pose with stolen Christmas stuff on the cart,
raising big candy canes)*

[SFX: Siren in distance]

MAN (V.O.)

Someone set the Stampers's shed on fire!

WOMAN (V.O.)

Who did it?

MAN (V.O.)

The Herdmans, who else!

ALL
THEY ARE THE WORST KIDS
IN THE HISTORY
OF THE WORLD

HERDMANS
WE ARE THE BEST KIDS
IN THE HISTORY
OF THE WORLD

TRACK 3

#2A HORRIBLE PLAYOUT

SCENE 2

THE BRADLEY HOME

(home is decorated for Christmas...there is a dining table, chairs, and poinsettia centerpiece...GRACE is either setting the table with TV dinners or she runs in as the doorbell rings)

[SFX: doorbell ringing and ringing and ringing]

BOB

(offstage)

Grace! Grace!

GRACE

Bob! Stop ringing the doorbell. People will think I locked you out.

BOB

(offstage)

I need your help. I can't open the door.

(GRACE opens door offstage or, depending on the set, onstage)

GRACE

Come inside.

(BOB enters, carrying a briefcase, a bag of ice cream, and a newspaper under his arm)

BOB

I tried to call but you weren't home. I bought dessert.

GRACE

Ice cream! You're a saint.

(kisses him...takes ice cream to kitchen)

GRACE

We're having TV dinners.

BOB

Again?

GRACE

You won't believe what happened today.

(CHARLIE enters)

CHARLIE

Claude Herdman brought his cat to show-and-tell.

(Setting table, GRACE hands silverware or napkins or plates to CHARLIE to help)

GRACE

It was a disaster.

CHARLIE

You should have seen it, Dad. The Herdman's cat shot out of his box and clawed four big long scratches all the way down the blackboard.

BOB

Wow.

CHARLIE

Then it started scratching kids, and shedding fur, and scattering books and papers everywhere.

BETH

(entering)

All the kids were running up and down the halls screaming.

GRACE

(handing BETH napkins or glasses for the table)

Here, Beth. Put this on the table.

CHARLIE

Then Miss Brandell pulled a coat over her head, grabbed a broom and started swinging and yelling, "Here, kitty-kitty."

BOB

Wish I'd seen that!

GRACE

Unfortunately, she broke the aquarium full of sixty goldfish and twenty gallons of water.

(GRACE either exits to get TV dinners or gets them from the sideboard)

CHARLIE

It was like a tidal wave.

BETH

The Herdman's cat gobbled up the goldfish, glass and all.

CHARLIE

Then it swallowed Ramona Gaffey's pet hamster —

BETH & CHARLIE

— whole!

BOB

What did Ramona do?

BETH

She cried so much they had to send her home.

BOB

What happened to the Herdman kid?

CHARLIE

Nothing. Nothing ever happens to them.

BOB

I've seen that cat before. Mrs. Herdman walks it on a chain down by the railroad tracks. It's missing an eye and has that short leg and broken tail.

GRACE

The postman thinks it's a bobcat.

(GRACE puts TV dinners down during the next few lines)

BOB

I don't think you can tame a bobcat.

CHARLIE

The Herdmans don't want to tame it. They just want to make it the meanest cat on the planet.

GRACE

Well, I was called in to administer first aid. Then the whole class, including Miss Brandell, was given recess for the rest of the day.

BOB

That's much more exciting than selling insurance.

(CHARLIE and BETH rip foil off their dinner trays)

CHARLIE

TV dinners! All right!

(CHARLIE checks out BETH's and sticks his fork in her dessert)

BETH

Charlie, stop! Mom!

GRACE

Charlie Bradley, that's Beth's dinner.

CHARLIE

I'm starved. Leroy Herdman stole my lunch.

GRACE

Again? That's the third day in a row.

CHARLIE

Fourth.

GRACE

That's it! I'm talking to the principal about those Herdmans. They're a menace.

CHARLIE

Please don't! Ralph would kill me.

GRACE

Somebody has to take a stand. They're bullying everyone.

BOB

Who's Ralph?

CHARLIE

Leroy's brother. He's mean.

BETH

But not as mean as Imogene.

CHARLIE

They're all mean!

BETH

And now that Christmas is coming, the Herdmans are getting meaner than ever.

GRACE

Christmas!

GRACE (CONT'D)

(leaps up from chair to get flyer)

I almost forgot.

BOB

Beth, can't you help Charlie out in the lunchroom?

BETH

Me?

BOB

You're the older sister.

CHARLIE

Dad, that's even worse. Don't worry. I'll handle it.

GRACE

(reentering with flyer)

This flyer was in the church newsletter. Helen Armstrong is holding auditions for the Christmas pageant this Sunday.

BOB

Not anymore she isn't.

GRACE

What are you talking about?

BOB

I ran into Ed Armstrong. Helen fell on the ice.

GRACE

Oh, no!

BOB

She's in the hospital.

CHARLIE

Hooray!

BETH

We don't have to do the pageant!

GRACE

That's terrible.

(swats at them with towel or hand)

Someone else will just have to direct the pageant.

CHARLIE

Can't we just stay home this year?

BETH

Yeah, and watch Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol on TV!

BOB

Sounds good to me.

[SFX: phone ring]

GRACE

No one's staying home, and no one's watching Mr. Magoo.

[SFX: phone ring]

BETH

But it's just going to be the same old thing. Alice Wendleken will play Mary.

CHARLIE

Elmer Hopkins will play Joseph.

[SFX: phone ring]

BOB

And I'll have to go.

SCENE 2A

THE BRADLEY HOME / HELEN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

(lights up on HELEN in her hospital room with leg and arm in traction and head wrapped in bandage...the CHURCH LADIES [BETTY, CONNIE, LUANNE] are huddled together around Helen's bed, making assignments...BETTY holds the phone for HELEN)

GRACE

Hello?

TRACK 4

#3 COUNTIN' ON YOU

HELEN

GRACE
WE HAVE A SITUATION HERE

GRACE

Helen?

HELEN

A CRISIS
DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?
I SHATTERED MY LEG AND ARM

GRACE

No!

HELEN

YES, I NEARLY BOUGHT THE FARM
AND NOW I'M IN THE HOSPITAL
AND I NEED
YES, I NEED YOUR HELP, MY DEAR

GRACE

Of course! What can I do?

HELEN

Direct the Christmas pageant.

GRACE

Me? Direct? What about Betty?

Sorry honey.

BETTY

Or Luanne?

GRACE

No can do.

LUANNE

Or Connie?

GRACE

My dance card is full.

CONNIE

TRACK 5

(the family makes frantic "Don't do it!" gestures as the CHURCH LADIES gather around the phone singing into it like a girl group at a microphone)

CHURCH LADIES

WE'RE COUNTIN' ON, COUNTIN' ON YOU, GRACE
IT'S A ROLE THAT THE THREE OF US CAN'T FACE
NOW IT'S UP TO YOU TO DO THAT PLAY
BESIDES WE TOOK THE OTHER JOBS YOU HAVE TO SAY OKAY

BETTY

A JOB LIKE THIS IS OH SO EASY

CONNIE

A PIECE OF CAKE

LUANNE

IT'S A BREEZE

CHURCH LADIES

LITTLE KIDS DRESSED UP LIKE LITTLE ANGELS
WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

GRACE

Everything!

(CHARLIE and BETH tug on their MOM, pleading)

CHARLIE

No, Mom!

BETH

We're begging you! Don't do it.

CHARLIE

That pageant's never any fun.

BOB

For them...or me.

GRACE

Don't worry; I'm not going to direct the play.

[SFX: doorbell]

GRACE

I'll take the auction.

(door opens...CHURCH LADIES are standing in the doorway)

CHURCH LADIES

No way!

WE'RE COUNTIN' ON, COUNTIN' ON YOU, GRACE
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE TO EVER REPLACE
OUR HELEN, CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S TRUE?
NOBODY ELSE CAN DO IT QUITE LIKE YOU-OO

GRACE

WAIT, THAT JOB TAKES REAL TALENT

LUANNE

YES, IT TAKES NERVES OF STEEL

BETTY

AND GUTS AND HEART AND ALL THOSE SKILLS

CONNIE

YOU'RE THE ONE TO GET US UP THAT HILL

CHURCH LADIES

WE'RE COUNTIN' ON, COUNTIN' ON YOU, GRACE

GRACE

PLEASE, DON'T I COULD NEVER REPLACE
OUR HELEN, I DON'T HAVE A CLUE

CHURCH LADIES

WE DREW STRAWS SO IT HAS TO BE YOU-OO

KIDS

No!

*(KIDS push CHURCH LADIES out the door...they return,
walking in time to music, back to HELEN)*

KIDS

WE'RE COUNTIN' ON, COUNTIN' ON YOU, MOM
CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S GONNA BE A BIG BOMB
WE MEAN IT MOM, JUST SAY NO
'CAUSE IF YOU DO THE PLAY, WE WON'T GO-OH

GRACE

What?! Bob, talk to them.

BOB

Oh, no! I'm with the kids. If you do the pageant, then we're all doing the pageant.

KIDS

And we don't want to do the pageant!

GRACE

Well, if that's how everyone feels—

*(HELEN's bed is turned to face the Bradley home--by a CANDY
STRIPER, who's been holding the phone up to her ear--or
CHURCH LADIES...music stops)*

HELEN

(into phone)

Not everyone.

TRACK 6

*(music begins again...CHURCH LADIES move HELEN's bed as
she sings...they all end up in a general musical comedy area
between Helen's hospital area and the Bradley home)*

HELEN

GRACE, LET ME MAKE ONE THING QUITE CLEAR
IT IS ALL YOUR FAULT I'M HERE

GRACE

You're kidding.

HELEN

REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID YOU'D HELP ME LOAD THE VAN?
YOU NEVER SHOWED AND HERE I AM

(GRACE gasps in realization)

HELEN

You owe me.

TRACK 7

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

WE'RE COUNTIN' ON, COUNTIN' ON YOU, GRACE

BOB & KIDS

YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID NO IN THE FIRST PLACE

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS TO DO THIS SHOW

GRACE

GUYS, DON'T YOU SEE I CAN'T SAY NO

*(CHURCH LADIES move HELEN out of general area during the
next lines, leaving the BRADLEYS by themselves)*

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

WE KNEW, GRACE

KIDS

Aw, Mom!

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

WE COULD COUNT ON YOU, GRACE

BOB

Really, honey?

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN
WE COULD COUNT ON YOU

(as they sing the last refrain GRACE hangs up phone)

GRACE
Well that's it. We're doing the pageant and auditions are Sunday.

