

Christmas Wishes

ACT ONE

(LIGHTS DIM.)

(IN THE DARKNESS THE AUDIENCE HEARS 30 SECONDS OR SO OF MUSIC FROM THE BAND, POSSIBLY A "SANTA BABY" PLAYOFF)

SCENE ONE - CHRISTMAS EVE, ON-STAGE AT THE STARLITE LOUNGE.

(WHILE STILL IN THE DARKNESS, WE HEAR THE PRERECORDED SOUND OF APPLAUSE. AS THE APPLAUSE CONTINUES WE HEAR A FEMALE VOICE. AS SHE BEGINS TO SPEAK THE LIGHTS SLOWLY COME UP TO REVEAL A TRIO OF SINGERS, "THE EXTRAORDINAIRES," LED BY FEMALE VOCALIST CARMEL STEWART. THEY ARE WRAPPING UP THE END OF A HOLIDAY PERFORMANCE.)

CARMEL

Thank you. Thank you very much. *(THE APPLAUSE BEGINS TO DIE DOWN)* Thank you. That's always been one of our favorites. You know, when the boys and I got together to choose the songs for this Christmas Eve show, we *all* had personal favorites that we wanted to include. Unfortunately, if we were to sing them all, we'd probably be here till *next* Christmas eve. *(INTRO MUSIC FOR NEXT SONG BEGINS)* That got us to thinking, though, about how many wonderful songs have been written for the holidays.....and that's what inspired us to write this next piece. We hope you enjoy it.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A CHRISTMAS SONG

**Whenever winter winds begin to blow
and temperatures dip down to four below,
though the days may seem blue
one thing always gets me through
each year as I hang up my mistletoe.**

**The snow is falling;
it's mid-December;
but it's time of year when I remember
how much I've missed 'em.
There's nothing like a Christmas song.**

**It's the season
for jingle-belling,**

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for silent nights and first-noeling.
I can't resist 'em.
There's nothing like a Christmas song.

Deck the halls and silver bells
or dear old Rudolph
can brighten the gloomiest frown.
Chestnuts roasting on a fire
can inspire
kiddies singin' Santa Claus is comin' to town.

They may be corny
and incidental
but what's the harm in being sentimental?
That's why I love 'em
There's nothing like a Christmas song.

Rockin' around the Christmas tree
or walkin' in a winter wonderland,
over the river
to visit grandma
Are there any tunes more grand?

My heart is full
to overflowing.
I hear a melody
when it starts snowing
and I surrender.
There's nothing like a Christmas song.

I never quit the Twelve Days of Christmas
'til I've conquered ev-e-ry line.
And I admit
I still get teary
When I hear that auld lang syne.

So call me dull
but have some pity.
I'm just a sucker for a Yuletide ditty.
How can you beat 'em?

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There's nothing like a Christmas song.

**They bring joy to the world
from Rome to Atlanta.
Is there any better way to greet ol' Santa?
I just go ga-ga
all for a Christmas song.**

CARMEL

(DURING THE APPLAUSE) Thank you. Thank you. I guess we *all* feel the same way about Christmas music, don't we? Now, we know you're probably anxious to get home to take care of those last minute holiday chores, but we've got one last song to wrap up the evening. Before we do, the Extraordinaires, *(INDICATING EACH OF THEM AS THEY WAVE TO THE AUDIENCE)* Jimmy Lydic, Todd Somerville and myself, Carmel Stewart, want to extend to you our warmest wishes for the most meaningful holiday ever. *(MUSIC IN)* And we'd like to leave you with this special sentiment which we should all keep in mind during this magical season.

WISHES CAN COME TRUE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

**Everyday it seems our lives become more tangled.
Holding on to dreams can sometimes be so hard.
Everyday we pray for things that never come to be
but one day holds special pow'r for you and for me.**

**Heaven knows;
Heaven cares;
Heaven hears
all our prayers.
Make a wish
and it's yours if you believe
that wishes can come true on Christmas Eve.**

**If the world around you starts to lose its meaning,
don't let all your hopes begin to fade or slip away.
That's the time when miracles can suddenly appear
if you just have faith in this wondrous time of year.**

**Heaven knows;
Heaven cares;
Heaven hears**

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**all our prayers.
Make a wish
and it's yours if you believe
that wishes can come true on Christmas eve.**

**For a dream can do great things
if your heart will give it wings.**

**Just remember all the world is filled with promise
on the night we celebrate the birth of a child.
Never doubt the blessing of this time of wonderment.
There's no greater way to praise the gift that God has sent.**

**Heaven knows;
Heaven cares;
Heaven hears
all our prayers.
Make a wish
and it's yours if you believe
that wishes can come true on Christmas eve.**

**Just have faith
in the wonders you can weave
from the wishes that you make on Christmas eve.
Oooooo....**

ALL THREE

Goodnight, and Merry Christmas.

(MUSICAL PLAYOFF, AS LIGHTS DIM. IN DARKNESS, AS MUSIC CONTINUES, WE HEAR AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE OWNER OF THE STARLIGHT LOUNGE.)

ANNOUNCER

Well ladies and gentlemen, that about wraps up our special Christmas eve show here at the Starlite Lounge. Thanks for joining us. And don't forget about the exciting New Year's eve bash we've got coming up, featuring the big band sounds of Mark Stevens and his Merry Musicmakers. Make sure you get your reservations in early so you won't be disappointed. Till then, the entire staff of the Starlite want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. And drive safely out there...the snow is really starting to come down. Good night!

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SCENE TWO - A DRESSING ROOM AT THE STARLITE, 15 MINUTES LATER

(CARMEL IS ON HER CELL PHONE)

CARMEL

(INTO THE CELL PHONE) Yes, hi, I've got a reservation tonight on the 12:45 redeye to Bermuda and I just want to confirm that it's still on schedule in spite of the storm. Thank you.
(SHE GETS PUT ON HOLD)

(AS SHE SPEAKS, JIMMY ENTERS IN HIS COAT.)

JIMMY

Merry Christmas, sweetheart. I'll see you in a few weeks. Have a great time and bring some sun back with you. *(HE HUGS HER)*

CARMEL

I will. Have a wonderful holiday, Jimmy. My love to your family *(HE EXITS)*
(INTO THE PHONE) Yes? It is? Oh, thank God. Thank you. And Merry Christmas to you, too. *(SHE DISCONNECTS AS TODD ENTERS, ALSO READY TO LEAVE)*

TODD

Are you sure you won't reconsider, Carmel? You know Sharon always has enough food on hand to feed the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. And the kids would love to see you again.

CARMEL

You're very sweet, Todd, but you know how I feel about Christmas.

TODD

I know. But I keep hoping one of these years it's going to be different.

CARMEL

I lost my reason to celebrate when I lost John and Jessie in the accident.

TODD

I know....it was rough losing your husband and daughter, but maybe it's time you try to move on. It's been five years.

CARMEL

Five years ago this very night. And I still blame myself. If we hadn't booked the group for a Christmas eve gig that year, they wouldn't have been forced to drive 50 miles in a blinding storm

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just so we could all be together. Every time I think of their car plunging off that bridge into the..... (*SHE CAN'T FINISH*)

TODD

(*HE PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER*) I know. I know. One of these days it's going to change. I promise.

CARMEL

I only wish it could.

TODD

Maybe you need to take that last song to heart. Wishes can come true on Christmas Eve, you know.

CARMEL

Wouldn't it be wonderful if that were true? But I don't see any way I could ever get my wish.....to hear them say I love you once more. (*GETTING HER EMOTIONS BACK IN CONTROL*) So, thanks for the offer. I hope you and Sharon and the kids have a terrific holiday. By this time tomorrow, I'll be sipping some exotic drink and enjoying the warm Bermuda breeze on the lanai of my overpriced villa.

TODD

(*GIVING HER A HUG*) We'll be thinking of you.

CARMEL

Thanks.

TODD

See you soon. Call us when you get back. And be careful. It's getting nasty out there.

CARMEL

I will. Good-bye.

TODD

Bye.

(*HE LEAVES. MUSIC IN. ALONE ON-STAGE CARMEL LOOKS TO HEAVEN*)

WISHES CAN COME TRUE ON CHRISTMAS EVE (reprise)

Christmas Wishes

**Do You know?
Do You care?
Do You hear ev'ry prayer?
If You do
then please help me to believe.
It's time that You come through on Christmas eve.**

(SHE GATHERS HER THINGS AND PUTS ON HER COAT)

**What's the point?
'cuz only the naive
think wishes can come true on Christmas eve.**

(SHE WALKS OUT AS LIGHTS DIM AND MUSIC ENDS)

(IN DARKNESS WE HEAR THE END OF A RECORDING FROM A WELL-KNOWN CHRISTMAS SONG WHICH WILL REPRESENT THE LAST SONG BEING PLAYED ON THE LOCAL RADIO STATION. AT END OF MUSIC, WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A SMALL TOWN RADIO ANNOUNCER.

NATE LEONARD

And that's about it for the WJYX Christmas eve show. Folks, I've been lookin' out my window here.....looks like this storm's gonna be a doozy. If the snow doesn't get you the wind surely will. It's startin' to whip up out there faster than Tom Harris' bulldog chasin after Mae Daniels' two Siamese cats. Don't know how many roads are already closed but sooner or later they're all gonna be pretty much out of commission. Phone lines are gettin' knocked down too, so callin' all your loved ones may have to wait till this all blows over and Sam Stevens and his sons can get out there to fix em. I'd advise any of you that're still out and about to get yourself home soon. Which is exactly what I'm gonna do now. This is Nate Leonard signin' off with a Merry Christmas to all and to all a goodnight.

