

a script from

231 WORSHIP

PURCHASE

SCRIPT

TO

“How Miss Finch Saved Christmas”

By

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What

Ms. Elvira Finch hated Christmas... but not anymore! Now she loves everything about it—the lights, the decorations, the presents, the singing and yes—even the noise! So when Ms. Finch finds herself in charge of this year’s Christmas pageant, she plans the biggest, boldest, most glitter-tastic Christmas extravaganza Newville has ever seen— that is, until her father, the filthy rich Frances F. Finch, returns from the Oldeville Retirement Village to get rid of Christmas once and for all. And when Father Finch finds a loophole in the town charter and creates a new holiday called Finchmas, it looks like he just might succeed. Luckily Gabby Gazoo and the other Newvillians step in to help Miss Finch save the day and remind the town of Newville that Christmas is more than a flashy festival... it’s a celebration of Jesus’s lasting love and peace on earth. With the help of a friendly narrator who speaks entirely in familiar rhyme, this entertaining sequel to the popular holiday comedy, *How Miss Finch Stole Christmas*, is a delight for actors and audiences of all ages.

Themes: Christmas, Pageant, Nativity, Comedy, True Meaning of Christmas, Birth of Jesus, Seuss, Rhyme

Who

19+ Actors (1 male, 1 female, 17+ flexible, optional extras) With the exception of Mary and Joseph, all roles are flexible and can be played by a male or a female, by choosing a version of the character name and adjusting pronouns.

Kirby: Town handyperson and narrator of the story; speaks in rhyme; adult

Ms. Elvira/Mr. Elvin Finch**: cranky, solitary resident of Newville; adult

Tobias/Trudy P. Edgewater: mayor of Newville; adult

Betty/Bernie Bunch: director of the nativity play; adult

Melody/Melvin McDoogle: leader of a group of Christmas Carolers; adult

Hattie/Harry Hiccup: owner of the Christmas Tree farm who sneezes; adult

Sally/Sammy Sneeze: soda shop owner who hiccups a lot; adult

Wally/Wanda Whizzbang: energetic toy shop owner; adult

Gabby/Gabe Gazoo: angel in the church nativity play; child, age 6-12

Frances F. Finch: Miss Finch's parent; adult

Zelda/Zeke Zizzer: Frances's assistant; adult

Mary: actor in the Christmas pageant; child or adult; limited lines; female

Joseph: actor in the Christmas pageant; child or adult; limited lines; male

Shepherd: actor in the Christmas pageant; limited lines; child or adult

Angel: actor in the Christmas pageant; limited lines; child or adult

Carolers: 4+, all but 1 can be singing only if desired

Angels/Magi/Sheep/Animals: optional non-speaking nativity roles for children

Townspeople: optional non-speaking extras

****Note that if the title role is being played as male, you may change the title of the play to "How Mr. Finch Saved Christmas".**

When Modern Day

Costumes Aside from the nativity roles, all costumes should reflect modern day and should be dressed for a cold winter's day outdoors. They should be bright and colorful, evoking the tone and feel of well-known Christmas television specials and movies, with the exception of Frances Finch and Zelda, who should be dressed in muted tones of black, grey and brown. Feel free to have fun with this, incorporating fun hats, trims, and accessories. All nativity characters should wear biblical attire. In Scene Three nativity characters should have sparkly pieces added to their costumes.

Set This play takes place in the small-town square of Newville, which is decorated for Christmas. A decorated Christmas tree is center. Next to the tree is the setup for a nativity play, which can be a small stable with manger, or just a manger. Additional shop fronts, foliage and decor can be present. You can choose to design and decorate your town in a Seuss style if you'd like. Additional scenery to create a nativity scene can be added at your discretion.