(groan from the KIDS)

BOB
Does that mean I have to go?

GRACE, CHARLIE & BETH
Yes!

TRACK 8

TRACK 9

#3A COUNTIN' PLAYOUT

[SFX: school bell]

SCENE 3

SCHOOL LUNCHROOM

(KIDS are eating lunch and chattering)

IVY

Alice, I heard Beth's mom is directing the pageant. Has she ever directed a play?

ALICE

No, but Mother said we don't have to worry – Mrs. Armstrong will be giving Mrs. Bradley orders from the hospital.

IVY

Mrs. Bradley knows you always play Mary, right?

ALICE

I'm sure Mrs. Armstrong will tell her. Oh, there she is.

(BETH enters)

ALICE

Beth! Come sit by me and Ivy.

BETH

Did you hear? Mrs. Armstrong is in the hospital.

IVY

It's all over school.

ALICE

I'm so excited your mom's going to direct. Now *you* can be the leader of the angel choir, which is perfect for you!

BETH

You really think so? I can barely read music.

ALICE

But you just look so angelic. And besides, as Mary, I like to know I have someone I can count on to lead the younger angels in and out and tell them to be quiet when I'm onstage with Baby Jesus.

IVY

It's the shepherds you have to worry about. They're always whamming each other with their canes.

ALICE

That's true, Ivy, but don't you think Beth should play the lead angel?

IVY

Of course, Alice!

BETH

Don't worry, Alice. I don't want to play Mary.

ALICE

Beth! I didn't even think—

BETH

You have to play Mary. You're smart, and neat, and well, so holy-looking.

ALICE

(feigning modesty)

I'm not really. But if you really believe that...

IVY & BETH

You're perfect!

TRACK 10

#3B HERDMAN ENTRANCE

(ELMER rushes in, then runs to join CHARLIE)

ELMER

The Herdmans are coming!

ALL KIDS

(panicked whisper)

The Herdmans!

IVY

(to her friends)

Quick, eat your dessert.

(the HERDMANS appear and pose in the doorway of the cafeteria, punctuated by cymbal crash)

RALPH

Well lookee here.

(as each HERDMAN kid identifies a food item, the good KIDS clutch the item to their chests or try to eat it fast)

I smell something good!

IMOGENE

Ham and cheese!

LEROY

Peanut butter!

CLAUDE

Fritos!

OLLIE

Chocolate milk!

GLADYS

What are we waiting for? Let's go shopping!

RALPH

TRACK 11

#3C HERDMAN SHOPPING

(the HERDMANS dance through the cafeteria like a swarm of locusts...when they move on from each kid, the victims look like they've been mugged)

Gimme that.

RALPH

That's mine!

CLAUDE

Mine!

OLLIE

Mine!

LEROY

Yes!

GLADYS

(the group surrounds TEDDY)

Fork it over, Teddy.

IMOGENE

TEDDY

What?

IMOGENE

You know what.

(TEDDY gives her his lunch)

IMOGENE

All of it.

TEDDY

(shaking his head back and forth)

No!

(IMOGENE slams his head in his lunch box)

TEDDY

Okay. Here.

IMOGENE

Nice.

(the HERDMANS huddle together to inspect their plunder)

LEROY

(to OLLIE)

What'd you get?

OLLIE

Get away from me.

RALPH

Ollie, show it. Now.

(OLLIE pulls a smashed food packet out of his torn coat pocket)

GLADYS

A Hostess cupcake? Give it here.

OLLIE

No. It's mine.

IMOGENE

Let him have it, Gladys. You can have some of Sally Martin's cake from her birthday party.

CLAUDE

How'd you get that?

IMOGENE

She gave it to me, just so I wouldn't go.

(CHARLIE has passed out some carrot sticks but is hoarding his dessert)

LEROY

Wait a minute! Charlie's mom always packs those Rice Crispie Treats.

CHARLIE

Oh no!

BETH

Charlie, look out!

HERDMANS

(circling CHARLIE)

Come on, Charlie ...

CHARLIE

Back off!

TEDDY

You're surrounded.

HERDMANS

Cough it up!

ELMER

Run, Charlie, run!

CHARLIE

Nooooo!

TRACK 12

#4 TAKE MY LUNCH

CHARLIE

I can't take it anymore!

(KIDS are IVY, ALICE, BETH, TEDDY, and ELMER)

CHARLIE

WANT MY LUNCH?
JUST TAKE IT
HERE'S THE BAG
GO BREAK IT
WILL I CARE NO WAY
IT'S JUST A P-B-J
SO TAKE MY BAG OF CHIPS
OR HAVE A GREAT BIG SIP
OF CHOCOLATE MILK OR MAYBE
APPLE JUICE IS WHAT YOU NEED

RALPH

Careful! It's a trap!

CHARLIE

WHY STOP AT LUNCH?
YOU KNOW I HAVE A HUNCH
YOU WANT MY HOMEWORK, TOO
OR WOULD YOU LIKE MY SHOES
MY SHIRT'S ABOUT YOUR SIZE
AND HERE'S THE REAL BIG PRIZE
IT'S MY BIKE IF YOU LIKE
I DON'T CARE 'CAUSE I'VE GOT
A SPECIAL PLACE
WHERE I WON'T HAVE TO SEE YOUR FACE
AND I CAN HAVE ANYTHING I PLEASE
ICE CREAM, COOKIES, CUPCAKES
TWINKIES BY THE BUNCH
AND HAWAIIAN PUNCH

IMOGENE

What is this place?

CHARLIE
MY SUNDAY
SCHOOL
IT'S SO VERY COOL

KIDS
SUNDAY SCHOOL

CHARLIE
MY SUNDAY
SCHOOL

HERDMANS
SUNDAY SCHOOL

CHARLIE

YOU KNOW, I START TO DROOL
JUST THINKIN' ABOUT THOSE TREATS

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

THEY MAKE FOR US TO EAT

CHARLIE
AT SUNDAY
SCHOOL

KIDS & HERDMANS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

CHARLIE

WHERE THE KIDS ALL RULE

HERDMANS
YOUR SUNDAY
SCHOOL

KIDS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

RALPH

YOU REALLY GET FREE FOOD?

IMOGENE

LIKE CHERRY COKES WITH ICE?

CHARLIE

AND PIZZA BY THE SLICE

BETH & CHARLIE

SO TAKE MY LUNCH

CHARLIE

IT'S MY TREAT

ELMER, ALICE, BETH & CHARLIE

TAKE MY LUNCH

CHARLIE

I REPEAT

KIDS

UNDERSTAND THAT WE'VE GOT BETTER PLANS
THAN JUST TO EAT AND RUN
IT'S REALLY LOTS OF FUN
IN OUR OWN SPECIAL PLACE
WHERE WE WON'T SEE YOUR FACE

KIDS
AT SUNDAY
SCHOOL

HERDMANS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

CHARLIE

IT'S SO VERY COOL

CHARLIE
MY SUNDAY
SCHOOL

KIDS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

IT'S REALLY KIND OF CRUEL
THAT YOU AND ALL YOUR KIN
WON'T EVER BE LET IN

KIDS

WON'T EVER BE LET IN

*(the KIDS shout at the HERDMANS and offer their lunches or
throw them at them)*

CHARLIE

SO TAKE MY LUNCH

ALICE

NO TAKE MINE

ELMER

TAKE MY LUNCH

TEDDY & BETH

NO, TAKE MINE

CHARLIE & KIDS

UNDERSTAND THAT WE'VE GOT BETTER PLANS
WE'RE OFF TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

HERDMANS

THAT'S WHERE THE KIDS ALL RULE

CHARLIE

AND THE BEST PART OF ALL

CHARLIE & KIDS

BEST PART OF ALL

CHARLIE

BEST PART OF ALL

KIDS

THERE ARE NO

CHARLIE & KIDS

HERDMANS THERE AT ALL

RALPH

So when is this Sunday school?

ALICE

Sunday. Duh.

LEROY

(grabs CHARLIE's lunch)

See you there, loser!

(HERDMANS exit.)

BETH

Charlie Bradley! What have you done?

TRACK 13

#4A TAKE MY LUNCH TRANSITION

SCENE 4

HELEN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

(lights up to reveal HELEN in her hospital bed...next to her bed is a giant bulletin board that looks like a CSI/Homeland board with strings connecting pictures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Elmer and Alice...HELEN gives GRACE the official Christmas pageant overstuffed notebook and then uses a pointer to describe the auditions...GRACE is anxious to leave)

HELEN

Don't be nervous, Grace. Just start the auditions with Mary. Tell the kids how important she is because Mary was the mother of Jesus.

GRACE

I know that, Helen.

HELEN

Then move on to Joseph. You can tell them God chose Joseph to be Jesus's dad. But don't spend too much time on that subject. It can be confusing. Besides Elmer is always Joseph. He knows all about Mary and Joseph.

GRACE

But we're holding auditions. All parts are available.

HELEN

Right. And don't let the Wise Men stand next to the shepherds. They always start hitting each other.

GRACE

Helen, I really have to get to the church.

HELEN

The angels should not wear makeup or earrings or high heels.

GRACE

I'm going, Helen.

HELEN

And the baby angels are going to be your biggest problem. Someone has to push them on.

GRACE

I mean it.

Bob could help.

HELEN

Very funny. Bye, Helen.

GRACE

(GRACE exits)

HELEN

(calling after her)

And absolutely no live animals!

TRACK 14

#4B PERFECT LITTLE TOWN TRANSITION

SCENE 5

CHURCH – AUDITION DAY

(the HERDMANS stand outside the bathroom door at church...wall is decorated with pictures of Jesus...a sign on the wall reads "AUDITIONS FOR THE PAGEANT TODAY")

IMOGENE

So, this is what a church looks like.

GLADYS

It's not *that* scary.

CLAUDE

Where's the bell?

LEROY

Where's the people?

OLLIE

I wanna ring that bell.

RALPH

I don't see any Twinkies.

IMOGENE

Me neither.

LEROY

Charlie Bradley lied to us.

(ALICE enters)

IMOGENE

Hey, Alice! Where are the snacks?

ALICE

We're having Kool-Aid and cookies after the auditions for the pageant, if that's what you mean.

CLAUDE

What's a pageant?

ALICE

It's a play.

IMOGENE

What's it about?

ALICE

Jesus.

IMOGENE

(checking out the church)

Everything here is.

ALICE

And it's about Mary. Mostly it's about Mary.

IMOGENE

Who's Mary?

ALICE

I am. I mean, probably I am. I know the part. And she *is* the star of the show.

(ALICE exits into the bathroom)

IMOGENE

We'll see about *that*.