(DURING THE ANNOUNCEMENT, LIGHTS WILL COME UP.)

SCENE THREE - LEON'S DINER, A HALF-HOUR LATER

(LEON'S IS VERY CLEARLY NOT THE MOST ELEGANT OF ESTABLISHMENTS. STILL THERE'S AN INVITING WARMTH TO THE SURROUNDINGS, AS IF THE PLACE HAS BEEN THERE FOREVER, AS IF THE CLIENTELE THINK OF IT AS A HOME AWAY FROM HOME. THOUGH IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE THE ONLY INDICATION MIGHT BE A CARDBOARD CHAIN OF LETTERS SPELLING OUT "MERRY CHRISTMAS" WITH SOME OF THE

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LETTERS MISSING. THERE IS A JUKE BOX IN THE CORNER AND A PAY-PHONE ON THE WALL.

A DOWN-ON-HIS-LUCK MALE PATRON, GEORGE, IS SITTING QUIETLY BY HIMSELF, NURSING A CUP OF COFFEE; POSSIBLY GIVING THE IMPRESSION OF BEING A HOMELESS SOUL. OWNER OF LEON'S, BETTY, ENTERS WITH A TRAY OF GLASSES WHICH SHE PUTS ON THE SHELF.)

(AS THE END OF THE DJ'S ANNOUNCEMENT, BETTY TURNS OFF THE RADIO)

BETTY

(TO GEORGE)

Hear that, George? Storm's movin' in fast so I'm gonna be closing up in a few minutes. You best finish your coffee and get yourself on the road while you still can.

(GEORGE DOESN'T ANSWER, ALTHOUGH THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO FAZE BETTY IN THE LEAST. SHE BEGINS TO CLEAR UP ANY LEFTOVER DISHES, ETC. HANK, A POLICEMAN, BLOWS IN FROM THE OUTSIDE. HE'S A DOWN TO EARTH, REGULAR KIND OF GUY. VERY SWEET ON BETTY AS WELL)

Well, look what the storm just blew in. Why're you still out on a night like this? I thought your shift was over at 10:00.

HANK

(BRUSHING OFF THE SNOW) It was. I was just on my way home and saw the lights.....wanted to make sure that you heard the storm warnings.

BETTY

Yep, just getting ready to close up for the night. Just waitin' for George to finish his coffee. You want a quick cup to warm you up? It's just gonna go to waste otherwise.

HANK

I guess I've got time for a quick one. *(SHE POURS HIM A CUP)*

(TO GEORGE) Better get a move on it George. Storm's not gonna wait much longer to hit.

(GEORGE REMAINS SILENT. HANK SMILES) You know, sometimes I wonder if he understands *anything* we say.

BETTY

Of course he does. *(TO GEORGE)* And one of these days he's gonna start talkin' and makin' up for lost time, aren't you George? *(STILL NO RESPONSE)*

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HANK

Maybe. So, Betty. Got any plans for the evening?

BETTY

Who wants to know?

HANK

I was just curious.

BETTY

If you really must know, I've got a date.....with a warm fire and "It's a Wonderful Life" on TV.

HANK

How about sharin' that warm fire with a warm body? (*SHE BEGINS TO ANSWER BUT HE STOPS HER*) And before you say no, let me ask you this.....How many times are you gonna make me beg before you say yes?

BETTY

And how many times have I told you you're wastin' your time even askin'?

HANK

I don't understand. You're goin' home to an empty house tonight but it doesn't have to be that way.

BETTY

Yes it does. Like I told you before, when Leon walked out on us three years ago for that blonde bimbo, I swore I was gonna soak him for ev'ry cent he had. Luckily the judge sided with me and I got to keep the diner and I get \$500 a month from the jerk to help support me and Rachel. The only thing I've gotta do is stay single and let him have Rachel for two weeks every Christmas. I can't go screwin' that up just to go foolin' around with you.

HANK

But I can give you so much more.

BETTY

Save it, Mr. policeman.

HANK

I've got a good job.

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BETTY

....that could get you killed any time you walk out of the house.

HANK

Around here? My gun isn't even loaded.

BETTY

Besides, what makes you think I'd want to jump back on the nuptial hay wagon? After Leon, I pretty much gave up on the idea of wedded bliss.

HANK

(MUSIC IN) I don't believe that. What's it gonna take, to change your mind?

BETTY

Well, I'd say it'd take a miracle. And miracles don't have a way of happenin' around here so I wouldn't hold your breath.

WAITING FOR MIRACLES

HANK

**Look around you, there's obviously
something that you're missing and that something is me.**

**There's no use denying
a girl needs some "guying,"
someone she's keen on,
a shoulder to lean on.**

**Just your luck, I've a shoulder or two
ready for a leaning that is long overdue.**

Why fight the attention?

Ignore apprehension.

**No need to think twice
if you take my advice.**

**You should stop waiting for miracles.
Sometimes you gotta grab the thing that's closest at hand.**

**When you stop looking for miracles
then you're gonna see what's meant to be....
and that's me.**

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BETTY
You, huh?

HANK
Me.

BETTY
Save your breath, cause it ain't gonna happen.

HANK
Aw, Betty, I wish you would reconsider.

BETTY
Look, Hank.....

BETTY
You may think that my life's in a rut.
When I look around I think it's anything but.
I'm perfectly able
to lean on a table
so what you're implying
I'm not really buying.
I don't need to be somebody's wife.
In case you hadn't noticed I'm content with my life.
So save the advances,
and spare the romances.
I don't need anymore
'cause I've been there before.

And I'm not waiting for miracles.
I'm way beyond believing that there's some guarantee.
Yes, I stopped waiting for miracles,
cause miracles are never meant to be,
not for me.

HANK
I'm not ever gonna give up
till you see this dog is one dependable pup.

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BETTY

**That'll be a comfort to know, after all.
When I need a puppy then I'll give you a call.**

And now who's waiting for miracles??!!

HANK

**Well, maybe I've been hoping for a Heavenly cue.
But I'll keep looking for miracles**

HANK BETTY
'cuz Then

BOTH
**Heaven'll need
to begin interceding
for you**

HANK
all for you

BETTY
not for me

BOTH (simultaneously)
All for you/Not for me!

HANK

Well, if you're not gonna let me join you, at least I can make sure you get home safely. Why don't you grab your things. I'll follow you in the squad car.

BETTY

You are an officer and a gentleman! It'll only take me a minute. (*SHE EXITS INTO THE BACK*)

HANK

(*TO GEORGE*) Hey, George.....gotta get a move on, buddy. Betty's closin' up. (*NO RESPONSE*) Time to head home. (*CLEARs HIS OWN COFFEE CUP*) Where *do* you live George? Can I give you a lift? Here, let me take that. (*HE CLEARs GEORGE'S CUP.*) You know, George, sometimes I wish that my life was as uncomplicated as yours. You don't have a care in the world, do you? If only we all could be as lucky as you.

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(BETTY RETURNS WITH HER COAT & PURSE, CARRYING TWO CHRISTMAS PRESENTS)

BETTY

Now, don't go takin' this to mean anything more than it's meant to be.....but I did a little shoppin' last week and found a couple of things. Nothing much.....just thought you might like 'em.
(HANDS ONE TO EACH OF THE GUYS) Merry Christmas, Hank.....and Merry Christmas, George.

HANK

Well, aren't you just the best! *(HE OPENS HIS AND FINDS A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE)*

BETTY

I think I remember once hearing you say that you were partial to the bubbly stuff.

HANK

You heard right! Can I at least give you a little thank you kiss without you thinkin' I was after something else?

BETTY

Well, if you must.

HANK

(HE GIVES HER A PECK ON THE CHEEK) Thanks, darlin'. 'Course, now we have to sample a little. After all, it's bad luck to have a bottle of champagne with no one to share it with, especially at Christmas!

BETTY

(HUMORING HIM) Oh, is that so?

HANK

I'll get the glasses. *(HE HEADS TO THE COUNTER)*

BETTY

Go ahead, George. Open yours. *(GEORGE LOOKS AT HER)* Go on. Don't be afraid.
(GEORGE LOOKS AT THE GIFT THEN SLOWLY OPENS IT, PULLING OUT A KNIT SCARF. BETTY TAKES IT AND PUTS IT AROUND HIS NECK) Just a little somethin' to keep you from catching your death of cold....and from the sound'a things out there, you're really gonna need it tonight. *(GEORGE, DEEPLY MOVED, TOUCHES IT, THEN LOOKS UP AT BETTY AND GIVES HER A LITTLE SMILE.)*

Christmas Wishes

(HANK RETURNS WITH THE GLASSES AND THE OPEN CHAMPAGNE.)

HANK

Here we are. *(HE POURS ONE FOR EACH OF THEM)* One for Betty, one for George, and one for Hank. A toast!

TO US!

HANK

Here's to Christmas,
the perfect time to say
"God bless us all this season
with a merry Christmas day."

BETTY

Here's to friendship!
The gift that we hold dear,
not only just at Christmas
but throughout each passing year.

BOTH

Here's to tomorrow--
what the future may hand to us.
may we always be deserving
of what Heaven may grant to us.

HANK

To Christmas!

BETTY

To friendship!

HANK

To the future!

BOTH

And to us!

(THEY CLINK AND DRINK. GEORGE EVEN SEEMS TO BE COMING AROUND A BIT, ALTHOUGH HE DOESN'T DRINK THE CHAMPAGNE.)

HANK

Christmas Wishes

What's the matter George, don'tcha like champagne?

BETTY

I guess coffee is his beverage of choice, isn't it George? (*GEORGE STILL DOESN'T SPEAK*)
All right. (*CLEARING GLASSES TO COUNTER*) We better we get out of here while we still can.