Props

Wreath	Large book
Bottle of soda	Pad of paper and pen
Baby doll	Satchel (optional)
Crutches	Greenery garland
Clipboard	Tray of cookies
Snow Shovel	Large cutout star
Tool box with tools	Lights and decorations
Cane or wheelchair	Tinsel trees and/or garland
Large wrapped gift box	

Why Luke 2

How This play evokes all things Seuss, so really play up the fun and whimsy. However, this play also has a ton of heart, so take your time with the quieter, more meaningful moments to let the message of the play sink in for your audience. Note that this play does not require blackouts for scene changes. Rather, if you would prefer, all scene changes can occur during Kirby's rhyming monologues, either with Kirby in a spotlight and the rest of the scene dimmed, or any minor changes can occur behind Kirby while he addresses the audience. This play can be performed by actors of all ages, whether it's a youth production, or with actors aged 4 to 104! If using younger actors, I recommend casting them in the smaller nativity roles and having them come to one or two rehearsals just before your performance.

Time 35-40 minutes

SCENE ONE

*At start of scene, various **Townspeople** enter happily, full of Christmas cheer. They carry shopping bags and packages, Christmas wreaths and wrapping paper, travel cups of hot cocoa and candy canes... basically all things Christmas fun. **Kirby** enters, pushing a snow shovel, which he uses to "shovel snow" and "throw it off to one side." He does this a few times before he turns to the audience. **Townspeople** continue to enter and exit throughout **Kirby's** monologue.*

Kirby: *(in sing song rhyme)* Welcome, again, dear friends one and all, to that town that's not big—no, it's so very small. This town here's called Newville, but new it is not. It's really quite old, *(smiles)* but we like it a lot. See, the people in Newville, they're a bright, cheery crew. They'll laugh and they'll smile 'till their faces turn blue! But there's one time of year, yes there's one holiday, when they'll be in the brightest, the cheeriest way! And that time is Christmas! That great time of year when we all gather 'round with those we hold near. We celebrate peace, and we celebrate love, and we give thanks for gifts given us from above. *(leans in)* But there's one gal in Newville who just didn't get it—hated Christmas so much she tried hard to prevent it. She stole Christmas from Newville, one long year ago, but with the help of Newvillians her heart started to grow. Now she really loves Christmas, she's no longer a grinch. And the name of this Newvillian? Why it's Miss Elvira Finch!

*The following townspeople are present in the scene (along with others): **Hattie Hiccup**, holding a wreath, **Sally Sneeze**, holding a soda bottle and **Wally Whizzbang**, holding a baby doll. **Kirby** starts shoveling again as Finch enters cheerfully, waving and smiling and interacting pleasantly with the **Townspeople**. She crosses to **Hattie**. **Kirby** watches the action unfold, a part of the story, but not, as he shovels.*

Hattie: *(nervously)* Oh, hey, there, Miss Finch. How are you today?

Finch: *(feigning anger)* How dare you address me by my first name! We are friends. *(smiles)* Call me Elvira.

Hattie: *(smiles)* Sorry, Elvira. *(sneezes)*

Finch: Hattie, why are you holding that wreath? You know you're allergic to pine.

Hattie: *(about to sneeze)* Be... *(sneeze doesn't come)* Be... *(sneeze doesn't come)* Be... *(sneeze doesn't come)*

*Sensing **Hattie** needs rescue, **Sally** comes running over.*

Sally: *(putting her arm around **Hattie**)* Because it's not pine. *(hiccups)*

Finch: What is it then?

Hattie: *(sneezing loudly)* Ahhhhh... spruce!

Finch: I'm guessing you're allergic to spruce as well. *(holds out a tissue)*

Hattie: Thanks. *(blows her nose then holds it out to **Finch**)* Here you go.

Finch: That's alright. You can keep it. *(smiles)*

Sally: Why don't I hold onto that wreath for a few minutes?

Hattie: Sure. *(hands **Sally** the wreath)* I'm trying something new this year down at Hattie Hiccup's Christmas Trees.

Sally: She's selling a variety of trees, not just pines. There's spruce and fir and silver tips and lodge poles. *(hiccups)*

Hattie: I figure there's gotta be one type of tree I'm not allergic to!

Sally: Unfortunately she hasn't found it yet.

Finch: You might need to switch to tinsel trees, Hattie. I'd buy one!

Sally: I thought you said those were garish and that you'd never put a Christmas tree in your house.

Finch: That was the old Elvira Finch. The new Elvira loves all things Christmas— the lights, the decorations, the presents, the singing and yes— even the noise!