(IMOGENE puts cigar in mouth and grins, as HERDMANS follow ALICE into the bathroom...last one in checks to make sure no adults are following...we hear intense murmuring)

TRACK 15

#4C HORRIBLE TRANSITION

(lights up on center stage)

SCENE 5A

CHURCH REHEARSAL ROOM

(the KIDS are seated on the floor facing GRACE, who's giving instructions about the rehearsals, costumes, and auditions in front of a chalkboard full of information...TEDDY keeps frantically raising his hand)

GRACE

Okay, kids. Here are the rules of engagement. We have three rehearsals so you have to come to every one. Teddy?

TEDDY

What if we get sick?

GRACE

You won't get sick. Which brings me to the lead roles. If you want to be Mary or Joseph you really have to come to every rehearsal. Teddy?

TEDDY

What if they get sick?

GRACE

They won't get sick. We'll be casting those roles today. But remember, *all* parts are important.

(ALICE enters...she is red-faced and clearly upset...sits down next to IVY)

GRACE

Now who would like to play Mary?

(KIDS all look at ALICE)

GRACE

Alice?

ALICE

(shakes her head and stares at her lap)

No, I don't want to. No.

GRACE

But you always play Mary.

ALICE

No!

TRACK 16

#4D HERDMAN ENTRANCE II

(IMOGENE and the rest of the HERDMANS enter)

CHARLIE

(whispers)

Mom! Bad news.

GRACE

Why look...it's the Herdmans.

(the KIDS quickly move to the opposite side of the room, giving the HERDMANS space...TEDDY raises his hand frantically)

TEDDY

Mrs. Bradley. Mrs. Bradley!

GRACE

What is it, Teddy?

TEDDY

I'm gonna be sick.

TRACK 17

#5 HEY MRS. BRADLEY!

IMOGENE

HEY MISSUS BRADLEY
I WANNA BE IN THE SHOW

HERDMANS

HERE'S HOW IT'S GONNA GO

IMOGENE

SINCE MARY IS THE STAR
I'M GONNA HAVE THAT PART
MISSUS BRADLEY

IMOGENE & HERDMANS

MISSUS BRADLEY

IMOGENE

PUT ME INTO THE SHOW

KIDS

UH-OH
WHY WOULD YA WANNA DO IT?
OH NO
YOU'RE GONNA RUE IT

IMOGENE

HEY MISSUS BRADLEY
RALPH WANTS TO BE IN THE SHOW

HERDMANS

HERE'S HOW IT'S GONNA GO

IMOGENE

HE WANTS TO BE COOL
NOT LOOK LIKE A FOOL
MISSUS BRADLEY

IMOGENE & HERDMANS

MISSUS BRADLEY

IMOGENE

PUT 'IM INTO THE SHOW

KIDS

THIS IS BAD
IT'S REALLY GONNA HURT US
IT'S GONNA BE
A THREE-RING CIRCUS

GRACE

NOW'S THE TIME FOR ONE OF YOU TO STAND UP
LAST CHANCE, WON'T SOMEONE PUT THEIR HAND UP
COME ON ALICE ELMER BETH OR TED

KIDS

SORRY, MISSUS BRADLEY
BUT WE'D END UP DEAD

GRACE

Well, we need someone to play Mary's husband Joseph.

IMOGENE

That's Ralph.

BETH

(upset)

Mom!

GRACE

Or he could be one of the Three Wise Men.

ALICE & IVY

(aghast)

Mrs. Bradley!

OLLIE, LEROY & CLAUDE

That's us.

(group groan filled with "oh no's")

GRACE

I almost forgot – there is the Angel of the Lord who appears with a message for the shepherds.

ALICE

(squeezing her eyes shut)

Not Gladys. Anybody but Gladys.

GLADYS

HEY MISSUS BRADLEY
I WANNA BE IN THE SHOW
HERE'S HOW IT'S GONNA GO
I WANNA BE THAT ANGEL THING
WITH THE BIG PINK WINGS
MISSUS BRADLEY
MISSUS BRADLEY
PUT ME INTO THE SHOW

KIDS

THIS IS BAD
A FEDERAL DISASTER
GONNA HAUNT US
NOW AND EVER AFTER OOOH

ALICE

HEY MISSUS BRADLEY
I CAN'T BE IN THE SHOW

I REALLY HAVE TO GO

TEDDY

What?

GRACE

MY FAMILY'S LEAVING TOWN

IVY

TOO BAD WE HAVE TO LET YOU DOWN

ELMER

MISSUS BRADLEY
MISSUS BRADLEY
WE CAN'T BE IN THE SHOW

KIDS

NO ONE

GRACE & HERDMANS

IS GONNA QUIT THIS PAGEANT

GRACE

NO ONE

GRACE & HERDMANS

IS GONNA LEAVE THIS TOWN
NO ONE WILL HAVE A CONFLICT EVER
NO ONE IS GONNA LET ME DOWN

GRACE

(good KIDS all frantically wave their hands to be called on)

BUT MISSUS BRADLEY

ALICE

TRACK 18

MISSUS BRADLEY

KIDS

YOU'RE ALL IN THE SHOW

GRACE

TRACK 19

#5A MRS. BRADLEY PLAYOUT

(KIDS run off as GRACE moves bulletin board off...ALICE pulls BETH downstage)

ALICE

Why did your mother let the Herdmans take over our pageant?

BETH

Why didn't you speak up? I thought you wanted to play Mary.

ALICE

Imogene told me she was playing Mary and if I even opened my mouth, she would get a pussy willow and jam it so far into my ear it'd come out the other side.

BETH

You know she wouldn't do that.

ALICE

She would too! Remember when Ollie had that plant growing in his ear? Ralph did that to him.

BETH

They beat on each other all the time, but they wouldn't do that to you.

ALICE

Hermans will do anything. To anybody. None of us are safe. Your mom should have thrown them out of the room.

BETH

Well, that's just mean.

ALICE

Those Herdmans are going to ruin our pageant. And it's all your mother's fault!

BETH

Alice!

ALICE

Wait till Mrs. Armstrong hears about this.

TRACK 20

#5B PROBLEM TRANSITION

SCENE 6

PHONE TREE AREAS

(HELEN is still in traction in hospital...pinspots come up on individual CHURCH LADIES as they talk to each other on the phone tree)

HELEN

WHAT?! Where did they come from? Who let them in?

CONNIE

Grace! She just let them take over.

LUANNE

And Imogene Herdman is playing Mary?

BETTY

Yes. Can you believe it?

LUANNE

She's the mother of Jesus, for Pete's sake!

CONNIE

Where was Reverend Hopkins, I'd like to know?

BETTY

He was visiting shut-ins.

HELEN

I'm a shut-in. He wasn't visiting me. Something has to be done about this!

(HELEN starts dialing)

TRACK 21

#6 PROBLEM

[SFX: phone ring]

GRACE

Hello?

HELEN

PROBLEM

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM, GRACE

YOU'RE MAKING A MESS OF MY SHOW

GRACE

Oh no!

HELEN

OH YES
HOW COULD YOU CAST THOSE HERDMANS
THAT KIND OF THING WON'T GO
YOU CAN'T DEPEND ON THOSE KIDS
IT'S AN INDISPUTABLE FACT
BUT HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN, MY DEAR
YOU CAN'T BE BLAMED FOR THAT

GRACE

Blamed?

HELEN

GRACE, YOU MUST REPLACE THEM
IT'S THE CHRISTIAN THING TO DO
IF NOT, THEY'LL LOOK LIKE FOOLS
WHEN THEY DON'T COME THROUGH

GRACE

WHAT ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS
AFTER SUCH A BLOW

HELEN

TRUST ME, I'M A DIRECTOR
THEY – MUST – GO

(hangs up phone)

GRACE

Helen? Helen?

TRACK 22

#7 BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY

SCENE 7

THE CHURCH

*(CHURCH LADIES and REVEREND HOPKINS at church
preparing food baskets)*

REVEREND HOPKINS & CHURCH LADIES

BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY
BASKETS FOR THE POOR
FOOD ENOUGH FOR TWENTY
AND A LITTLE MORE

SANTA BRINGS THEM TREASURES
WE DELIVER JOY
EACH ONE PACKED WITH OUR LOVE
AND A LITTLE TOY

*(REVEREND HOPKINS ducks out of sight, or out of the room, to
get more supplies)*

LUANNE

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH GRACE

CONNIE

SHE MUST BE OUT OF HER MIND

BETTY

PUTTING THOSE KIDS IN THE PLAY

REVEREND HOPKINS

(pops his head in)

PERHAPS SHE WAS BEING KIND.

(exits)

LUANNE

HAVE YOU SEEN THOSE KIDS

BETTY

YOU KNOW, THEIR MOTHER'S NEVER HOME

CONNIE

I'M NOT SURPRISED, THEY'RE A PAIN

REVEREND HOPKINS

(pops his head in)
THOSE KIDS ARE ON THEIR OWN
(exits)

CONNIE
WHAT HAPPENED TO THEIR FATHER?

BETTY
HE LEFT YEARS AGO

LUANNE
HOPPED ON A FREIGHT
NEVER LOOKED BACK

BETTY
DO YOU BLAME HIM?

CHURCH LADIES
NO

(REVEREND HOPKINS reenters, joins CHURCH LADIES as they pack baskets)

REVEREND HOPKINS & CHURCH LADIES
A BASKET FOR THE JOHNSONS
A BASKET FOR THE KEENS
MISSUS SANCHEZ COUNTS ON US
AS DOES MISTER GREEN

REVEREND HOPKINS
THIS ONE'S FOR THE HERDMANS
SEVEN SOULS IN NEED
WHO WOULD LIKE TO TAKE IT?

LUANNE
NOT ME

CONNIE
NOT ME

BETTY
NOT ME

REVEREND HOPKINS

I see...

*(music vamps as scene transitions...REVEREND HOPKINS
exits and appears in HELEN's room with a poinsettia)*

SCENE 7A

HELEN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

HELEN

Reverend! I've come up with a way to save the pageant.

REVEREND HOPKINS

I didn't know it was in need of saving.

HELEN

Take the Herdmans out of the show and put them in concessions.

REVEREND HOPKINS

We don't sell concessions.

HELEN

Then have them hand out programs.

REVEREND HOPKINS

What programs? We're putting all our money into baskets for the needy.

HELEN

There must be a loophole. They're not even members of our church.

REVEREND HOPKINS

Maybe they'll join.

HELEN

If you're trying to give me a heart attack, you're doing a very good job.

REVEREND HOPKINS

Then it's a good thing you're in the hospital.