(*SUDDENLY THE DOOR OPENS AND IN BLOWS CARMEL STEWART, SOMEWHAT DISHEVELED AND SNOW-COVERED, LOOKING AS IF SHE'S HAD TO WALK A BIT THROUGH THE STORM TO GET THERE*).

CARMEL

God, what a night!

BETTY

I'm sorry, miss but I was just about to close up for the night.

CARMEL

I assure you, I'll only be here for as long as it takes to use your phone. My car slid into a ditch a about a half-mile down the road and my cell phone isn't picking up a signal out here in the middle of nowhere. I need to phone the auto club. (*SHE CROSSES TOWARD THE PAY PHONE*)

BETTY

Well, I'd sure like to help you out but the phone's dead. Storm's knocked down all the lines.

CARMEL

(*SARCASTICALLY*) Wonderful.

HANK

Even if you could get through, old Bill Reed and his nephew, Travis run the only garage around here and they've closed up till the day after Christmas.

CARMEL

Terrific. Where am I, Mayberry?

HANK

No, this is....

CARMEL

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It doesn't make any difference. I need to find some way to get to the airport.

HANK

What for?

CARMEL

Well, I don't know what *you* do at an airport but I've got a flight to Bermuda to catch.

HANK

What I meant was, there's probably no use goin' to the airport tonight. Sooner or later it'll be snowed in.....if it isn't already.

CARMEL

Great. Now what am I gonna do?

HANK

If it helps you out any, I can swing back past the station on my way home and drop you off there. Maybe the sheriff can help you out.

CARMEL

Well, it's better than nothing. Thank you.

HANK

By the way, I'm Hank and this is Betty.

BETTY

It's a pleasure.

CARMEL

Nice to meet you. I'm Carmel. Look, I'm sorry if I came on a little strong. Christmas eve has never been the best of nights for me.

BETTY

No need to apologize. Just glad that we were still around to help.

HANK

Betty, why don't you give me your keys. I'll go and brush off your car and warm it up for the trip home.

BETTY

Christmas Wishes

(HANDING HIM THE KEYS) Thanks, Hank. *(TO CARMEL)* While he's out there, would you like some coffee to warm you up? I think I can squeeze one more cup outta the pot.

CARMEL
That would be wonderful

BETTY
Come and sit down. Get your breath. You're obviously not from around here.

CARMEL
No, I live about 50 miles from here. I was performing over at the Starlite Lounge.

BETTY
(POURING COFFEE) You an actress?

CARMEL
A singer. My group, The Extraordinaires??.....*(SHE LOOKS TO BETTY TO SEE IF SHE'S HEARD OF THEM. BETTY SHAKES HER HEAD 'NO')* had a show tonight.

BETTY
That must've been fun.

CARMEL
It was a job. *(TAKING CUP)* Thank you. I'm sorry if I'm holding you up. You're probably anxious to get home.....Christmas eve and all.

BETTY
Nothing waiting for me there except an empty bed.

CARMEL
Oh, I thought maybe you and.....

BETTY
Hank? No. *(LAUGHS)* Well, not that he wouldn't jump at the chance if I said the word. I'm by myself tonight. I've got a daughter, Rachel.....she's 6....but she's always with her dad during the holidays. We're divorced. I wish it could be different but you gotta do what you gotta do.

CARMEL
I'm sorry. *(GEORGE GETS UP, DROPS A QUARTER TIP ON THE COUNTER, AND EXITS OUTSIDE)* What's his story?

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BETTY

George? Don't really know *what* his story is. He just started comin' in here about a year ago. Never talks....never says a word. Always points to the same thing on the menu....a cup of coffee. Don't even know if his name is George. I just started callin' him that one day because he always leaves a twenty-five cent tip.....one Washington quarter. So, George it was. He's just a lost, lonely soul. Harmless really. What about you? Your family waiting for you in Bermuda?

CARMEL

No, I'm alone too. Just heading down there for a little vacation.....and distraction. My husband and my little girl died five years ago in a car accident on Christmas eve.....not very far from here, actually. Their car went off a bridge.

BETTY

Oh, how awful

CARMEL

I find I always need *plenty* of distraction to get through the holidays.

BETTY

I'm so sorry.

CARMEL

Thanks. Coffee really hits the spot.

BETTY

So here we are. Four mismatched people with more in common that we'd like to admit.

CARMEL

What do you mean?

BETTY

We know all too well what it's like to be alone this time of year.

CARMEL

How true.

THE LONELIEST GAME

Christmas Wishes

CARMEL

Wake up Christmas morning to an empty space.
There's no one there;
no one to share.
Set the Christmas table.....just one place.
No need for two.
There's only you.

BETTY

Unwrap the Christmas present you bought yourself
then hid somewhere away on a dusty shelf.
Count each endless hour that slowly ticks away
and pray that you can get through the day.

BOTH

Christmas can find you
waiting and playing
the loneliest game,
CARMEL
it's a hard time of year.

BOTH

when what you wish for
and what you get
are never the same;
when all around you
the world can seem hopelessly gray,

BETTY

and, just like ev'ry other,
for you it's just
another day.

CARMEL

Christmas cards arrive at a steady rate.
They're never fun
addressed to one.

BETTY

There's no special reason to decorate.
Why trim a tree
no one will see?

CARMEL

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Neighbors will invite you for Christmas cheer.
You're thankful for the chance to have others near.

BETTY

But as you sit there, you're filled with one regret,
the one thing that you never forget....

BOTH

Christmas can find you
waiting and playing
the loneliest game.

CARMEL

it's a hard time of year.

BOTH

when what you wish for
and what you get
are never the same;
when all around you
the world can seem hopelessly gray.

BETTY

And just like ev'ry other,
for you it's just
another day.

CARMEL

Pretending not to notice the emptiness;
struggling somehow just to hide the ache;

BOTH

all the while trying
to not think of crying
when, inside, your heart wants to break.

Hold on to the dream
one day it will end;
someday in your heart
all hurting will mend.

That's the day you'll wake up and suddenly
no longer face
an empty space.

Christmas Wishes

**At the Christmas table you're gonna see
a place for two,
not only you.
In the corner there'll be a Christmas tree
with presents all around it, and then
you can at last
start to celebrate Christmas again.
When, all around you,
the loneliness comes to an end,
it will be Christmas again.
It can be Christmas again.**

(HANK REENTERS, ALONG WITH GEORGE)

HANK

Sorry, ladies, it doesn't look like any of us is going anywhere tonight.

BETTY

What do you mean?

HANK

Well.....number one: your car doesn't seem to want to start..... number two: headquarters just radioed with a warning for everyone to stay off the roads. Only emergency vehicles are allowed through; number three: it's really startin' to come down out there..... not a good night for anyone to be out walkin'. That's why I brought George back.

CARMEL

(INTERRUPTING) Your police car is an emergency vehicle isn't it? You can still get me to the station, right?

HANK

And that's number four.....the airport just shut down for the night. There'll be no planes goin' *or* comin' till the storm clears. No use tryin' to get to the station now.

CARMEL

Now what am I supposed to do?

HANK

Not a whole lotta choices except sit tight until we get the "all-clear" sign, I guess.

Christmas Wishes

CARMEL

You mean, spend Christmas eve here?

BETTY

I know it ain't much, but I can think of worse places to spend the night.

CARMEL

Are you sure there's absolutely no way to get out?

HANK

Short of findin' a team 'a sled-dogs sittin' around doin' nothing, I can't think a thing.

CARMEL

Great.....I'm giving up Bermuda to spend Christmas eve with Sheriff Taylor, Aunt Bea and Gomer Pyle. (*PAUSE*) I'm sorry, that was a mean thing to say.

BETTY

Oh.....don' t give it another thought. (*MUSIC IN*) We're all just a little bit worked up about the storm. But there's always something to be thankful for, isn't there?

IT'S GONNA BE A LONG NIGHT

BETTY

**Outside it's snowing,
the wind is blowing
and there's no let up in sight.
Let's make the best of it
It's gonna be a long night.**

**In fact I'll wager
dear mother nature
is poised to put up a fight.
Let's make the best of it.
It's gonna be a long night.**

**Just look on the bright side:
we're here where it's warm.
It's not quite Norman Rockwell
but it's shelter from the storm.
We may as well get cozy**

Christmas Wishes

and get used to one another,
so quit your bellyaching
'cuz we're stuck here with each other.

We all can do it;
we'll all get through it.
It's bound to turn out all right.
Let's make the best of it.
It's gonna be a long, long night.

(SHE SINGS TO HANK)

Our plans have changed now,
been rearranged now.
Pull up a chair and sit tight.

(SPOKEN) Hank?

HANK

(AGREEING)

We'll make the best of it!
It's gonna be a long night.

BETTY

(SPOKEN) Now you're talkin, pal!

(SINGING TO CARMEL)

So what's your worry?

No need to hurry

now that they've canceled your flight.

(SPOKEN) Well?

CARMEL

(BEGRUDGINGLY)

I'll make the best of it.
It's gonna be a *long* night.

BETTY

(SPOKEN)

That's the spirit.

HANK

(INDICATING THE JUKE BOX)

We've even got music
for setting the mood.

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

The fridge is overflowing
so we won't run out of food.

HANK

All the comforts of home
I have to admit.

HANK & BETTY

What more could you ask for?

CARMEL

I can think of quite a bit.

BETTY

(TO GEORGE)

All gloominess ends now.
You're here among friends now.
Let's hear your bark and your bite!

HANK

(AFTER A MUSICALLY-SILENT PAUSE, ANSWERING FOR A STILL-QUIET GEORGE)

He'll make the best of it.

+ **BETTY**

It's gonna be a long, long night.