Hattie: There’s no way you can like the noise. *(sneezes)*

Sally: Even I don’t like the noise. *(hiccups)*

Finch: Well I do.

Melody McDoogle enters, with **Carolers** following.

Melody: If you like noise, you’re gonna love what we’ve been working on!

Caroler 1: Sing your hearts out, everyone!

Melody blows pitch pipe.

Carolers: *(singing)* Joy to the world, the Lord is come!—

Melody signals for the **Carolers** to stop and turns to **Finch**.

Melody: Aren’t you going to stop us?

Finch: Why would I stop you?

Melody: Because you hate Christmas?

Finch: Not anymore. Keep going.

Melody: *(nervously)* Um, we can’t.

Finch: Why not?

Caroler 2: Because we haven’t learned the rest of the song!

Melody: I figured we wouldn't get past the first line so I didn't teach them the rest of it.

Finch: Well I can't wait to hear what you've got.

Melody: You heard her, folks! *(blows pitch pipe)* And a one and a two and a—

Finch: *(stops her)* I meant later. Right now I've got Christmas gifts to buy and I'm a bit parched. *(turns to Sally)* Say, Sally, do you have any festive new drinks down at Sally Sneeze's Soda Shop?

Sally: I sure do! *(holds up a soda bottle)* I call it Fruitcake Fizz! It's a mix of cherries, pineapple, and raisins with hints of orange and lemon peel.

Melody: Lemon peel? I hope it's not too sour. *(rubs her neck)* Terrible for the vocal cords.

Sally: Trust me, this soda's got plenty of sugar in it.

Hattie: It's super yummy, *(giggles)* even though the bubbles get up my nose and make me sneeze. *(sneezes)*

Sally: The bubbles make me hiccup. *(hiccups, then smiles)* But it's worth it.

Finch: I'll stop in for some after I find the perfect gift for my father.

Wally crosses to **Finch**.

Wally: Did I hear you're looking for a gift, Miss Finch?

Finch: Elvira, please. And yes I am! But my father already has so much and can be awfully hard to buy for.

Wally: My toy shop, Wally Whizzbangs Excitement Emporium has gifts that'll make any dad super glad!* *(*If **Frances** is cast as a female, use "make any mom super calm")* How about a doll who can talk and comes programmed with five realistic phrases? *(holds out baby doll)*

Wally turns the doll upside down. Suddenly we hear...

Doll Voice: *(offstage, perhaps loud and gruff)* I've got a boo boo!

Finch: *(chuckling)* Thanks, Wally, but I think I'll keep looking.

Wally: Suit yourself. *(to doll)* Who's the cutest wittle baby ever?

Doll Voice: *(offstage, perhaps loud and gruff)* I want my mommy!

Wally hugs the doll as **Tobias P. Edgewater** and **Betty Bunch** enter. **Betty** is on crutches and has a foot injury.

Betty: And I want that doll for this year's Christmas pageant.

Wally: What happened to the Baby Pees-A-Lot I gave you last year?

Finch: Who cares about Baby Pees-A-Lot! What happened to your foot, Betty?!

Tobias: She had a little accident.

Betty: I was carrying the manger to the town square and dropped it on my foot.

Melody: Oh no!

Betty: Oh, yes! My foot's broken in three places.

Sally: That's one heavy manger.

Betty: You're telling me.

Tobias: The doctor said Betty needs lots of rest and to keep her foot elevated.

Wally: Isn't that going to be a little difficult since Betty's in charge of putting on the big Christmas pageant?

Betty: That's actually why Mayor Edgewater and I are here.

Tobias: We need you to save the Christmas pageant, Elvira.

Finch: Me? But how?

Betty: I can't direct the pageant anymore, but we were hoping you could.

Finch: Isn't the pageant in three days?

Betty: Yes, it is. But we have the manger from last year and the cast is set.

Finch: I... I don't know the first thing about Christmas pageants.

Gabby Gazoo enters.

Gabby: But I do!

All: Gabby Gazoo!

Gabby: I've been in the Newville Christmas pageant every year since I was four years old. I'd be happy to help you, Miss Finch.