(REVEREND HOPKINS punctuates line by putting potted plant in HELEN's lap, then exit.)

SCENE 7B

THE CHURCH

TRACK 23

(music transitions to CHURCH LADIES...lights out on Helen...CHURCH LADIES sing in a round as they tie bows on baskets)

BETTY, LUANNE & CONNIE

BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY
BASKETS FOR THE POOR
FOOD ENOUGH FOR TWENTY
AND A LITTLE MORE

SANTA BRINGS THEM TREASURES
WE DELIVER JOY
EACH ONE PACKED WITH OUR LOVE
AND A LITTLE TOY

BETTY

Baskets go out next week.

CONNIE

Music rehearsal for the pageant tonight.

LUANNE

Why rehearse? This is going to be the worst Christmas pageant ever.

TRACK 24

#7A SILENT NIGHT TRANSITION

SCENE 8

CHURCH REHEARSAL ROOM – FIRST REHEARSAL

(GRACE is trying to teach songs to group...KIDS are holding sheet music...HERDMAN KIDS huddle together and make fun of "Silent Night..." they say "fart" and do fart sounds then pretend like they're innocent until they get to the verse and then they...let 'er rip...GRACE blows pitch pipe and the kids sing the first word like angels)

KIDS & HERDMANS

SILENT

HERDMAN BOYS

FART

(fart sound)

KIDS

(HERDMANS louder than KIDS)

HERDMANS

HOLY

DEADLY

HERDMAN BOYS

FART

ALICE

I'm telling!

HERDMANS

SUCH A SMELL WILL STOP YOUR HEART

ALICE

Mrs. Bradley!

(while the HERDMANS continue to sing and hold their nose and wave hands in front of their faces, GRACE interjects)

GRACE

All right. All right. That's some joke. Now come on. Come on.

HERDMANS

COUGHING AND GAGGING, SEE THEM RUN
EATING BEANS IS SO MUCH FUN

(GRACE claps to stop them)

GRACE

Good. You've learned the tune. Now let's sing it the right way.

(GRACE blows pitch pipe again but is interrupted)

RALPH

Hey Mrs. Bradley. If this is a play, why aren't we playing?

LEROY

(shoves CHARLIE)

Tag! You're it.

GRACE

Leroy, don't push.

GLADYS

(running around the kids, hitting and kicking them)

No! Duck, Duck, Goose. Duck! Duck! Duck! Duck!

IMOGENE

No! Red Light. Green Light.

GRACE

We're singing the Bell song.

OLLIE

The dumbbell song!

CLAUDE

That's Ralph's song.

RALPH

Who you calling a dumbbell?

GRACE

(blows whistle)

That's enough. Over here. NOW!

(stunned, the KIDS quickly comply while ALICE, BETH, and IVY huddle off to the side, talking while GRACE either takes them offstage or arranges them in a chorus upstage)

ALICE

It's clear your mom can't control the Herdmans. That's what my mom said.

BETH

What does your mom know? She's not even here.

ALICE

I tell my mom everything. I write it down.

BETH

That's pretty sneaky.

ALICE

I'm not the sneak. Gladys is. At auditions she took three sips of communion wine.

BETH

That's just grape juice. Everybody knows that.

IVY

But it belongs to the church.

TRACK 25

#8 MY MOTHER SAID

ALICE

What about the kindergarten Happy Birthday bank?

BETH

What about it?

ALICE

I shook it and it doesn't make a sound.

BETH

So?

ALICE

Last week it made a sound.

BETH

What kind of person shakes the Happy Birthday bank?

ALICE

A person who cares.

TRACK 26

KID VOICES

(continue under)
DING DONG DING DONG

IVY
MY MOTHER SAID HER MOTHER SAID
YOUR MOTHER'S IN OVER HER HEAD

BETH
YOUR MOTHER'S WRONG, YOUR MOTHER, TOO
MY MOTHER KNOWS JUST WHAT TO DO

IVY
MY MOTHER SAID

ALICE
MY MOTHER TOO

ALICE & IVY
YOUR MOTHER HAS NOT GOT A CLUE

BETH
YOU TAKE IT BACK

ALICE
WHY, WHEN I'M RIGHT
(gestures to HERDMANS offstage)
SHE PUT THEM IN
JUST OUT OF SPITE

BETH
THAT ISN'T TRUE MY MOM GAVE YOU ALL A CHANCE
BUT YOU WENT AND TURNED SCAREDY-PANTS

ALICE
GLADYS PUT A CRAYON IN HER POCKET
AND YOUR MOTHER DIDN'T TRY TO STOP IT

BETH
THAT'S SUCH A LIE

ALICE
YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE

ALICE & IVY
THERE'S NOT A THING YOUR MOM'LL DO

IVY

SHE LET THEM TAKE
ALL THE GOOD PARTS

ALICE

WITHOUT A FIGHT

ALICE & IVY
THAT WASN'T SMART

KIDS VOICES
DING DONG

BETH
DON'T BLAME MY MOM IF YOU
WENT AND LOST YOUR NERVE
YOU'RE JUST GETTING WHAT
YOU DESERVE

DING

ALICE

I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS UNTIL TODAY

BETH

FRIENDS WOULD NEVER SAY THE THINGS YOU SAY

ALICE
THAT ISN'T FAIR

KIDS VOICES
DING

IVY
WE REALLY CARE

DONG

ALICE & IVY
I NEVER SAID
SHE NEVER SAID
YOUR MOTHER'S IN OVER HER HEAD

DING
DONG
DING DONG

IVY
IT WAS HER MOM

DING

ALICE
THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID

DONG

And my mom is never wrong.

KID VOICES

DING
DONG DING
DONG

TRACK 27

*(the girls stomp off...BETH, who is very upset, shouts to Mom,
then exits)*

BETH

Mom! I need to talk to you!

TRACK 28

#9 PROBLEM – REPRISE

[SFX: phone ring]

SCENE 9
THE BRADLEY HOME / HELEN'S PHONE AREA

(GRACE is on the phone, surrounded by boxes of costumes...BOB carries more in...they are shepherd and angel costumes...HELEN is in wheelchair with phone)

HELEN

PROBLEM
WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM, GRACE
BUT I CAN SAVE THE SHOW

GRACE

Oh, no.

HELEN

OH YES
THE ANSWER'S VERY SIMPLE
JUST LET THE HERDMANS GO
THOSE KIDS ARE NOTHING BUT TROUBLE
YOU'VE MADE A BIG MISTAKE
IT'S CLEAR THAT THIS WAS JUST TOO MUCH
TO PUT UPON YOUR PLATE

GRACE

Now, wait...

HELEN

GRACE, YOU MUST REPLACE THEM
FOR THE TEAM, THE CHURCH, THE TOWN

GRACE

I CAN'T, I WON'T, I NEVER WILL
I WON'T BACK DOWN

HELEN

GRACE, DON'T YOU SEE
YOU'RE RUINING MY SHOW

GRACE

ARE YOU THE DIRECTOR?
I DON'T – THINK – SO

(GRACE hangs up)

HELEN

Grace? Grace? Grace!!!

(GRACE marches over to BOB)

GRACE

That Helen Armstrong makes me so mad!

BOB

Why?

GRACE

She's turned everyone against me. Even the kids!

(CHARLIE enters with boxes)

CHARLIE

Teddy's mom heard about the way the Herdmans sang "Silent Night" and she wants to switch churches.

BOB

You're kidding!

GRACE

See? They all say I should get rid of the Herdmans.

CHARLIE

You should.

GRACE

I can't! It would hurt their feelings.

CHARLIE

Why do you care about *their* feelings? They don't care about ours!

(CHARLIE slams box down and exits)

BOB

Charlie!

(to GRACE)

Don't mind him.

GRACE

He's right. They're awful.

BOB

The Herdmans?

GRACE

Yes! Today Imogene locked herself in the bathroom and Teddy wet his pants.

BOB

That's not good.

GRACE

And Leroy and Claude broke the steeple bell.

BOB

Wow!

GRACE

(getting more and more upset)

Ralph and Gladys stole all the cookies. And that tattletale Alice was in there writing everything down.

BOB

They're just kids. It'll be okay.

GRACE

No, it won't! The Herdmans really *are* the worst kids in the history of the world!

(she collapses in chair)

TRACK 29

#10 MAYBE

BOB

Honey? Are you okay?

GRACE

I don't know...

MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO GIVE UP THE FIGHT
MAYBE I'VE MADE THE BIGGEST MISTAKE
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO PUT ON THE BRAKES

BOB

MAYBE YOU'RE STRONG

GRACE

BUT WHAT IF YOU'RE WRONG?

BOB

MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN RIGHT ALL ALONG

GRACE

I'M REALLY AFRAID THOSE KIDS WON'T SHINE

BOB

MAYBE JUST MAYBE IT'LL BE FINE
DON'T YOU SEE, GRACE?
IT ALL COMES FROM YOU, GRACE
YOU'RE THE GLUE, GRACE

GRACE

Oh, Bob...

BOB

YES, IT'S TRUE

GRACE

MAYBE IT'S JUST A SMALL TOWN PLAY

BOB

MAYBE THINGS WILL BE OKAY

GRACE

MAYBE THOSE KIDS NEED SOMETHING NEW

BOB

MAYBE WHAT THEY NEED IS YOU

GRACE

(hugs him)

Maybe you're the best husband ever.

BOB

Does that mean I still have to go?

GRACE

Yes.

(slams turban on his head)

TRACK 30

#10A ANGEL TRANSITION

SCENE 10
CHURCH REHEARSAL ROOM – SECOND REHEARSAL

*(the stage is strewn with boxes of costumes labeled “angel wings,”
“shepherd robes,” and “animal ears...” BETH and ALICE and the
good KIDS are giving the HERDMANS instructions)*

BETH

The shepherds always stand over here.

ALICE

And Mary comes on from there.

BETH

With Joseph. And the inn is offstage.

LEROY

What’s an inn?

TEDDY

It’s like a motel –

ELMER

– where people go to spend the night.

CLAUDE

What people? Jesus?

ALICE

Oh, honestly! Jesus wasn’t even born yet. Mary was great with child.

RALPH

Pregnant? Mary was pregnant!

ALICE

Don’t say that!!

*(lots of snickering...GRACE enters with boxes of stuff she pulled,
followed by CHARLIE, who is helping her)*

GRACE

Okay, team, put a cork in it. We all know Mary was pregnant.

(GRACE exits to get more boxes)

ALICE

I don't think it's nice to say "pregnant" in church.

BETH

But Mary was.

ALICE

I'm not even allowed to say "pregnant" out of church.