ALL THREE

We may be stranded;
thermometer's landed
at ten degrees Fahrenheit;
We'll make the best of it.
It's gonna be a long night.

BETTY

The phone lines are down.

HANK

The highway is closed.

BETTY & HANK

You risk the chance of frostbite
if your nose is exposed.

CARMEL

I'm stuck inside a diner
in the middle of God knows where.

BETTY & HANK

Christmas Wishes

It could be worse, you know.

CARMEL

(SPOKEN) How?

BETTY & HANK

You could be out there.

(HANK OPENS THE DOOR TO THE SOUNDS OF THE WIND HOWLING)

BETTY

Close that door, Hank!

BETTY

Whatever the weather

BETTY & HANK

we're in this together

ALL THREE

so now it's time to unite

and make the best of it.

We'll stand the test of it.

BETTY & HANK

Won't this be fun?

CARMEL

Not quite.

BETTY & HANK

We'll make the best of it

ALL THREE

and make it through

this long, long, long, long, long,

long night.

ALL THREE

(SPOKEN)

That's right!

BETTY

Well, if we're gonna be here awhile I guess I better put on another pot of coffee..

(SUDDENLY THEY HEAR A LOUD DISTRESSING YELL COMING FROM OFFSTAGE, FOLLOWED BY A CRASH AND A BIG THUMP AS IF SOMEONE HAS FALLEN OFF THE ROOF. THEY ALL RUSH TO THE WINDOW.)

Christmas Wishes

HANK

Good Lord, there's a man laying in the snow.

BETTY

Goodness, get him inside.

HANK

Come on George, give me a hand.

(HANK AND GEORGE EXIT)

BETTY

(YELLING OFF TO THEM) Be careful with him, he may be hurt.

CARMEL

I wonder how he got here..... I don't see another car out there.

BETTY

God only knows. *(TO THEM OUTSIDE)* That's it, take it easy with him. That's it. Just a little further.

(HANK AND GEORGE REENTER, PROPPING UP SEBASTIAN BETWEEN THEM. SEBASTIAN IS A KINDLY LOOKING GENTLEMAN, A BIT COMICALLY DISHEVELED WITH REMNANTS OF BUSHES STICKING OUT OF HIS CLOTHES. HE CARRIES A SMALL SACHEL. AT THE MOMENT HE SEEMS A BIT DELIRIOUS.)

SEBASTIAN

Oh my.....oh my.....oh my.

BETTY

(PULLING UP A CHAIR FOR HIM) Here.....sit him down here. *(THEY DO)*

SEBASTIAN

(OUT OF BREATH) Oh my goodness.

BETTY

Just calm down honey.....calm down and get your breath.

SEBASTIAN

Could I have some water, please?

Christmas Wishes

CARMEL

I'll get it. (*SHE GOES TO COUNTER AND POURS A GLASS FOR HIM WHILE DIALOGUE CONTINUES*)

SEBASTIAN

Where am I?

BETTY

Right now you're sittin' in Leon's Diner....and you're talkin' to the owner.

SEBASTIAN

(*THINKING HIS VISION HAS BEEN AFFECTED, STRAINING TO GET A GOOD LOOK AT BETTY*) You're Leon? Oh my....I guess I'm worse off than I thought.

BETTY

Your eyes are fine. I'm Betty.....Leon was my ex-husband. Are you all right?

SEBASTIAN

I don't know. (*HE BEGINS TO TAKE STOCK OF HIMSELF*)

HANK

Do you think anything's broken?

SEBASTIAN

Just my spirit, it seems.

CARMEL

(*HANDING HIM GLASS OF WATER*) Here you go.

SEBASTIAN

Thank you. You're all very kind. (*HE DRINKS*) It's a little embarrassing. Dropping in on you like this.....unannounced. I'm so sorry.

BETTY

Nonsense. Don't even give it another thought. We're just glad that you're not hurt.

SEBASTIAN

I'll be on my way as soon as I warm up a bit.

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

Look, you just sit tight and stay as long as you want. None of us are plannin' on goin' anywhere, anyway.

HANK

By the way, I'm Hank.

CARMEL

And I'm Carmel.

BETTY

(INDICATING GEORGE WHO GETS UP AND GOES INTO THE REST ROOM) And that was George.

SEBASTIAN

It's a pleasure to meet all of you. My name is Sebastian.

HANK

How did you get here, Sebastian? And what were you doing out there in that storm?

SEBASTIAN

Well, I'm with The UPS. *(HOLDING UP SACHEL)* I have a very important delivery to make.

CARMEL

(INDICATING HIS CLOTHING) Is that the new Christmas uniform?

SEBASTIAN

I beg your pardon?

CARMEL

I mean, it's not the traditional brown uniform. Is this some special outfit UPS has come up with for the holidays?

SEBASTIAN

(NOT QUITE UNDERSTANDING BUT AGREEABLE NONETHELESS) Um....OK.

BETTY

So you were out making a delivery....

SEBASTIAN

Christmas Wishes

Yes, I was going along very nicely when I got blown off course somehow. My On-A-Star tracking ability seems to be a bit rusty. The next thing I knew, I collided into that big fir tree out there and ended up the snow bank where you found me.

HANK

(LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW)

Where'd you leave your truck?

SEBASTIAN

My truck?

HANK

I didn't see a truck out there.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, I don't have a truck.

HANK

You were driving a car?

SEBASTIAN

I wasn't driving at all. But I must've been going about 40 miles an hour when I collided with the treetop and fell into the snow.

(THEY ALL LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER)

CARMEL

(ASIDE TO THEM) He must've really hit that tree hard.

BETTY

Well, it doesn't matter, Sebastian. The important thing is that you're here and we're going to take care of you until you feel better..

SEBASTIAN

Oh, I've got to be back on my way. You see, it's important that I make this delivery tonight. The boss was very adamant that it arrive on Christmas eve. Someone is desperately waiting for it.

HANK

Look, I realize that UPS has a reputation to uphold, but no one's gonna fault you if you don't get that package delivered on a night like this.

Christmas Wishes

SEBASTIAN

But if I don't get it there tonight, I'm afraid I'll never get out of BOOT camp.

(AGAIN, THEY ALL LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER)

BETTY

Boot camp, huh?

SEBASTIAN

Yes. You see, up till now, I've had a hard time proving myself to the boss.....this was my last chance to prove to him that I could be trusted with an assignment and that I deserve to get out of BOOT camp.

(BETTY LOOKS AT CARMEL, THEY DECIDE TO HUMOR HIM)

BETTY

Of course you do, Sebastian.

CARMEL

We understand perfectly.

HANK

We do? *(BETTY NUDGES HIM)* I mean.....we do, we do!

BETTY

Look, Sebastian.....there's still over an hour before Christmas eve is officially over. Why don't you rest here a while longer? It'll give you a chance to warm up some more.

SEBASTIAN

I guess if I stayed just a little longer I'd still have enough time to get this package to its proper destination. If you're sure I wouldn't be too much bother.

BETTY

Not in the least. In fact, I insist.

SEBASTIAN

Then I accept your kind offer of hospitality.

BETTY

Christmas Wishes

Wonderful. All right everyone. First things first. If we're going to spend the night here, then this place needs some sprucing up.

HANK

Meaning what?

BETTY

Meaning it's Christmas eve.....but you'd hardly know it from the looks of the place. We've got to find some way to decorate, make it more festive.

CARMEL

How do we do that?

BETTY

Just follow me. We'll figure out something. Come on. (*BETTY, CARMEL AND HANK MAKE THEIR WAY INTO THE BACK ROOM. BETTY STOPS JUST BEFORE SHE EXITS AND CALLS OUT TO SEBASTIAN*) Hey, Sebastian, you feel like giving us a hand?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, yes. Of course. I'm coming. (*BETTY EXITS. SEBASTIAN STARTS TOWARD THE BACK AND THEN STOPS, COMES FORWARD LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN*) I won't let you down, boss. Not this time. This time you can count on me to get the job done. This time I'm going to succeed no matter what. I'll get this package delivered before midnight, even if it kills me.....I mean.....well, I don't have to tell *you* what I mean, do I? (*HE EXITS INTO THE BACK WITH THE OTHERS*)

(*MUSIC IN*)

(*AFTER SHORT PAUSE, GEORGE REENTERS FROM REST ROOM. WHILE THE OTHERS ARE STILL IN THE BACK, WE HEAR HIM SPEAK FOR THE FIRST TIME.*)

GEORGE

(*ADDRESSING HEAVEN*) Dear Lord, is there a reason this is happening tonight? Is the kindness that these strangers have shown me the sign that I've been praying for? After five years of atoning for the deep sorrow that I caused that night, are you finally giving me a chance to move on? Oh God, on this most blessed of nights, can you at last forgive me for what I did and bring peace back into my life?

GEORGE'S PRAYER

Christmas Wishes

Why is it
that life is strange....
how, in just one moment, it can all change?
So fragile,
unending.
Can you ever know where the road is bending?
Once you're strong;
you have it all;
blessed with ev'ry happiness both large and small.
Then one day
there comes an instant
all you knew
is gone from you.

If you're there,
if you can hear,
hear this prayer
and draw me near.
Fill my heart
and make the hurting cease.

On this night of nights
make me whole,
bring me peace.

There are days
when life is kind,
when you can erase the mem'ry from your mind.
But, somehow,
pretending
never ever leads to a happy ending.
You can run
from yesterday
but it's never far enough to run away.
For that moment
is just behind you.
No matter where,
it's always there.

If you're there,

Christmas Wishes

**if you can hear,
hear this prayer
and draw me near.
Fill my heart
and make the hurting cease.
On this night of nights
make me whole,
bring me peace.**

(BETTY REENTERS FROM THE BACK.)