Hattie: We all would! *(sneezes)*

Finch: In that case... I'd love to be in charge of the Christmas pageant!

All cheer.

Gabby: I think this pageant is going to be great!

Finch: I hope so. *(in sing-song rhyme)* In all the years past I wish Christmas would end, until one special girl became a new friend. *(smiles at Gabby)* Now I understand Christmas is a gift from above, and celebrate Jesus's birth, peace, and love.

Wally: *(leans in to Sally)* Not gonna lie... that was a pretty good rhyme.

Gabby: Let's make this the best Christmas pageant Newville has ever seen!

Betty: Ahem. Pageant director with a broken foot standing right here.

Gabby: Let's make it *one of* the best pageants Newville has ever seen!

Betty: That's better.

Finch: I have so many ideas! Hattie could you donate garlands and trees?

Hattie: Of course!

Finch: Sally, do you think you could provide the refreshments?

Sally: Absolutely!

Finch: And Melody, do you think you can teach your Carolers the rest of that song in time to sing it at the pageant?

Melody: I know I can!

Finch: Great!

Wally: And I'll provide the baby Jesus! (*holds up the baby*)

Doll Voice: (*offstage, perhaps loud and gruff*) Change me!

Finch: Sure thing, Wally, only let's pick a different baby doll... something a little more Christ-like.

Wally: Why does everyone hate Baby Talkington?

Gabby: What about me? How can I help?

Finch: You have the biggest job of all, Gabby. You'll be my assistant director!

Gabby: Sounds spectacularly splendiferous!

Tobias: The Newville Christmas Pageant is saved, thanks to Miss Finch!

Finch: I won't let you or the town of Newville down, Mayor Edgewater.

Tobias: I have faith in you, Miss Finch.

*All exit as **Kirby** turns to the audience. Perhaps lights dim on scene and spotlight on **Kirby**.*

Kirby: Could she really do it? Could Finch save the day? Would the pageant be pulled off? Would Finch stage the play? *(chuckles)* “Of course she can do it!” the Newvillians said. “And she’s not alone, she’s got help from her friends.” The trees will be trimmed and the lights will all blink. The carols they’ll sing and the cocoa they’ll drink. The pageant would happen, there would be a show... but there’s one thing the town of Newville didn’t know. See over in Oldeville, the senior village next door, was a Finch these Newvillians hadn’t quite met before. It was Frances F. Finch, and if it’s not apparent, you’d know Frances better as Elvira’s parent. Yes, Frances was rich, and always wanted more, thought Christmas is better when bought at the store. Francis knew the Newville charter, every rule and all the laws, he had found every loophole, was aware of each clause. To stop Newville’s Christmas, Frances would have to attack, and the only way to do that... *(leaning in)* was for old Mr. Finch to come back!

If using spotlight, it dims and lights come up on the scene. Or lights can fade to black.

SCENE TWO

*At start of scene, **Kirby** is performing another handyman task while **Gabby** is rehearsing the nativity pageant with **Mary, Joseph, Angel, and Shepherd**. **Gabby** has a clipboard. They are gathered around a wooden manger. **Shepherd** is not paying attention.*

Angel: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another—

*There is a beat as **All** wait for **Shepherd**.*

Angel: (annoyed) Ahem. The shepherds said to one another—

There is a beat as **All** wait for **Shepherd**.

Gabby: Shepherd!

Shepherd: (startles) What?

Gabby: It's your line.

Shepherd: Oh, right. (getting into character) Glory to God in the highest.

Angel: That's my line.

Shepherd: Oh, right. (tries again) Isn't he beautiful, Joseph?

Mary: That's my line.

Shepherd: Makes sense.

Gabby: Do you know your line, Shepherd?

Shepherd: Of course. It's— (thinks, doesn't know) Line?

Joseph: Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

Gabby: See? Even Joseph knows it.

Shepherd: Then maybe he should be the one to say it. I'm sure we could find a way to make it work.

Gabby: Why don't we take a break and give some people (looks pointedly at **Shepherd**) a chance to look over their scripts... again. We'll pick up here in ten minutes.

Shepherd, Joseph, Mary and Angel cross off to one side and look at a script as **Finch** enters, with **Betty**, who is still on crutches.