ELMER

And this is the barn where Mary had her baby.

IVY

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger —

CHARLIE

— because there was no room for them at the inn.

IMOGENE

They didn't have room for Jesus?

ALICE

Well, nobody knew the baby was going to become Jesus.

IMOGENE

Didn't Mary know? And what's the matter with Joseph? Why didn't he tell the innkeeper? I mean, my god, she was pregnant!

ALICE

Stop saying that!

OLLIE

What's a manger? Some kind of bed?

(GRACE enters with more supplies)

GRACE

They didn't have a bed in the barn so they put him in the manger, which was a big feeding trough for the animals.

IMOGENE

(outraged)

This is getting worse and worse!

ALICE

On the word *manger*, the angels are supposed to sing.

(BETH, ALICE, IVY start humming "Away in a Manger" ...enter
CHURCH LADIES)

BETTY

Hello, Grace, we wanted to pop in to see how it's going.

GRACE

What? Oh, we're just getting started.

IMOGENE

(continues to rant)

So Mary wrapped her baby in wadded-up clothes and stuffed him in a feedbox?

CONNIE

It sounds like you could use some help.

(ALICE nods vehemently to her mother, CONNIE)

IMOGENE

Where was her social worker?

GRACE

I can handle it, Connie.

(to IMOGENE)

They didn't have social services in those days.

IMOGENE

I guess not!

GLADYS

The social worker is at *our* house every other week.

BETTY

We'll be in the kitchen making applesauce cake.

LUANNE

Holler if you need anything.

GRACE

(calls to LUANNE as they leave)

Don't worry, I won't.

RALPH

What kind of story is this anyway?

GRACE

It's the Christmas story. Don't you know the Christmas story?

(ALICE, BETH, and IVY stop humming)

LEROY

Never heard of it.

(ANGELS and the other KIDS start whispering, "They don't know the Christmas story")

CLAUDE

What's the big deal?

BETH

Do you think they really don't know the Christmas story?

IVY

I think they don't.

ALICE

Of course not. They've never been in a church in their life. They just came for the snacks, which your brother told them we had.

CHARLIE

I said I was sorry.

GRACE

Okay, then. Everyone come here for a moment.

(KIDS gather on floor around GRACE)

GRACE

You see, Jesus is born and the Angel of the Lord—

GLADYS

(raising fist in the air)

That's me!

GRACE

That's right—and the angel tells the shepherds about it and they go visit.

BETH

Then King Herod sends Three Wise Men to find baby Jesus.

IVY

They follow a star that leads them to Jesus. Then they give him very special gifts.

LEROY

Like what?

CHARLIE

Gold, frankincense —

TEDDY

-- and myrrh.

CLAUDE

What's that?

GRACE

A fragrant oil.

RALPH, IMOGENE & GLADYS

Oil!?

IMOGENE

What kind of cheapo king gives oil for a present?

OLLIE

We get better stuff from the firemen.

ELMER

It turns out that King Herod is an evil guy who is worried that Jesus will take over and become the king when he grows up.

TEDDY

So he wants to kill baby Jesus.

IMOGENE

My god, they're gonna kill a baby?

ALICE

Not the Wise Men. King Herod.

RALPH

Is that true, Mrs. Bradley?

GRACE

Well, yes, it is.

GLADYS

Sounds like something straight outta Action Comics.

*(KIDS all talk at once... "Did you hear that? Action Comics!"
"Jesus isn't a comic book character..." "Who says?")*

TRACK 31

#11 DIE HEROD DIE!

IMOGENE

Shut up, everyone. Shut up!

*(this song has sword fighting, pirate moves, lots of swash and
buckle...GRACE tries to regain control of the situation and can't)*

IMOGENE

I WANNA HEAR ABOUT THE BABY AND THE EVIL KING
AND MARY AND JOSEPH AND THE ANGEL WITH WINGS

OTHER KIDS

THE ANGEL HAD A MESSAGE TO DELIVER THAT NIGHT
SHE GAVE THOSE SHEPHERDS A TERRIBLE FRIGHT

HERDMANS

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WISE MEN, WHAT ABOUT THE KING?
WASN'T HE ABOUT TO DO A REALLY BAD THING?

GLADYS

"SHAZAM," SAID THE ANGEL WITH THE BIG PINK WINGS

GRACE

What?

GLADYS

I'VE GOT SOME NEWS AND I'M GONNA SING

ALICE

Is she kidding?

GLADYS

DIE, HEROD DIE, "SHAZAM"
LOOK AT ME, I'M THE ANGEL OF THE LORD
DIE, HEROD DIE, "KERPOW"
I CAN FLY LIKE AN EAGLE AND I GOT A BIG SWORD

ALICE

She had a harp!

SHEPHERDS

LOOK AT US, WE WANNA FIGHT

BETH & GRACE

Fight?

GLADYS

FOLLOW ME, SHEPHERDS
STAY LOW AND TIGHT

ALICE

Uh-oh.

HERDMAN BOYS

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WISE MEN WHO CAME FROM AFAR?

KIDS

THEY GOT ON THEIR CAMELS AND FOLLOWED THAT STAR

*(KIDS are joining in...this is fun...GLADYS and the
HERDMANS are tossing out weapons)*

HERDMANS & KIDS

DIE, HEROD DIE, "SHAZAM"
DIE, HEROD DIE, "KERPOW"
DIE, HEROD DIE

RALPH

(ready to destroy whoever it is)

Hey, who's playing Herod?

GRACE

He isn't in the play.

LEROY

He's out to kill baby Jesus and he isn't even in the play?

ALICE

He's never in the play.

IMOGENE

Somebody better be Herod. Charlie – be Herod.

CHARLIE

Nooooooo!

HERDMAN BOYS

Hey, Herod!

BETTER WATCH OUT, WE'RE COMING FOR YOU
COME ON BOYS, WE GOTTA JOB TO DO

GLADYS & IMOGENE
TIME FOR SOME ACTION, NO TIME TO BOAST

HERDMAN BOYS
"KERPOW," SAID THE WISE MEN, THAT GUY IS TOAST

CHARLIE

I'm not Herod!

GRACE

No one is going to be Herod.

ALL KIDS (EXCEPT CHARLIE)
DIE, HEROD DIE, "KER-SPLAT"

CHARLIE

They're going to kill me!

GRACE

There's no Herod!

ALL KIDS (EXCEPT CHARLIE)
DIE, HEROD DIE, "TAKE THAT"

BETTY

Grace, what's going on?

GRACE

We're rehearsing, Betty.

IMOGENE

I'M GONNA HIDE THE BABY
BURN DOWN THE INN

(IMOGENE puts her cigar in her mouth and heads for the kitchen door)

BOYS

WE'LL TIE UP HEROD

CHARLIE & GRACE

No!

BOYS

TAKE HIM FOR A SPIN!

GLADYS

ALL OF YOU ANGELS, RING THAT BELL
IT'S TIME TO SEND HEROD STRAIGHT TO—

(GRACE claps hand over GLADYS's mouth as CHARLIE yells)

CHARLIE

H-E-E-E-L-L-L-L-L-P, Mom!

LUANNE

Is that a cigar in Mary's mouth?

GRACE

No! What? Imogene put that out!

(smoke creeps into the room from the kitchen)

BETTY

Smoke! Fire!

CONNIE

Call the fire department!

HERDMANS & KIDS

DIE, HEROD, DIE

LUANNE

Get the kids out!

REVEREND HOPKINS

What's going on?

BETTY

The Herdmans have set fire to the church!

HERDMANS & KIDS

DIE, HEROD, DIE

GRACE

Everybody! Don't panic. Just stay calm!

HERDMANS & KIDS

YOU CAN KISS THIS WORLD GOODBYE

[SFX: Distant fire engine sounds]

(the HERDMANS are delighted to hear the fire trucks and dance around like demons...a frazzled REVEREND HOPKINS shouts over the chaos)

REVEREND HOPKINS

That's it!

(music stops abruptly)

I'm canceling Christmas!

EVERYONE

What?!

TRACK 32

(musical finish...blackout)

End of Act I

INTERMISSION (OPTIONAL)

(if no intermission, CHURCH LADIES, with baskets and/or lanterns, come downstage as scene changes...they are eventually joined by REVEREND HOPKINS and CHURCH KIDS all carrying baskets and candles)

ACT II
SCENE 11

STREET ON THE POORER SIDE OF TOWN

TRACK 33

#12 BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY REPRISE

(music underscores as EVERYONE BUT THE BRADLEYS enter with Christmas baskets and weave their way around the stage to the music of "Baskets for the Needy..." CHURCH LADIES pause to gossip)

LUANNE

CAN YOU BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED?

CONNIE

IT'S ALL OVER TOWN

BETTY

POOR GRACE, SHE MUST FEEL AWFUL

CONNIE

HE HAD TO SHUT IT DOWN

BETTY

CHRISTMAS WON'T BE CHRISTMAS

LUANNE

WITHOUT OUR CHRISTMAS PLAY

CONNIE

TOO BAD ABOUT THOSE HERDMANS

CHURCH LADIES

NOW WE ALL MUST PAY

BETTY

WHAT HAPPENS CHRISTMAS SUNDAY?

LUANNE

I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE

REVEREND HOPKINS

I THINK WE SHOULD PRAY

CHURCH LADIES

YES—LET’S—DO

REVEREND HOPKINS, CHURCH LADIES & KIDS

A BASKET FOR THE KEATINGS
A BASKET FOR THE REEDS
FOOD FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER
SO MANY FOLKS IN NEED

SANTA BRINGS THEM TREASURES
WE DELIVER JOY
EACH ONE PACKED WITH OUR LOVE--

(pause as the BRADLEYS enter...BOB has a flashlight...GRACE is carrying a basket with a tag that says "Herdmans" on it...the CHURCH LADIES exit in different directions)

REVEREND HOPKINS, CHURCH LADIES & KIDS

LA LA LA LA LA

GRACE

Did you see that? They’re shunning me.

BOB

Grace! They didn’t even see you!

BETH

Well, Alice and Ivy saw me and didn’t even say hello.

CHARLIE

They think it’s Mom’s fault the church caught fire.

BOB

That’s ridiculous. It was just smoke. No one was hurt and nothing was damaged.

GRACE

But now the pageant is cancelled.

(they stop in front of a broken-down fence with a "Beware of the Cat" sign on it)

BOB

This is the house.

GRACE

Are you sure? There’s no number.

BOB

(pointing flashlight at sign)

The sign says "Beware of the Cat."

BETH

Then this is the place.

GRACE

We'll just hurry in and give the Herdmans their basket.