BETTY

(AS SHE GATHERS COFFEE FILTERS TO BE USED FOR DECORATING) There you are George. We're going to put some Christmas spirit into this place and do a little decorating. You want to come in the back and give us a hand?

GEORGE

I'd be happy to Betty.

BETTY

(SHOCKED AT GETTING A RESPONSE) Why, George.....it's good to hear your voice. It's kind'a nice sharin' Christmas Eve with someone isn't it? I bet it's been a long time since you've done that. *(GEORGE IS CLEARLY EMBARRASSED BY HIS SITUATION.)* Why don't you come in the back and give us a hand?

GEORGE

I'll be right there.

BETTY

(TOUCHING HIS HAND) You're among friends here George. Merry Christmas. *(SHE EXITS INTO BACK ROOM)*

GEORGE

**Maybe there's an answer waiting here for me?
Can a miracle tonight be mine?
Can it be these strangers somehow hold the key?
Are you giving me a blessed sign?**

**Help me heal
the misery.**

Christmas Wishes

**Give me back my life the way it used to be
to move on,
and live free
finally knowing that you can forgive me.**

**Now,
if there's miracles to conceive
let the wonder of Christmas Eve
open my heart and set me free
to believe**

**that you're there,
that you can hear.
Hear my prayer
and draw me near.
Fill my heart
and all the hurt will cease.
On this night of nights
give me hope,
bring me peace.**

(GEORGE EXITS TOWARD THE BACK ROOM AS THE LIGHTS DIM TO A BLACKOUT)

Christmas Wishes

ACT TWO

LEON'S DINER - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

(MUSIC BEGINS. LIGHTS COME UP REVEALING THE CAST IN THE MIDST OF DECORATING THE DINER FOR THEIR CHRISTMAS ALL-NIGHTER. THEY USE A COMBINATION OF ACTUAL CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AS WELL AS SOME MAKESHIFT THINGS THAT THEY'VE PUT TOGETHER FROM VARIOUS AND SUNDRY ARTICLES FOUND AT THE DINER.)

(GEORGE IS NOW VERY MUCH A PART OF THE FESTIVITIES, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND VOCALLY.)

DECK THE HALL

ALL

Deck the hall

Deck the hall

Deck the hall with boughs of holly

Doo-doo-doo-doot

doo-doo-doo-doot

doo-doo-doo-doot

doo-doo-doo-doot.

Deck the hall with boughs of holly

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

'Tis the season to be jolly

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Don we now our gay apparel

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Troll the ancient, Yuletide carol

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

See the blazing yule before us

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Strike the harp and join the chorus

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Follow me in merry measure

Christmas Wishes

fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
while I tell of Yuletide treasure
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Deck the hall.
Deck the hall.
Deck the hall with boughs of holly.
Deck the hall with boughs of holly
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
'Tis the season to be jolly
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
Don we now our gay apparel
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Deck the hall with boughs of holly
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
Deck the hall
Deck the hall
Deck the hall with
fa, la, la, la, la, la, la,
fa, la, la!

BETTY

(*SURVEYING THE RESULTS OF THEIR WORK*) Well, my goodness. This place has never been decked out like this before.

HANK

Looks fancy enough for a Saturday Evening Post cover.

CARMEL

Talk about your extreme makeovers! Who needs Martha Stewart?

SEBASTIAN

I must say it *is* quite festive, quite festive indeed.

CARMEL

And George....I'm glad you finally decided to break your vow of silence. (*HE SMILES, A BIT EMBARRASSED*).

Christmas Wishes

HANK

Hear, hear!!

GEORGE

Thank you, everyone.

BETTY

Now we probably won't be able to shut him up. (*THEY LAUGH*)

(AS THE LAUGHTER DIES DOWN, THEY SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES AT A LOSS FOR WHAT TO DO NOW. THERE IS AN AWKWARD PAUSE AS THEY LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER, SMILING, REALIZING THAT THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE TO DO BUT SIT AROUND AND WAIT FOR THE STORM TO BLOW OVER.)

BETTY

(TRYING TO BREAKING THE ICE) Is anyone hungry?

ALL

No...not now....maybe later, etc.

BETTY

(PAUSE) I got a fresh pot of coffee on.

ALL

No...not now....maybe later.

BETTY

(AFTER ANOTHER AWKWARD PAUSE) Well, aren't we all just pathetic!?

CARMEL

What do you mean?

BETTY

Here we are, five grown-up people who can't find anything talk about. You'd think we were all strangers or something.

CARMEL

Well, technically we *are* strangers, a least some of us anyway.

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

Look, honey, once you walk through the door of Leon's diner, you're automatically a member of the family. So let's start actin' like a family.

CARMEL

All right.

BETTY

You too, George.

GEORGE

Ok.

SEBASTIAN

(*VERY HAPPY*) That's just what the boss encourages us all to do....be a family. He'll be so pleased.

BETTY

(*A GLANCE AT THE OTHERS, HUMORING HIM*) That's wonderful, Sebastian. We wouldn't want to disappoint him now, would we?

SEBASTIAN

(*QUICK TO ADD*) Especially at Christmas!

HANK

(*ANOTHER GLANCE AROUND*) Especially at Christmas!

CARMEL

OK, we're a family. What would a rather eclectic family stuck in a diner on Christmas eve do now?

HANK

Well, we could.....ummm....Betty, you got any board games we can play?

BETTY

No....I'm afraid not.

CARMEL

Christmas Wishes

Anyone read any good books, lately?

THE OTHERS

No...none I can think of.....it's been awhile, etc.

GEORGE

Maybe we should.....ummm.....

BETTY

(HAVING HAD, AND HEARD ENOUGH) All right. This is getting ridiculous. As long as none of you have anything brilliant to suggest, listen up. I've got an idea.

HANK

We're all ears.

BETTY

Let's put on a Christmas pageant.

(THEY STARE AT HER)

Well?

CARMEL

You *did* say a Christmas pageant?

BETTY

Yes....it'll be the first-time ever, Leon's Diner Christmas Pageant.

GEORGE

For who?

BETTY

For each other.

HANK

Why?

BETTY

Because nobody has a better idea, that's why!

SEBASTIAN

Just what did you have in mind, Betty?

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

I don't know....a few holiday stories, maybe some Christmas songs.

CARMEL

But we don't have any music.

BETTY

'Long as we got quarters for the juke box, we got all the music we need! Come on, it'll be fun, you'll see. (*GETTING A PAD OF PAPER AND AN EMPTY JAR*) Now this is how we're gonna do it. There are five of us so I'm gonna put five slips of paper into this pickle jar. (*WRITING AND DROPPING THEM INTO THE JAR*) On three of them I'm writin' the word "song," on the other two, the word "story." We'll each take turns pullin' one of 'em out. If you get a "song" (*INDICATING THE JUKE BOX*) you just go over to the band there, (*OPENING THE CASH REGISTER AND PUTTING THREE QUARTERS ON THE COUNTER*) drop your quarter in, and pick out a tune. If you get a "story" then you need to share some Christmas memory with everyone. Got it?

ALL

I guess so.....I'll give it a try.... etc.

BETTY

And just to show all 'a you what a good sport I am, I'll go first. (*SHE REACHES IN TO THE JAR*) And as the openin' act in the first-time ever Leon's Diner Christmas Pageant I will be performing.... (*SHE READS FROM THE PAPER*) a song! (*EVERYONE ELSE BEGINS TO MOVE TO THE SIDES TO GIVE HER ROOM AS SHE TAKES A QUARTER TO THE JUKE BOX. UNFORTUNATELY, SHE'S GOT OTHER PLANS FOR THEM.*) Oh, no you don't. Just because it's my turn don't mean you all get off with nothin' to do. I'm gonna need some backup. (*SHE'S PERUSING THE MUSIC CHOICES*) OK. This is one of my all-time favorites. (*PUNCHES THE BUTTON. BEFORE THE MUSIC BEGINS, SHE PLACES EVERYONE WHERE SHE NEEDS THEM FOR THE STAGING OF THE NUMBER*)

ALL

(*LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC*) Ready.

(*LIVE MUSIC IN*)

BETTY

Here we go!

Christmas Wishes

(BUT JUST BEFORE SHE BEGINS TO SING, THE POWER GOES OUT ON THE JUKEBOX. MUSIC WINDS DOWN TO A STOP. BRAVELY, SHE STARTS TO SING A-CAPELLA)

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

BETTY

**You know Dasher and Dancer
and Prancer and Vixen,
Comet and Cupid
and Donner and Blitzen.
But do you recall
the most famous reindeer of all?**

(SPOKEN) *I do!*

(SHE GIVES THE JUKEBOX A KICK WHICH STARTS THE MUSIC UP AGAIN)

(note: FROM HERE ON, THE SONG SHOULD BE SPLIT ACCORDING TO THE STAGING NECESSITIES AND NOT NECESSARILY AS INDICATED)

**I love Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer.
I love Rudolph, what a wonderful guy.
I love Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer.
He lights the way when Santa starts to fly.**

ALL (Parts to be assigned)

GROUP 1

Shoo-bop, shoo-bo-dop, shoo-bop

GROUP 2

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer

had a very shiny nose

He has a nose that really glows.