Finch: As you can see we've got the nativity set in place and Hattie will be stopping by in a little bit with the greenery.

Betty: It looks wonderful.

Finch: There's just a few last minute touches, but otherwise I think we're ready for tomorrow.

Betty: You've obviously got everything under control, Elvira. I knew you were the right person to take over the Christmas pageant.

Finch: I couldn't do it without Gabby, here. She's a great assistant director.

Gabby: I had no idea it was so much fun on this side of the stage. *(leans in)* I kind of like bossing people around.

Betty: *(leans in)* I agree!

Gabby and **Betty** laugh as **Frances F. Finch** enters, using a cane or in a wheelchair. He is followed by **Zelda Zizzer**, who walks next to him, holding a large book, a pad and pen and or pushes the wheelchair, in which case, she should wear a satchel containing the book as well as the pad and pen which she removes and takes notes with once **Frances** is in place.

Frances: So do I.

Elvira: *(surprised)* Father! What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be at the Oldeville Retirement Community?

Frances: Zelda sprung me out. You remember my assistant, Zelda Zizzer.

Elvira: Of course. Hello Zelda.

Zelda: Good day, Miss Finch.

Betty: Who has an assistant in a retirement home?

Zelda: Mr. Finch does, of course. Who else is going to make his appointments and manage his schedule?

Betty: I would assume the staff that work there, but what do I know?

Finch: It's nice to see you, Father, but I'm pretty sure our visit was scheduled for next week.

Zelda: *(consulting her pad or phone)* That is correct. The twenty-ninth at two o'clock sharp.

Gabby: You're not seeing your father on Christmas?

Finch: My dad doesn't do Christmas.

Frances: That's not true.

Finch: We haven't celebrated Christmas since I was a child.

Frances: But we've celebrated plenty of other holidays in other months.

Zelda: *(consulting her pad or phone)* There's Finch-en-tine's day on the thirteenth of February.

Finch: Ah yes. The day all Newvillains send cards to the Finch family letting them know how much they're adored.

Frances: And don't forget about Saint Finch's Day.

Zelda: The twenty-first of March

Gabby: There was a saint in the Finch family?

Frances: *(chuckles)* Heavens, no. Saint was our beloved family dog.

Gabby: Ah, so that's why we leave dog bones on the steps of Finch Manor on that day!

Frances: Old Saint would've loved those bones, wouldn't he, Elvira?

Finch: Yeah, sure. But you still haven't said what you're doing here in Newville, Dad.

Frances: Can't a father visit his daughter?

Finch: Of course, but—

Frances: And haven't you been telling me I shouldn't stay cooped up in Oldeville? That I should get outside in the fresh air more?

Finch: Absolutely, but—

Frances: Well, here I am—visiting my daughter, outside in the fresh air.

Finch: (*admonishingly*) Dad.

Frances: (*sighs, coming clean*) Alright. I heard you were in charge of the Christmas pageant and I wanted to see if you needed any help.

Finch: How did you hear that?

Frances: From Tobias of course.

Finch: Tobias?

Zelda: Tobias P. Edgewater, mayor of Newville.

Finch: I know who Tobias is. What I don't know is why he's talking to my father.

Zelda: (*consulting her pad or phone*) Mayor Edgewater and your father have a standing appointment, every Wednesday at one p.m.

Finch: A standing appointment? What for?

Frances: Oh, you know... a little of this, a little of that. He keeps me abreast of the goings on in Newville and I make regular contributions to the city beautification fund.

Finch: I see. And you expect me to believe you want to help with the Christmas pageant? You’ve never expressed interest in Christmas before.

Frances: Nor have you, until very recently, if I’m not correct.

Gabby: That’s true. Miss Finch stole Christmas last year. But she gave it back.

Betty: Well, she didn’t steal Christmas exactly, just the baby Jesus—

Gabby: Which was a Baby Pees-A-Lot from Wally Whizzbang’s Excitement Emporium.

Frances: So what do you say? Will you let old Papa Finch help?

Finch looks to **Gabby** and **Betty**.

Gabby: I think it would be really nice.

Betty: So do I.

All look to **Zelda**.