CHARLIE

But Mom, they'll kill us!

BOB

Don't be silly they're just kids.

BETH

That's what you say! Mom, please don't make us go by ourselves.

GRACE

Oh, alright. I'll go with you.

BOB

What should I do?

GRACE

Watch out for the cat.

SCENE 12

THE HERDMAN'S GARAGE

(Lights come up slowly on the Herdmans' garage, which is filled with old toilets, broken strollers, broken trikes, a tire, and things the kids have collected over the years...there is a bare light bulb hanging over the debris... CHARLIE and BETH carefully make their way through the debris and call into the garage.)

GRACE

Mrs. Herdman?

BETH

Ralph? Gladys?

CHARLIE

Anybody home?

BETH

I don't think they're here. Let's just leave the basket and go.

(BETH sets the basket on a rusted, broken wagon and turns to leave, then hears the HERDMANS coming home...they are having a heated discussion...GRACE, CHARLIE and BETH panic and CHARLIE mouths, "Hide!" They duck around stuff in the garage or the side of the garage)

LEROY

It's just not fair!

IMOGENE

We didn't start the fire.

OLLIE

Which fire?

IMOGENE

The one at the church.

OLLIE

Oh, *that* fire. No, we did not.

IMOGENE

It was those ladies' cakes that burned. And they blamed us.

(CHARLIE and BETH look to GRACE, wide-eyed)

LEROY

Yeah.

RALPH

I don't think one guy can just cancel Christmas.

CLAUDE

Who does he think he is, God?

OLLIE

I'd like to give him what for.

LEROY

Me too.

GLADYS

I'd like to sic the cat on him.

HERDMANS

Yeah!

GLADYS

I really did want to be that angel with the big pink wings.

IMOGENE

(picks up the bald baby doll)

I wanted to be Mary. But I wouldn't have named my baby "Jesus." What kind of name is that?

LEROY

What would you have named him?

IMOGENE

Buddy.

CLAUDE

That's way better.

(they pull the light bulb chain and discover the magnificent Christmas charity basket sitting on the wagon...it looks jam-packed with goodies...the ham has a bow on it)

HERDMANS

Whoa!

RALPH

What's that?

GLADYS

It looks like a baby in a manger.

OLLIE

Little baby Buddy!

LEROY

No! It's like a gift from the Three Wise Guys.

(The kids start to approach the basket)

IMOGENE

Don't touch it until Ma sees it. She's gonna love it.

RALPH

Ma won't care.

LEROY

(Pushes his brother away)

She will too.

RALPH

Don't push me.

(RALPH and LEROY push each other and crash into GLADYS, who kicks them both.)

GLADYS

Cut it out, you two.

LEROY

Ow! Gladys, that hurt.

(OLLIE grabs CLAUDE'S stocking cap and runs, followed by brothers.)

CLAUDE

Hey, that's mine!

OLLIE

Not anymore.

LEROY

You git back here!

RALPH

Ollie Herdman! You're gonna git it!

(IMOGENE is about to follow her brothers when she pauses at the door and turns around and sees GLADYS looking at the basket.)

IMOGENE

Gladys, you better not get into that basket.

GLADYS

I'm not. I just want to look at it.

TRACK 34

#13 THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

GLADYS

All year I dream of this – the perfect Christmas gift.

*(GLADYS starts the song, identifying what's in the basket of food.
As they sing, the brothers slowly return to join them.)*

GLADYS

A BOX OF MASHED POTATOES
A BIG OL' HAM

IMOGENE

A BAG OF DAY-OLD ROLLS
TWO KINDS OF JAM

IMOGENE & GLADYS

AND FOR ONE MAGIC NIGHT OF THE YEAR

GLADYS

NO ONE GETS ANGRY

IMOGENE

NO ONE SHEDS A TEAR

IMOGENE & GLADYS

AND THE BEST GIFT OF ALL
IS OUR BASKET FULL OF CHEER

IMOGENE

RALPH LIGHTS A CANDLE

GLADYS

MA SINGS A SONG

HERDMANS

WE ALL STAND IN A CIRCLE
AND TRY TO GET ALONG
AND FOR ONE MAGIC NIGHT OF THE YEAR

BOYS

NOBODY'S HUNGRY

GIRLS

EVERYONE'S ALL RIGHT

HERDMANS

AND THE BEST GIFT OF ALL
IS WE'RE TOGETHER TONIGHT

GRACE

(to BETH and CHARLIE)

LOOK AT THEM!
THERE'S A LIGHT IN THEIR EYES
FULL OF LOVE AND HOPE
WHY SHOULD IT COME AS A SURPRISE?

BETH & CHARLIE

I THINK WE'RE THE ONES
WHO LET THEM DOWN

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

WE TOLD THEM THEY'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH
FOR OUR LITTLE TOWN

HERDMANS

AND FOR ONE MAGIC NIGHT OF THE YEAR

BOYS

NOBODY YELLS AT US

GIRLS

OR TELLS US THAT WE'RE WRONG

HERDMANS

AND THE BEST GIFT OF ALL
IS THAT TONIGHT

IMOGENE

TONIGHT

HERDMANS

WE BELONG

(at the end of the song GRACE, CHARLIE and BETH try to sneak away. GRACE is first out, but BETH trips over some junk and she and CHARLIE are caught in the garage.)

IMOGENE

Someone's spying on us.

RALPH

Who's there?

BETH

(guiltily reveals herself and CHARLIE joins her)

It's just us.

LEROY

The Bradleys!

RALPH

Get em!

CHARLIE

Wait!

BETH

We brought the basket.

GRACE

(running in to defend them)

From the church!

OLLIE

This year we got candy canes!

CHARLIE

(Improvising trying to get away)

That's great, Ollie. So...

(looks to BETH for help)

BETH

(looks pointedly at her mom)

So, our *mom* wanted to tell you something.

IMOGENE

Are we in trouble?

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

No, no.

GRACE

I know you didn't start the fire.

CLAUDE

That's right. It was those church ladies' cakes.

GLADYS

Does that mean we can do the show?

BETH

Um...I don't know.

CHARLIE

Yes!

GRACE

Charlie Bradley!

BETH

(hisses)

What are you doing?

BOB

(calling)

Grace? Kids?

BETH

We gotta go!

CHARLIE

We really do.

IMOGENE

Wait! Are we doing the pageant or not?

BETH

Uh, I don't know.... Mom?

(BETH, CHARLIE and HERDMANS turn to GRACE)

GRACE

Well...be at the church tomorrow at 5 PM just in case.

TRACK 35

#14 BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

OLLIE

Do we need a baby Jesus? I can get one from the grocery store. There's lots of 'em just sitting around in grocery carts.

GRACE

Thanks, Ollie, but I don't think it's necessary. Do you have a doll?

(IMOGENE holds up the most beat-up shabby doll on the planet...no hair, no clothes...it's clearly been through six kids)

IMOGENE

Just this one.

GRACE

He's perfect.

CLAUDE

Do you need a cat?

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

NO!

GRACE

I mean, thank you, Claude, but we don't.

BOB

(calling again)

Grace? Kids?

BETH

Coming! Sorry we gotta run!

(grabs CHARLIE'S hand and pulls him away)

CHARLIE

Bye!

(A few HERDMANS raise a hand in goodbye; OLLIE flaps his in an enthusiastic farewell.)

OLLIE

Bye!

(RALPH hits OLLIE with his hat to get him to stop. OLLIE gives him a "what'd I do?" response.)

SCENE 13

TRACK 35A

(BETH and CHARLIE run to parents at the fence.)

GRACE

Charlie told the Herdmans we're doing the pageant—

BOB

Charlie, no!

BETH

I'm glad he did!

BOB

But Reverend Hopkins already cancelled.

CHARLIE

Then he should un-cancel. It was the church ladies' cakes that burnt.

BOB

What?

TRACK 35B

CHARLIE

IT'S A JOKE—

BETH

IT WAS ONLY SMOKE.

BETH & CHARLIE

THERE WAS NO FIRE!
AND IF THE HERDMANS TAKE THE BLAME FOR THIS

CHARLIE

WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF LIARS!

BETH & CHARLIE

WE HAVE TO DO THE PAGEANT
IT ISN'T FAIR TO STOP THE SHOW

BOB

OH, KIDS, I DON'T KNOW
WE CAN ASK, BUT HE'LL PROBABLY JUST SAY NO

CHARLIE & BETH

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

CHARLIE

THEY CAN DO IT

CHARLIE & BETH

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

BETH

WE CAN MAKE IT RIGHT

CHARLIE & BETH

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

CHARLIE

AND MAYBE, JUST MAYBE

CHARLIE & BETH

WE'LL HAVE THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER
TOMORROW NIGHT

GRACE

Bob, the kids are right. We have to do the pageant.

BOB

It's your decision. What can I do?

GRACE

Go home.

BOB

(surprised, shrugs)

Works for me.

GRACE

And be ready to alert the phone tree.

BOB

Got it.

GRACE

Kids...we have to talk to the Reverend. To the church!

CHARLIE

All right!

BETH

Better hurry!

GRACE

Bob, wait for my call!

BOB

(Calling after the family as they run off.)

Hey! Does this mean I have to—?

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

Yes!

(GRACE, KIDS head for church...BOB exits other way)

TRACK 35C

(TRANSITION into next scene.)

SCENE 13A

CHURCH

(REVEREND HOPKINS is at the podium, checking the list to make sure he delivered all of the baskets. GRACE and KIDS run in.)

GRACE

Reverend Hopkins!

REVEREND HOPKINS

Grace! What's the matter?

CHARLIE

The Herdmans had nothing to do with the smoke last night.

REVEREND HOPKINS

What?

GRACE

It was Betty's applesauce cakes that burnt.

BETH

So now we can do the pageant!

REVEREND HOPKINS

But Imogene ... that cigar...

BETH & CHARLIE

It wasn't her!

TRACK 35D

GRACE

IT'S A SHAME
THOSE KIDS WERE BLAMED

BETH & CHARLIE

THEY DIDN'T START A FIRE

GRACE

IF WE DON'T TELL THE WORLD THE TRUTH

CHARLIE & BETH

WE REALLY WILL BE LIARS

REVEREND HOPKINS

That's strong.

GRACE

WHO ARE WE TO HURT THEIR FEELINGS?
HOW CAN WE BE SO SMALL?
IN SPITE OF IT ALL

GRACE, CHARLIE & BETH

THEY SHOULD HAVE A CURTAIN CALL!

REVEREND HOPKINS

Now wait a minute...