And if you ever saw it

You wouldn't believe it if you did.

you would even say it glows

What a nose

All of the other reindeer

**All the other, all the other reindeer
used to laugh and call him names.**

Christmas Wishes

**How insensitive.
They never let poor Rudolph
No they never did
join in any reindeer games
How sad!**

ALL

**Then one foggy Christmas eve
Santa came to say
"Rudolph with your nose so bright
won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"
Then all the reindeer loved him
and they shouted out with glee:
"Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer,
you'll go down in history.**

GIRLS

**I love Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer.
I love Rudolph, what a wonderful guy.
I love Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer.
He lights the way when Santa starts to fly.**

ALL

**Then one foggy Christmas eve.
Santa came to say
"Rudolph with your nose so bright
won't you guide my sleigh tonight?
Then all the reindeer loved him
and they shouted out with glee:
"Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer,
you'll go down in history."**

**We love Rudolph, he saved the day,
his bright red nose at the front of the sleigh.
Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer,
You'll go down in history
you'll go down in history.
you'll go down in his-to-
Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer
you'll go down in history!**

Christmas Wishes

(THEY ALL APPLAUD FOR BETTY)

BETTY

Now you're gettin' into the spirit of things! Good job everyone! I told you this would be fun, didn't I? OK, Hank, you're up.

HANK

All right. *(REACHING INTO THE JAR)* Here goes nothing. And it's going to be *(HOLDING UP PAPER FOR ALL TO SEE)* a story!

CARMEL

Does that mean we can all sit down now?

BETTY

Yes, but don't get too comfortable. *(THEY ALL SIT)* All right, Hank, the stage is all yours.

HANK

Let's see.....a Christmas memory, huh? Well.....*(THINKING HARD)* Ok, I've got one!
(MUSIC WILL UNDERSCORE)

This happened a few years ago, shortly after I joined the department. Christmas eve. Quiet night, not much happenin'. I was out in the patrol car....mostly just drivin' around admirin' all the Christmas lights.....wasn't stormin' like it is tonight but it was definitely snowin' heavy. It was pretty late....when I happened to notice an elderly gentleman walking alone in the middle of the street. I stopped and asked if he needed any help...if I could give him a lift anywhere. He said he was on his way to the cemetery. I didn't question it....but I suggested that he wait till mornin', when it wasn't so dark and after the snow had let up some. But he wouldn't hear anything of it and he just kept walkin'. Well, I couldn't leave him alone like that so I offered to take him to the cemetery myself..

We chatted a bit during the drive. His name was....umm...Sam.....Samuel.....Samuel Logan. It seemed that his wife.....don't remember her name now.....had died earlier that year and this was going to be their first Christmas apart. They had been together for 56 years. Most days he was able to deal with her bein' gone. But Christmas eve was different, he said. You see, it was Christmas eve, 1944 when they had gotten married. It was during the war and he was scheduled to be shipped overseas the next day. They both knew there was a very real chance he might never make it back and they wanted something to hold onto...something that would get them through the separation until they could finally be together again. Since it was late on Christmas eve, there wasn't a minister available so they decided to perform the ceremony themselves. They drove to the nativity display in the town square. There, in front of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, they each lit a candle and pledged their love to each other. He gave her a rose.....that was

Christmas Wishes

her name! Rose! Anyway, he gave her a rose and then they kissed. It was as simple as that. The next day he was gone. Luckily he survived the war and they were together again within a couple of years. They eventually had a church wedding. But, from that time on, they decided they would renew their wedding vows every Christmas eve in the same way they did that night.....at the nativity display with candles and a rose. And they did that for the next 54 years. But now, with her gone, it was never to happen again.....but he still wanted to be near her that night, at least for a few moments.

By that time, we had arrived at the cemetery. I offered to wait for him. As he walked toward his wife's grave, I saw him reach into his coat pocket and pull out a candle and a rose. He placed them gently in front of the headstone, said a few words and then headed back to the car.

For the next few years, just out of curiosity, I would drive by the cemetery on Christmas day and there, faithfully, would be a candle and a rose sitting at Rose's grave. It always made me smile. Then last year, they weren't there. Instead, what *was* there a new gravestone. On it was etched a candle and a rose. Underneath, the engraving read "Samuel and Rose, Together Again."

And that's the story of a Christmas eve I'll never forget.

(MUSIC ENDS)

(EVERYONE IS MOVED.)

BETTY

(POSSIBLY WIPING A TEAR) Why, Hank Adams, I never knew you could be so tenderhearted. That was just about the sweetest story I ever heard.

SEBASTIAN

Very moving. Rose and Samuel Logan.....I'll have to look them up one of these days.

(EVERYONE LOOKS AT HIM)

BETTY

All right, enough. Carmel's next.

CARMEL

Oh, why not. *(REACHING INTO THE JAR)* And next, for your entertainment, ladies and gentlemen, I will be performing a.....song!

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

Grab a quarter.

(CARMEL DOES AND HEADS TOWARD THE JUKE BOX)

CARMEL

(LOOKING OVER THE SELECTIONS) Well, let's see what we've got here. No....no....no.... oh.....here's one I do with my group. Should I? Well, I'll give it a go. Now, we usually do this with a lot of percussion so I'll be needing some help too. *(SHE PASSES OUT THE PERCUSSIVE INSTRUMENTS TO THE OTHERS: SUGAR SHAKER, EMPTY POP BOTTLE, PLASTIC CUPS & COFFEE CREAMER AND SPATULA.)* Here....you take this, and you use this and this is for you. I'll give you your cue when it's time to come in.

(DURING THE SONG, SHE'LL USE GEORGE AS THE GUINEA PIG TO PLAY OFF OF, AS IF HE WERE SANTA CLAUS. HE'LL ENJOY IT, ALTHOUGH BE RATHER SHY AND EMBARRASSED ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. THE OTHERS WILL GET MUCH ENJOYMENT AS WELL WATCHING HIS REACTIONS.)

SANTA BABY

CARMEL

**Santa baby, just slip a sable under the tree for me.
Been an awful good girl, Santa baby.
So hurry down the chimney tonight.**

(SHE GRABS A CHAIN PAPER GARLAND OFF THE WALL AND USES IT AS A BOA)

**Santa baby, a shiny new convertible too,
light blue.**

**I'll wait up for you, dear Santa baby,
so hurry down the chimney tonight.**

**Think of all the fun I've missed;
think of all the fellas that I haven't kissed.
Next year I could be just as good
if you check off my Christmas list.**

**Santa baby, I want a yacht and really that's not a lot.
Been an angel all year, Santa baby,
so hurry down the chimney tonight.**

Christmas Wishes

(SPOKEN) Now here's where you come in.

(ONE BY ONE SHE CUES THE TO BEGIN PLAYING THE PERCUSSION ITEMS)

1. *TO SEBASTIAN - THE SUGAR SHAKER*
2. *TO BETTY - THE EMPTY POP BOTTLE WHICH SHE USES TO BLOW INTO*
3. *TO HANK - TWO PLASTIC GLASSES WHICH HE WILL RUB AND CLAP TOGETHER*
4. *TO GEORGE - THE METAL COFFEE CREAMER AND METAL SPATULA, ALTHOUGH, THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE SONG, EACH TIME HE IS ABOUT TO BANG THEM TOGETHER, SHE SAYS "NOT YET, GEORGE." THIS HAPPENS TWO OR THREE TIMES)*

CARMEL

**Come and trim my Christmas tree
with some decorations bought at Tiffany.
I really do believe in you.
Let's see if you believe in me.**

(SHE WRAPS THE PAPER BOA AROUND GEORGE'S NECK AND SITS ON HIS LAP)

**Santa baby, forgot to mention one little thing: a ring
I don't mean on the phone, Santa baby.
So hurry down the chimney tonight, Santa baby.
So hurry down the chimney tonight.**

GEORGE

(SPOKEN, INDICATING HIS PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS)

Now?

CARMEL

Now!

(HE BANGS THEM ONCE TO FINISH THE SONG)

BETTY

Let's give it up for Carmel, everyone. Take a bow, dear.

(THEY ALL APPLAUD)

CARMEL

Christmas Wishes

(EXAGGERATING, BOWING, BLOWING KISSES) Thank you, thank you. You've been a great audience, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you so much. And a big round of applause to my band *(SHE APPLAUDS THEM)* and for my assistant, George.

ALL

Yeah George...nice going pal...etc.

(GEORGE SHYLY TAKES A BOW)

BETTY

OK, that's enough. Moving right along in our fabulous Christmas eve spectacular.....Sebastian, don't think you're getting away without taking a turn.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, my. I don't know what I could do.

HANK

Well, that's not for you to decide. *(HOLDING THE JAR OUT FOR HIM)* Put your hand into the pickle jar of fate and see what comes out.

SEBASTIAN

All right. *(HE REACHES INTO THE JAR, PULLS OUT A SLIP AND HANDS IT TO HANK.)*

HANK

And now, for our holiday pleasure, the great Sebastian will honor us with.....*(SHOWS EVERYONE THE SLIP)* a song!!

BETTY & ALL

(CHANTING) Sebastian! Sebastian! Sebastian! Sebastian!

(HANK HANDS HIM HIS QUARTER)

SEBASTIAN

Well, I'll do my best. I haven't sung in a lifetime.

(HE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE JUKE BOX)

BETTY

Well, now's your chance to change all that. Make your choice and take it away.

Christmas Wishes

SEBASTIAN

(AS HE LOOKS OVER THE CHOICES) Lately, I've only been singing songs that please the boss.

CARMEL

Your boss has quite a hold over you doesn't he?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, he pretty much has his hand in everything. Why, here's one of his favorites. *(POPS THE QUARTER IN AND MAKES HIS SELECTION)*.

BETTY

We're ready when you are.

SEBASTIAN

(MUSIC IN) Now, don't forget, I'm a little rusty.

HANK

Just relax.

SEBASTIAN

Here goes nothing.