Zelda: I have no opinion whatsoever. I’m just here in my capacity as Mr. Finch’s assistant.

Finch: Then I say yes!

Frances: Great! *(looks around)* I can see that I’ve arrived just in time. There’s so much to do.

Mary, Joseph, Shepherd and **Angel** take notice and cross to the group.

Finch: Actually, we're almost done.

Frances: Almost done? How can this be? This is a stage show, right?

Betty: That's right.

Frances: But it's so... plain. Where are the lights? The pizzaz? The wow factor?

Betty: This pageant is about the birth of Jesus.

Frances: Yeah, so?

Gabby: So it doesn't need any pizzaz.

Joseph: Jesus was born in humble surroundings.

Mary: There was no room at the inn, so Mary gave birth in the stables out back.

Angel: He was wrapped in cloth and laid in a manger.

Shepherd: And shepherds came from the fields to worship him.

Gabby: The birth of Jesus *was* the wow factor. God sending his only son to bring peace and joy to the earth is the most amazing thing this world has ever known.

Betty: Gabby's right. In this case, less is more.

Frances: That may be true, but this is a play celebrating his birth, right?

Gabby: Right?

Frances: Might I suggest we make a few minor adjustments?

Finch: Like what?

Frances: Well in my experience, when it comes to celebrations, more is more.
(crosses to **Finch**) Can't you see it now? A thousand twinkling lights illuminating the stage like a sky full of stars?

Finch: (warming to the idea) That sounds lovely.

Frances: (pointing) And over here glittering trees in every color of the rainbow, covered from top to bottom in ornaments?

Finch: (getting excited) I like it. Very modern chic.

Frances crosses to **Mary** and **Joseph**.

Frances: And our actors—these costumes are a bit drab, wouldn't you say?

Betty: Hey! I made those myself.

Frances: And a little outdated.

Gabby: They're period costumes! They're supposed to be outdated!

Frances: I think we can jazz them up a bit.

Finch: So do I!

Betty: (to **Gabby**) I don't like where this is headed.

Gabby: Me either.

Mary, Joseph, Shepherd and **Angel** cross away from the group or exit as **Hattie** enters, carrying a plain green garland, followed by **Sally**, who carries a tray of cookies, **Wally**, who carries a baby doll, and **Melody**, followed by **Carolers**.

Hattie: Here's that garland you wanted, Elvira, and I have two trees in my truck that are ready to unload. (sneezes)

Finch: Thanks Hattie, but I don't think we need them anymore. We're going in a different direction for the pageant this year.

Frances: What do you think about brightly colored tinsel trees instead of plain old boring green ones?

Hattie: They *could* be better for my allergies! *(sneezes)*

Sally: How about my sugar cookies? Will they work for the refreshments?

Sally holds out the plate. **Gabby** takes one and takes a bite as **Frances** looks at them in disdain.

Frances: Sugar cookies? Aren't they a little overdone?

Sally: They're perfectly done! Crispy on the outside and soft on the inside!

Gabby: They're great, Sally.

Frances: I only meant that everyone makes sugar cookies at Christmas. *(to Finch)* I know this bakery in New York City that can ship the finest French pastries you've ever tasted. They can be here by morning.

Finch: That sounds amazing! Don't you think, Sally?

Sally: I do love a good macaron!

Melody: You don't need to worry about the music. We've got that covered.

Caroler 3: We finally learned the rest of the song!

Melody: Give it a listen! *(blows into pitch pipe)* And a one, and a two, and a—

Frances: *(stops Melody)* Actually, I have the most fabulous choir in mind. You've never heard voices more angelic.

Finch: That sounds fantastic! *(to Melody)* Maybe you and your carolers could sing with them.

Melody: That could be fun!

Wally: Well I finally found the perfect doll for baby Jesus. He’s an ultra realistic doll with an air pouch that makes it look like he’s breathing!

Frances: You know what makes the most realistic baby?

Finch: What?

Frances: A real live baby! I’ve got a friend who manages child actors. I’m sure I could get him to send down a few infants for you to choose from.

Finch: That would be incredible. *(to All)* Isn’t that incredible?