GRACE, BETH, CHARLIE

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

BETH & CHARLIE

THEY DESERVE IT
GIVE THEM A CHANCE

GRACE

THEY MAY SURPRISE US ALL
GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO KNOW THAT THEY MATTER

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

LET THEM DO THE PAGEANT
AFTER ALL.

TRACK 35E

REVEREND HOPKINS

I have to say Elmer was pretty disappointed the pageant was cancelled, which was a big surprise.

CHARLIE

He was glad to finally not have to play Joseph.

BETH

Even Alice spent all week sewing sequins on her angel costume.

GRACE

If you don't let us do the pageant what does that say about us? That we let a bunch of kids take the blame for something they didn't do.

TRACK 35F

REVEREND HOPKINS

Now, hold on--

I'LL ADMIT
I WANTED TO QUIT
BUT IT JUST ISN'T FAIR

IT'S UP TO ME TO FIX THIS PROBLEM
AND LET THEM KNOW I CARE

I THOUGHT WE HAD TO STOP THIS PAGEANT
BUT NOW I SEE I WAS WRONG
IT'S CLEAR TO ME NOW
THIS SHOW MUST GO ON

(Lights up on CHURCH LADIES and HELEN clutching their phones.)

GRACE, CHARLIE & BETH

Yes!

CHURCH LADIES

What?

HELEN

(in wheelchair with phone)

No!

REVEREND HOPKINS

(confirming his decision to the Bradleys.)

WE'LL GIVE THEM A CHANCE

HELEN

(Shouting into phone; glaring at REVEREND HOPKINS)

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

CHURCH LADIES

(to REVEREND HOPKINS)

YOU REALLY LET US DOWN!

REVEREND HOPKINS, GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

(to HELEN and CHURCH LADIES)

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

HELEN

WELL, YOU CAN BE CERTAIN

ALL

THIS PAGEANT'S GONNA BE THE
TALK OF THE TOWN!

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

WHY GIVE THEM A CHANCE?

REVEREND HOPKINS, GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

THEY CAN BE HEROES

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

THERE'S NOT A CHANCE
THAT THEY WILL BE

REVEREND HOPKINS, GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

SIX OF THE STARS
SHINING THE BRIGHTEST

REVEREND HOPKINS, GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

IN THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

WORST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

*(Now it becomes shouting match between two groups, with
REVEREND HOPKINS in the middle.)*

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

Best!

CHURCH LADIES & HELEN

Worst!

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

Best!

GRACE, BETH & CHARLIE

Worst!

REVEREND HOPKINS

Ladies, please!!!!

(The CHURCH LADIES, not HELEN, snap to and force smiles.)

ALL (EXCEPT HELEN)
BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER!

HELEN

WAIT AND SEE!

(GRACE hugs REVEREND HOPKINS, then she and family run off. CHURCH LADIES AND HELEN look skeptically at the REVEREND.)

REVEREND

Good Lord! What have I done?

Musical finish.

[SFX: Five rings of the broken church bell]

TRACK 36

#14A CAROL TRANSITION

SCENE 13B

THE CHURCH

(in front of the pageant set, which could be on a wagon pulled by the KIDS...it's pageant night and TEDDY comes running across the stage wearing his full shepherd costume and a fake beard)

TEDDY

Mrs. Bradley? Mrs. Bradley?

(IVY crosses stage in her angel costume, frantic)

IVY

I can't find my script. Where's my script?

(CHARLIE appears in his shepherd outfit panicked, followed by other kids. They are all in a tizzy...they all need GRACE's help...GRACE enters in white shift, wearing angel wings, carrying a box of supplies.)

CHARLIE

Mom! The shepherds are clonking each other with their canes.

IVY

(running to GRACE.)

I can't find my script. Who took my script?

(GRACE hands her a spare script)

GRACE

Here.

(BOB enters carrying a potted plant)

BOB

You said I should bring this, but I don't think it looks anything like a palm tree.

ALICE

Someone's been using my mascara. That's so unsanitary...

(GRACE hands ALICE a new tube of mascara)

GRACE

Take this. It's new.

BETH

Mom, it's crazy downstairs. I have no idea what I'm supposed to do.

(GRACE hands her halos)

GRACE

You and Alice lead the angels onto the stage. Charlie, you lead the shepherds. Bob's got the Wise Men. Here's the order.

(GRACE passes out running-order pages to CHARLIE, BETH, ALICE, and BOB)

REVEREND HOPKINS

(pops his head in)

There's a line halfway around the block!

CHARLIE

Mom, I don't know when the shepherds come on.

GRACE

I'll cue you.

REVEREND HOPKINS

I'm letting them in.

ALICE

Mrs. Bradley.

GRACE

What?

ALICE

I brought my Mary costume just in case.

GRACE

What are you saying?

TEDDY

(enters in shepherd outfit)

Mrs. Bradley!

REVEREND HOPKINS

Places, everyone!

(KIDS squeal and bolt for the wings with GRACE starting to follow them)

Mrs. Bradley!

TEDDY

(putting on her own halo)
Everyone take deep breaths. Try to stay calm.

GRACE

Mrs. Bradley!

TEDDY

(out of patience)
What is it, Teddy?

GRACE

The Herdmans aren't here.

TEDDY

Shoot me now!

GRACE

(blackout)

SCENE 14

THE PAGEANT

TRACK 36A

#15 THE PAGEANT

(the set is a homemade crèche...there is a manger made of a cardboard box with hay in it...yellow paper stars hang from strings overhead...music: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" plays as lights come up onstage...ANGELS, led by BETH and ALICE, enter and take a position in a half circle around the manger...CHARLIE leads on shepherds... GRACE brings up the rear...ALICE and BETH are downstage...shepherds off to the side tending their sheep)

KIDS & GRACE (NO HERDMANS)

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
HOW STILL WE SEE THEE LIE
ABOVE THY DEEP AND DREAMLESS SLEEP
THE SILENT STARS GO BY

YET IN THY DARK STREETS SHINETH
AN EVERLASTING LIGHT
THE HOPES AND FEARS OF ALL THE YEARS
ARE MET IN THEE TONIGHT

(GRACE nods at IVY, who is at the podium)

IVY

In the days of Caesar Augustus a decree went out that all the world should be taxed, and Joseph went into Bethlehem with Mary his wife, who was great with child. And while they were there, she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn.

(KIDS are looking around and whispering to each other...GRACE starts them singing "Away in a Manger" accompanied by piano, and then bolts offstage to look for the HERDMANS)

TRACK 37

(music "Away in a Manger")

GRACE

AWAY IN A MANGER

KIDS & GRACE (NO HERDMANS)
NO CRIB FOR A BED

(the KIDS stop singing and hum under following lines until RALPH and IMOGENE appear)

ALICE

(whispers loudly to BETH)

I knew this would happen. Those Herdmans chickened out. Now we don't have a Mary or a Joseph. What are we supposed to do now?

(RALPH and IMOGENE appear on the opposite side of the stage from where GRACE went)

BETH

Quiet. Here they come.

(IMOGENE and RALPH step onto the stage, stare out at audience amazed that they are in front of all these people...GRACE steps out from where she left and nods at them...after a few moments of silence, they speak to each other, making up dialogue...it's not stilted...it's genuine)

IMOGENE/MARY

Oh, Joseph, I don't know what to do. There's no bed for our little baby.

RALPH/JOSEPH

Yes, there is, Mary. This barn's full of hay.

(he pats the soft hay in the manger)

Look! It's soft, like a mattress.

(GRACE, IVY – and any other ANGELS that might have been added – and ELMER, CHARLIE, and TEDDY hum one verse of "Silent Night" under the following dialogue)

TRACK 38

(music: "Silent Night")

ALICE

Mary and Joseph aren't supposed to talk.

BETH

Why not? They're trying to decide what's best for the baby.

(IMOGENE puts baby Jesus on her shoulder and starts patting his back)

ALICE

Look at that! She's burping Jesus. That's just not right.

BETH

Maybe he has colic and is fussy just like any other baby.

ALICE

But he's not any other baby.

(IMOGENE puts baby in the manger and a star lights up above their heads...if it hasn't stopped already, humming stops)

IVY

And in that region, there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. When lo, an angel of the Lord appeared to them.

TRACK 39

(music: harp arpeggio)

(everyone looks stage right for GLADYS)

IVY

Lo! An angel of the Lord appeared to them.

TRACK 40

(music: harp arpeggio)

(everyone looks stage left)

IVY

(loudly)

An angel of the Lord!

[SFX: footsteps and crash box]

TRACK 41

(music: piano low tremolo)

(GLADYS appears, either knocking down kids or leaping on the stage or above the manger)

GLADYS/ANGEL

Hey everybody! Unto you a child is born. His name is Jesus and he's in the barn. Wanna see him?

(the SHEPHERDS, afraid of GLADYS, frantically shake their heads no)

GLADYS/ANGEL

Come on! Come on!

(the SHEPHERDS get up and move to the manger...music transitions to "We Three Kings")

IVY

And Wise Men came from the East to worship the newborn baby.

TRACK 42

(music: "We Three Kings")

KIDS

WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE
BEARING GIFTS, WE TRAVERSE AFAR
FIELD AND FOUNTAIN
MOOR AND MOUNTAIN
FOLLOWING YONDER STAR

(the THREE WISE MEN walk stiffly on as the KIDS sing...they turn, point, and freeze on "following yonder star..."the music plays another verse...KIDS hum under the following dialogue)

ALICE

Look at them. They're not moving.

BETH

They're scared.

ALICE

They should be. Look what they're wearing. They look like Trick or Treat.

(BOB appears in his bathrobe with a towel wrapped around his head like a turban...BOB starts singing a capella, snapping his fingers and swinging the beat)

BOB

OH, STAR OF WONDER, STAR OF NIGHT
COME ON GUYS, LET'S GET THIS RIGHT

(THREE WISE MEN join BOB, harmonizing on "perfect light")

BOB & THREE WISE MEN
WESTWARD LEADING, STILL PROCEEDING
GUIDE US TO THY PERFECT LIGHT

TRACK 43

*(piano enters again, and KIDS hum the next verse as BOB and the
THREE WISE MEN walk to MARY)*

ALICE

What have they got? I bet it's something awful.

BETH

Like what?

ALICE

Like a burnt offering. You know the Herdmans.

IVY

And the Wise Men were bearing gifts.

LEROY

(holds up box)

We got mashed potatoes!

CLAUDE

(holds up can)

Pork 'n' beans!

OLLIE

(struggles to lift ham)

And a big ol' ham!

(humming stops)

BETH

That's the Herdmans' entire food basket from the church.