SILENT NIGHT

SEBASTIAN

**In the most unlikely of places
on the most unlikely of nights
in the most unlikely of shelters
God bestowed his Heavenly light.**

**"Glory be to God in the Highest,"
angels sang their sweet lullaby
for the child born unto Mary.**

ALL

**Silent night,
holy night,
all is calm,
all is bright.**

Christmas Wishes

**Round yon Virgin,
Mother and Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild.
Sleep in Heavenly peace.
Sleep in Heavenly peace.**

SEBASTIAN
**On the night
Jesus was born.**

BETTY

That was wonderful, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

You're all too kind. Thank you. And now, I'm afraid it's time that I be on my way. (*GRABBING HIS SATCHEL*) Got an important delivery to make.

HANK

Are you sure you won't reconsider staying? It doesn't look like the storm's let up much. And there's a warning that only emergency vehicles are allowed on the roads.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, that's no problem. I didn't drive. (*LOOKS AT HIS WATCH*) Oh, I'm late. I've gotta fly. (*HE HEADS TOWARD THE FRONT DOOR*)

HANK

Look, Sebastian. I'm afraid I'm going to have to insist that you stay. I don't think you're fully recovered from the fall you took earlier.

SEBASTIAN

Thank you all for your concern but the boss is watching.

BETTY

Forget the boss.

SEBASTIAN

(*CHUCKLES*) Oh, I don't think that's possible. Nonetheless, like I said, this is my last chance to make it out of BOOT camp, so I've got to get this delivered before midnight. When I see the boss, I'll make sure to put in a good word for all of you.

Christmas Wishes

ALL

(HUMORING HIM ONCE MORE) That sounds fine.....I'm sure you will....You do that, Sebastian, etc.

SEBASTIAN

(STOPPING AT THE DOOR) Don't forget to wish for something good tonight. After all, wishes can come true on Christmas eve.

CARMEL

(TAKEN ABACK) What did you say?

SEBASTIAN

Wishes can come true on Christmas eve.....but first you've got to believe. Goodbye everyone.

ALL (EXCEPT CARMEL WHO DRIFTS AWAY FROM THE CROWD STUNNED BY WHAT SEBASTIAN JUST SAID)

Goodbye.....Be careful.....Hope you make it home safely.....etc.

(HE LEAVES. BETTY, HANK & GEORGE MOVE TO THE WINDOW AND PEER OUT)

HANK

I sure hope he knows where he's going.

BETTY

Darn, the snow is coming down so thick he's already disappeared.

HANK

Talk about being stubborn.

BETTY

(AS THEY COME AWAY FROM THE WINDOW) Well, we tried our best to convince him to stay.

HANK

Whoever "the boss" is, I hope he appreciates Sebastian's dedication.

BETTY

I wonder what this BOOT camp division at UPS is all about?

HANK

Christmas Wishes

Who knows? (*THEY NOTICE CARMEL LOST IN DEEP THOUGHT*) Hey, Carmel. Is everything OK?

CARMEL

(*COMING AROUND*) Oh.....um, yes.....I was just thinking about what Sebastian just.....I'm fine.

BETTY

Well, as I look around the room, I see we've still got one last headliner in our midst who has yet to take a stab with the pickle jar. George, I believe you've got the floor next. (*SHE HOLDS OUT THE JAR. GEORGE HESITATES.*) Now, come on. This is no time to get shy on us again. (*SHE REACHES IN*) And, if I'm not mistaken, I would say that your assignment is going to be.... (*SHE OPENS THE SLIP*) yep, a story.

HANK

Don't be scared, George.

CARMEL

(*CHUCKLING*) I hope I won't need Kleenex for *this* one.

(*GEORGE SITS ON STOOL, HESITATES*)

BETTY

It's OK, darlin'. Take your time.

GEORGE

(*AFTER A PAUSE*) All right. Well.....to begin with, I guess I should tell you that my real name is Daniel, Daniel Quinn.....although I was beginning to get used to the name George. (*THEY LAUGH*). I.....I, ahh.....I.....wasn't always like this. I used to be an investment broker, a fairly successful one at that. I had a wife.....two children. Life was good. That all changed five years ago on Christmas eve. I had just been given a big promotion at work. On the way home I decided to stop at a bar not far from here to celebrate. Well, it wasn't long before I had done a bit too much celebrating.....so much so, that the bartender said that I had had enough. But I was able to convince her to keep the drinks coming...."Hey, how about a break? After all, it's Christmas," I kept saying. About 10:00, it was time to head home. I wished the bartender "Merry Christmas" and, feeling rather generous, left her a \$100 tip.

I knew I probably shouldn't get behind the wheel of the car, but I wasn't far from home, and, since it was Christmas eve, there weren't many cars out on the road, so I figured I could make it without incident. On the way though, I was stopped by a cop who told me that I had been

Christmas Wishes

weaving back and forth. He was ready to take away my car keys and take me home in the squad car. Once again I used the "Hey, how about a break? After all, it's Christmas," line on him. Well, he gave in after I assured him that I didn't live very far away. He told me he would let me go if I promised to head straight home. I gave him my word and we drove off in opposite directions.

(HE PAUSES, CROSSES DOWNSTAGE FACING AWAY FROM THEM)

I had to cross the old wooden bridge at the edge of town to get home. I don't know what happened.....I must've fallen asleep, because the next thing I knew I was on the bridge and face to face with a car coming from the opposite direction. I panicked. I went to apply the brakes but pressed down on the gas pedal instead and raced ahead. The other car swerved out of the way to miss me.....and.....ended up crashing through the guard rail and plunging into the frozen river below. Fearful of being thrown in jail for driving under the influence, I fled the scene. It wasn't until the next day that I read that a man and his little girl had died in that car.

That was the beginning of the end for me. Until tonight, I've been careful to hide the painful secret of that terrible night five years ago: the night my world changed in one split second; a night that I would give anything for the chance to live over again and make it right for those people.

And that's *my* story of a Christmas eve I'll never forget.

(THE OTHERS ARE SILENT, MOTIONLESS. AFTER A PAUSE, CARMEL RISES AND BEGINS CROSSING SLOWLY BUT DELIBERATELY TO GEORGE.)

CARMEL

(QUIETLY AT FIRST) You killed my husband and my little girl. *(HANK AND BETTY REACT)* *(EMOTION BUILDING)* You killed my husband and my little girl! *(LOUDER AND WITH EVEN MORE EMOTION, STRIKING GEORGE WITH HER FISTS.)* You killed my husband and my little girl. *(SHE IS IN TEARS REPEATING IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN. HANK IMMEDIATELY RUSHES OVER AND TRIES TO RESTRAIN HER. GEORGE, IN SHOCK COWERS TO PROTECT HIMSELF.)*

HANK

Carmel, stop. Stop it! Stop it! *(HE PULLS HER AWAY)*

CARMEL

He killed my family. That was my family on the bridge that night. He killed them.

(BETTY PUTS HER ARMS AROUND CARMEL AND TRIES TO CALM HER, GETTING HER TO A CHAIR. HANK ATTENDS TO GEORGE.)

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

Honey.....take it easy. Shhhhhh.....it's all right. It's all right. I know...I know..., etc.

CARMEL

All these years I've blamed myself for forcing them out in the storm that night. And all this time he was the cause of it. (*YELLING TO GEORGE*) You coward!!

BETTY

(*STILL TRYING TO CALM HER*) I know....I know...Shhhhhh.

CARMEL

What cruel twist of fate could have brought me face to face with the man who ruined my life?

BETTY

It's OK. It's gonna be OK. (*SHE FINALLY GETS CARMEL QUIETED. AFTER A PAUSE, SHE TURNS TO GEORGE*) George.....Daniel.....that night.....do you remember the name of the bar you stopped at?

GEORGE

It was Hunter's, out on Route 7. Why?

BETTY

(*PAUSE*) Somebody up there *must* be playing tricks tonight.

GEORGE

What do you mean?

BETTY

I was the bartender on duty that night.....(*ALL ARE STUNNED*)...the one who kept pouring him drinks.

GEORGE

You?

BETTY

Yeah.....it's hard to forget a \$100 tip. (*TO CARMEL*) I never imagined that I was partly to blame for the accident I read about in the newspaper the next day. I'm so sorry, Carmel. (*CARMEL IS TOO NUMB TO EVEN SAY ANYTHING*) Can you ever forgive me? (*SHE HUGS HER AGAIN*)

Christmas Wishes

HANK

Well.....I guess it's my turn now. It seems that I also played a part in that accident five years ago.

(PAUSE AS ALL LOOK AT HIM) I guess I was the cop who stopped him that night. I was just finishing my shift and was anxious to get to a party I had been invited to. I remember the weaving car....and I remember thinking that I shouldn't let the guy off....but he promised that he would head straight home. I guess it was the worst decision I could've made. *(HE CROSSES TO CARMEL)* I don't know what to say. I never knew till now that my actions that night had been the cause of so much grief. I am so very, very sorry.

BETTY

(AFTER A PAUSE) Isn't it odd? Here we are.....four people, unknowingly connected to a tragic accident five years ago who, for some unexplained reason, have been brought together tonight of all nights. Is it all just a coincidence.....or could this really *be* some cruel twist of fate?

CARMEL

(EMOTIONALLY DRAINED) I guess we'll never know, will we?

(SUDDENLY, THEY HEAR A LOUD, FAMILIAR YELL OUTSIDE AND A THUD)

BETTY

Oh, no. It can't be.

(BETTY AND HANK RUSH TO THE WINDOW)

HANK

It's Sebastian. He's landed in the snow again.

BETTY

Good Lord!

HANK

Come on , George. Let's go get him.

(THEY RUSH OUT)

BETTY

(AT THE DOOR) I knew we shouldn't have let him go. Lord only knows what he's done to himself this time. Be careful.