ALICE

What happened to the gold, frankincense, and myrrh?

BETH

This is better. Much better!

RALPH/JOSEPH

Hey look, Mary! It's the Three Wise Guys and, uh —

BOB

Bob.

IMOGENE/MARY

Thank you, Wise Guys and Bob, for bringing my family a ham.

RALPH/JOSEPH

We can live on this for a whole month.

ALICE

What's that sticking out of the corner of the basket? That white thing?

BETH

It looks like a diaper.

IMOGENE/MARY

(holds up the diaper)

And this is something we can really use.

ALICE

That's gross.

(THREE WISE MEN sit down)

ALICE

Why are the Wise Men sitting down? They're supposed to leave.

BETH

I guess they're hungry. Besides, you wouldn't expect them to just show up, hand over the ham and leave. They came a long way!

(music intro begins the last phrase of "Silent Night")

TRACK 44

#16 ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS

RALPH/JOSEPH

Look, little baby Jesus is getting sleepy.

(IMOGENE puts her finger to her lips and gives the group a gentle "shhhh!" as they all gather close to IMOGENE/MARY to look at the baby)

IMOGENE

(a capella)

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

WHEN THE WIND WAS STILL
A STAR CAME OUT
ABOVE A LONELY HILL

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS
THERE WAS NOT A SOUND
TO BREAK THE PEACE
ON THE COLD HARD GROUND

TRACK 45

(accompaniment enters)

IMOGENE

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS
ALL THE WORLD LOOKED DOWN
ON A PEACEFUL TOWN
CRADLED IN SNOW
AND A YELLOW MOON
CAST A GLOW THAT FOUND
ALL THE MEN AND BEASTS
HUDDLED BELOW

IMOGENE & RALPH

'ROUND A SWEET LITTLE BABY
LYING IN A MANGER
LOOKING UP AT STRANGERS
WITH GIFTS IN THEIR HANDS
NOT KNOWING HE WAS MEANT TO BE
THE HOPE OF HUMANITY
BORN TO BRING SOME HARMONY
TO A TROUBLED LAND

HERDMANS

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS
ALL THE WORLD LOOKED DOWN
ON THAT PEACEFUL TOWN
CRADLED IN SNOW
AND A YELLOW MOON
CAST A GLOW THAT FOUND
ALL THE MEN AND BEASTS
HUDDLED BELOW

HERDMANS & KIDS

'ROUND A SWEET LITTLE BABY

HERDMAN & KIDS

LYING IN A MANGER
LOOKING UP AT STRANGERS
WHO CAME FROM AFAR
JUST A CHILD LIKE YOU AND ME
FULL OF HOPE AND FULL OF NEED
OR WAS HE JUST A RESTLESS SEED
FROM A WANDERIN' STAR

ALL

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS

IMOGENE

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS

(IMOGENE bends over and kisses the baby)

IVY

And on that night, all was calm and all was bright.

(the cast freezes as the light frames them all in a final pose)

[SFX: a chime sounds as a star lights up or twinkles overhead]

(REVEREND HOPKINS comes onto the stage, clearly moved)

REVEREND HOPKINS

Thank you to all the children and Mrs. Bradley. That was...that was something-

(he's going to say "else" but GLADYS, as the Angel of the Lord, appears over the top of the manger...she likes being the star of the show...the kids all break their poses to look at GLADYS)

GLADYS

Hey, everybody! Unto us a child is born!

REVEREND HOPKINS

(smiling up at GLADYS)

Let there be joy in the world!

TRACK 46

#17 LET THERE BE JOY

(KIDS sing as they remove costume parts, run off to the sides of the stage – some clonking each other...or just generally goofing around with that “We did it!” energy)

ALL KIDS

LET THERE BE JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY
IN THE WORLD
LET THERE BE PEACE, LET THERE BE JOY
IN EVERY GIRL, IN EVERY BOY
LET THERE BE JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY
IN THE WORLD

(at intervals in the song, the music vamps, allowing the following vignettes to occur, as the cast merges on stage to form the final tableau – CHURCH LADIES rush onto the stage where the KIDS are already goofing around, while REVEREND HOPKINS tries to get them to stay on the stage for a photo...he has the camera with a flash...each vignette ends with a camera flash)

BETTY

(clutching a handkerchief)

Could you believe that was Imogene Herdman up there? She had me in tears.

LUANNE

The kids are just so darn cute.

CONNIE

And that little Gladys brought a lot of spirit to the Angel.

LUANNE

Who was the baby Jesus?

CONNIE

That was a doll.

BETTY

Oh, I don't think so, Connie. I'm sure I saw his little hand reach for the rattle.

CONNIE

Wait till Helen hears about this. I don't know what she's going to think.

(HELEN rolls up in a wheelchair)

HELEN

It was the best Christmas pageant ever.

(HELEN gestures for GRACE to join her and takes her hand)

HELEN

I knew picking Grace was the right decision.

TRACK 47

(music starts)

HELEN

COME ONE AND ALL

CHURCH LADIES, HELEN & GRACE
AND CELEBRATE THIS DAY
WITH THOSE YOU LOVE FROM NEAR AND FAR AWAY
REACH OUT YOUR HAND AND WELCOME BACK AGAIN

ALL

ONE AND ALL LIKE A LONG LOST FRIEND

(music vamps...CHARLIE running up to LEROY)

CHARLIE

Hey, Leroy. Don't forget your food basket.

LEROY

That's a gift. You don't take back a gift. Want a candy cane?

CHARLIE

Sure.

LEROY

(whispers)

I gotta whole bag of 'em hid back here. Come on.

*(CHARLIE runs off with LEROY...BOB and BETH join GRACE
in another area, hugging her)*

BETH

Mom, you did it!

BOB

There's my Amazing Grace.

GRACE

You're still in your bathrobe.

BOB

I've talked to the Herdmans and we're forming a singing group and taking it on the road. The Three Wise Guys and Bob.

(GRACE laughs and kisses BOB on the cheek...camera flash...during this ALICE joins them taking BETH's hand)

GRACE, BOB, BETH & ALICE

LET THERE BE PEACE, LET THERE BE JOY
IN EVERY GIRL, AND EVERY BOY
LET THERE BE JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY
IN THE WORLD

(lights up on the HERDMANS and REVEREND HOPKINS who is trying to corral them back with the rest of the cast take a group picture)

REVEREND HOPKINS

Thank you, kids, for joining our pageant. I have to say, we'll miss you next year.

RALPH

Don't worry. From now on, we're doing the Christmas pageant every year.

GLADYS

But next year, I'm playing Mary.

IMOGENE

Yeah! The heck you will!

(GRACE steps between GLADYS and IMOGENE as they lunge for each other)

GRACE

SO LIFT YOUR HEARTS AND DO NOT TURN AWAY
FROM THOSE IN NEED WHO MAY HAVE GONE ASTRAY

ALL

REACH OUT YOUR HAND AND WELCOME BACK AGAIN
ONE AND ALL, LIKE A LONG LOST FRIEND

(final tableau: The BRADLEYS and REVEREND HOPKINS upstage – GRACE and BETH as angels, BOB and CHARLIE as shepherds...the HERDMANS and OTHER KIDS scuffle to get the best spot...the final pose as GLADYS poses in the back with arms held high)

ALL

LET THERE BE LOVE

LET THERE BE JOY

IN EVERY GIRL

IN EVERY BOY

LET THERE BE JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY
JOY

LET THERE BE
JOY
JOY
JOY, JOY, JOY

IN THE WORLD
IN THE WORLD

TRACK 48

#18 BOWS

ECHO

LET THERE BE LOVE

LET THERE BE JOY

IN EVERY GIRL
IN EVERY BOY

JOY IN THE WORLD

JOY

IN THE WORLD

End of Play

APPENDIX

Props List

Scene 1: Church

Shopping cart

2 lawn-size candy canes

Rudolph reindeer from lawn

String of lights (to wrap Elmer)

Plastic Santa (dressed like a clown, with clown mask and wig)

Snowman made of 3 balls to be tossed around

Prop carrot nose

Scene 2: The Bradley Home

Bob's bag of groceries with carton of ice cream inside

Newspaper

Briefcase

4 TV dinners covered in aluminum foil

2 cooking mitts

Tablecloth

Silverware and napkins for 4

Church flyer

Christmas decorations

Dial phone with long cord (pastel pink, yellow, or turquoise blue)

Scene 2A

Helen's hospital phone

Costume prop: leg and arm cast

Hospital equipment that holds leg

Scene 3: School Lunchroom

Lunchboxes and paper lunch bag

Charlie's lunch is in paper bag

Hostess Cupcake in package

Scene 4: Helen's Hospital Room

Bulletin board with photos, pictures, and yarn with CSI-type layout

Pointers

Thick production notebook labeled "Christmas pageant"

Scene 5: Church – Auditions

Cigar for Imogene (one that can blow smoke)

Scene 5A: Rehearsal Room

Blackboard with pageant parts and rehearsals detailed

Scene 6: Phone Tree Areas

3 princess dial phones for Church Ladies with no cords

Helen's hospital phone

Scene 7: Church

4 big baskets that are being festively decorated

4 ribbons and other decorating supplies

4 hams, 4 boxes of mashed potatoes, 4 jars of jam, 4 bags of rolls, 4 toys

Poinsettia plant to be taken to Helen

Scene 7A: Helen's Hospital Room

Helen's list and pen

Scene 8: Church – First Rehearsal

Pitch pipe

Possible whistle

Scene 9: The Bradley Home / Helen's Phone Area

2 clearly labeled boxes of costumes with shepherd headgear

Helen in wheelchair

Scene 10: Church – Second Rehearsal

Boxes of costumes labeled: angel wings, shepherd robes, animal ears

Shepherd crooks and broom handles made to look like shepherd crooks

Slip-on angel wings that Gladys puts on

Cooking mitts/aprons for Church Ladies

Cigar that puffs smoke

Jump rope to tie up Charlie

Scene 11: Street on Poorer Side of Town

Fully-packed baskets with ribbons (at least 3, but probably more)

Lanterns

The Herdmans' food basket

Flashlight

Scene 12: The Herdman Garage

The Herdmans' food basket (from previous scenes)

Beat-up baby doll with no clothes, no hair, maybe missing an eye

Scene 12B: Church

Reverend's clipboard checklist

Scene 13: Church

Grace's box that holds: mascara, scripts, running list, halo

Large potted plant

Scene 14: The Pageant

Baby blanket for Jesus

Herdman's basket items: box of mashed potatoes, can of pork and beans, big ham, cloth diaper

Could have: cardboard camel for Bob

Helen's wheelchair