Christmas Wishes

(SHE GETS A CHAIR READY FOR HIM AGAIN. THEY APPEAR AT THE DOOR. ONCE AGAIN SEBASTIAN IS DISORIENTED, COVERED WITH BRANCHES, POSSIBLY SPITTING OUT SOME SNOW.)

Sit him down here.

(THEY DO. SEBASTIAN IS GROANING)

HANK

Here you go, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Oh my.....oh my.....

BETTY

Sebastian, what on earth happened this time?

SEBASTIAN

(OUT OF BREATH A BIT) Well.....I was well underway once again but I must've made a 180 degree turn and not realized it. The next thing I knew, I was once more face to face with the top of that big fir tree out there. I slammed into it and fell into the same snow bank. I don't understand why I keep ending up outside your doorstep. It's like something keeps forcing me back here.

HANK

Did you make your delivery?

SEBASTIAN

(HOLDING UP THE SMALL BAG) No. Oh, the boss isn't going to like this, not one bit. I guess I've ruined my chance of ever getting out of BOOT camp now.

BETTY

Sebastian, listen to me. No job is worth risking your life over.

HANK

That's right. United Parcel Service should be ashamed for sending you out on a night like this.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, I don't work for United Parcel Service.

Christmas Wishes

HANK

You told us you were with UPS.

SEBASTIAN

Well, I'm with *The* UPS but it's not United Parcel Service.

(THEY ARE CONVINCED HE'S LOST IT)

HANK

(IN A LOUD STAGE WHISPER) Betty, maybe we better find a place for him to lie down until his head clears.

SEBASTIAN

You don't understand. UPS stands for Union of Primary Seraphim.

BETTY

(HUMORING HIM) Of course.....that's what UPS stands for....the Union of Primary Seraphim.

SEBASTIAN

But it's true. I'm an angel. *(THEY ALL STARE AT HIM)* I'm sorry, did I neglect to mention that before?

BETTY

(MORE AS AN UNCONVINCING STATEMENT THAN A QUESTION) An angel.

SEBASTIAN

An angel.

HANK

And the boss you keep referring to?????

SEBASTIAN

(POINTING UP TO HEAVEN) Who else?

HANK

God?

SEBASTIAN

Well, some call him that. He goes by a lot of different names.

Christmas Wishes

BETTY

What about this boot camp you keep talking about?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, that's the "Basic Order Of Taskers." It's the proving ground for every new angel. You see, before an angel can receive his first class medal and take his place among the rank-and-file angels in the big house, he's got to prove himself worthy of the responsibility by successfully performing some important task here on earth....come to the aid of someone in need.

HANK

You mean you're trying to earn your wings?

SEBASTIAN

(CHUCKLES) No, that's only in the movies. Every angel is assigned his wings the moment he checks in at the front gate. How else would we get around? Unfortunately, I haven't been very good at any of it thus far. I've tried several times to perform the tasks I've been assigned but failed miserably, I'm afraid. *(HOLDING UP PACKAGE HE'S TAKEN OUT OF HIS BAG)* This was going to be my last chance. All I had to do is deliver one package and I couldn't even do that. Poor Stewart Carmel will have to wait until after Christmas to get this now. *(HE SNIFFS THE PACKAGE)* I sure hope it's nothing perishable.

CARMEL

(WHO HAS REMAINED OFF TO THE SIDE NURSING HER EMOTIONS, TUNING IN ONCE MORE AFTER HEARING THE NAME SEBASTIAN JUST MENTIONED) Sebastian, who did you say that package was for?

SEBASTIAN

Stewart Carmel. Why do you know him?

CARMEL

Is it possible it might be for Carmel Stewart?

SEBASTIAN

(LOOKING AT THE LABEL ON THE BOX) No, it clearly says Stewart....wait a minute. Why, I never noticed that comma there before. I guess the label was printed with the last name first. I believe this *is* for a Carmel Stewart.....and.....but.....*you're* name is Carmel.

CARMEL

I'm Carmel Stewart.

Christmas Wishes

SEBASTIAN

(HAPPILY) Well, what do you know? *(HANDS HER BOX)* Then I guess this is for you. No wonder I keep ending up back here.

CARMEL

But where did this come from? Who sent it?

SEBASTIAN

I believe you'll have to open it to find out.

(CARMEL HESITATES AT FIRST. LOOKS AT THE OTHERS THEN UNTIES THE GOLD RIBBON AROUND IT. SHE LOOKS INSIDE AND STARES AT THE CONTENTS FOR A MOMENT)

CARMEL

Is this a joke?

SEBASTIAN

I assure you, dear, the boss isn't much for practical jokes.

BETTY

What is it?

CARMEL

(TAKING OUT AN ENVELOPE) It says "To Carmel".....and it's my husband's handwriting.

(MUSIC UNDERSCORING OF "WISHES CAN COME TRUE ON CHRISTMAS EVE" IN AND CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE DIALOGUE)

BETTY

(SLOWLY, EMOTIONALLY STUNNED) Oh...my...Lord.

CARMEL

(OPENS THE ENVELOPE AND PULLS OUT A NOTE AND, AS SHE TEARS UP, READS.)
Don't worry. Jessie and I are fine. It's beautiful here. And no matter what, we're always watching over you. Most importantly, we love you.. My love for all eternity.....until we can be together again. John. PS: I thought you should have this.
(SHE REACHES INSIDE THE ENVELOPE AND PULLS A WEDDING RING)

Christmas Wishes

It's his wedding ring. *(SHE KISSES IT AND SLIPS IT ONTO HER FINGER.)*

BETTY

(LOOKING INTO THE BOX) Honey, there's something else in the box.

(CARMEL LOOKS INSIDE AND PULLS OUT ANOTHER ENVELOPE. SHE OPENS IT AND IMMEDIATELY BEGINS TO TEAR UP EVEN MORE BEFORE SHE READS IT ALOUD.)

Daddy and me are here together. I miss you so very, very much. I made these for you so you won't feel sad anymore. I love you, mommy. Jessie

(INSIDE THE ENVELOPE SHE FINDS TWO SILVER STARS. SHE CLUTCHES THEM TO HER HEART AS TEARS SWELL)

(AS THE REALIZATION THAT SEBASTIAN REALLY IS AN ANGEL SINKS IN, A STUNNED HANK AND BETTY LOOK AT HIM)

SEBASTIAN

I'm only the messenger, dear. The boss is the one who gets all the credit.

CARMEL

My one wish has always been to hear my family say "I love you" once more. And tonight that wish has come true. I guess there are such things as miracles in the world.

SEBASTIAN

More than you can imagine.

HANK

(TO BETTY) So....Betty, are you willing to stand by your word?

BETTY

What are you talkin' about, Hank?

HANK

You said it would take a miracle before you'd consider gettin' together with me. And, unless I'm mistaken, I'd say this qualifies as first-class, top-notch, fine-and-dandy, miracle-to-beat-all-miracles miracle.

BETTY

For once, Hank, I guess can't argue with you. Maybe someone is trying to tell me something.... maybe I don't need to be afraid to have another go at the marriage thing.

Christmas Wishes

HANK

(HUGGING HER) I love you, darlin'

BETTY

And I guess I love you too, Hank.

(SUDDENLY, CARMEL GETS UP AND CROSSES TO GEORGE. ALL EYES ARE ON HER. AS SHE APPROACHES, GEORGE COWERS A BIT. SHE LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MOMENT THEN GENTLY TAKES HIS HAND AND PLACES ONE OF THE SILVER STARS INTO IT. HE LOOKS UP AT HER, THEN DOWN AT THE STAR. SHE SMILES, NODS AND THEN HUGS HIM.)

SEBASTIAN

Christmas eve is *full* of miracles. *(MUSIC SEGUES INTO INTRO TO "WE ARE ALL CONNECTED")* But I guess the most important thing we all need to remember is the lesson we've been shown tonight.....that we are not alone.....everything we do has a profound affect on those around us.

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

SEBASTIAN

**You drop a pebble into a stream,
and as it settles upon the shore,
the water ripples, extending ev'ry circle,
linked to the one that came before.**

**For ev'ry moment we live our life,
with everything that we dream,
we learn a lesson that we are not alone
and, like the ripples in a stream,**

**we are all connected
in this world we share.
We are all connected....
a part of everyone, everywhere.**

**No matter how far the journey is,
whatever path that we take,
we need each other to help us find the way**

Christmas Wishes

and guide the choices that we make.

ALL

**We are all connected;
we are not alone;
in each life reflected
in ways that may never be known,
just as others are reflected in our own.**

BETTY

For ev'ry time the road seems impossible,

HANK

for ev'ry time a cloud may appear,

BOTH

**if we're together we can weather ev'ry storm
and we can conquer ev'ry fear.**

(THEY HUG)

CARMEL

**You see a rainbow across the sky
or make a wish on a starry night.
Somewhere there's someone who's smiling at that rainbow
or wishing on the same starry light**

GEORGE

**With everything that we say or do
we touch another somehow;
just like the pebbles we toss into a stream,
we're making ripples even now.**

(AS SONG CONTINUES, GEORGE GOES TO CARMEL. HE TAKES OFF THE SCARF THAT BETTY GAVE HIM EARLIER, LOOKS TO BETTY WHO NODS HER APPROVAL AND THEN PLACES SCARF AROUND CARMEL'S NECK. THEY HUG ONCE MORE)

ALL

**We are all connected
in this world we share.
We are all connected....
a part of everyone, everywhere.**

Christmas Wishes

**We are all connected;
we are not alone;
in each life reflected
as others are reflected in our own.**

**We are all connected,
ev'ry man and son.
We are all connected.
Until our time on earth is done,
in this world
we all are one.**

(BLACKOUT)