All except Gabby look at one another and nod and say things like, “it sure is”, “yes”, “wow” etc. as Tobias enters. He crosses to stand with Kirby and they both listen, unseen by others.

Gabby: Mr. Finch, it’s nice of you to take an interest, and your ideas are... well... interesting.

Frances: Thanks, little girl.

Finch: This is Gabby Gazoo. She’s my assistant director.

Gabby: And as the assistant director I have to ask—do we have the budget for any of this?

Frances: No need to worry about silly things like budgets. Now that I’m helping with the pageant, no expense will be spared! Zelda, take this down.

Zelda: Yes, Mr. Finch. *(pen at the ready over the pad)*

Frances: Call the folks down at Pete’s Party Palace and get twenty trees in every color and make sure they are covered in lights and decorations. Have them shipped to Hattie Hiccup’s Christmas Trees.

Zelda: *(writing)* Got it.

Frances: Then call Carla's Costume Cottage and order all new costumes for Mary, Joseph, and the rest of the bunch in the latest fashion.

Finch: *(excitedly)* And cover them in glitter!

Frances: That's right. The more glitter, the better!

Betty: Says the guy who's clearly never worked with glitter.

Frances: Then call Larry's Lighting Laboratory and have him bring a thousand twinkling lights.

Finch: *(disappointed)* Only a thousand?

Frances: Right. Make it two thousand.

Finch: *(excitedly)* Make it *ten* thousand!

Frances: That's the spirit! Have him deliver ten thousand of the most twinkle-tastic lights in his shop.

Zelda: Right away, Mr. Finch.

Tobias and Kirby cross to the group.

Tobias: Ten thousand lights?

Gabby: Mayor Edgewater! Thank goodness you're here.

Betty: The Christmas pageant is starting to be filled with, well, pageantry.

Gabby: It's getting out of control.

Frances: Elvira and I have it all perfectly under control, I assure you. Isn't that right, Elvira?

Finch: That's right, Dad!

Hattie: There's gonna be colorful trees! *(sneezes)*

Sally: And French pastries! *(hiccups)*

Melody: And a huge choir! *(blows into her pitch pipe)*

Wally: And a real live baby Jesus! *(holds up the doll)*

Doll Voice: *(offstage, perhaps loud and gruff)* Feed me!

Wally tucks the babydoll behind his back sheepishly.

Gabby: You've got to stop them, Mayor Edgewater!

Frances: Stop us? *(laughs)* Why would you want to do a thing like that?

Finch: We're only trying to make this the best Christmas pageant Newville has ever seen!

Frances: And it won't cost Newville a dime. I've offered to pay for everything myself.

Finch: The Finch fortune will finance the festivities!

Tobias: Well if it's not going to cost us any money and it's going to be bigger and better than before, then who am I to say no?

Gabby: Who says bigger is better?

Frances: I say it is! Bigger is always better. More is more!

Gabby: Don't you see? All the lights and fancy treats and excessive decorations—

Betty: And the glitter!

Gabby: Right—and the glitter—has taken away what Christmas is all about.

Betty: It wouldn't even feel like Christmas anymore.

Gabby: It would be an entirely different holiday altogether!

Frances: An entirely different holiday, eh? Zelda, the town charter, please.

Zelda: Right here, Mr. Finch. *(hands **Frances** the book)*

Betty: I don't like where this is going.

Frances thumbs through it as **Kirby** turns to audience.

Kirby: Many years ago, when the town of Newville began, the town charter was written by a foolhardy man. Oh, he wrote in the rules and he drafted the laws. He composed the whole charter, but added a clause. See this man was a Finch, the first Finch Newville had. He was Elvira Finch's great-great-great-granddad. So this loophole great-great-great-granddad Finchy added, it gave Finches power they never had had-ed. It gave them the power to add holidays... *(leans over the book and points to a spot)* And that clause, it remains there to this very day.

Frances: Ah, yes, here it is. The holiday clause.

Gabby: Not again! Elvira stole Christmas last year but it came just the same.

Frances: I'm not taking Christmas away. However, as the town charter states, as long as a Finch resides within the boundaries of Newville, then that Finch has the right to add a holiday to the calendar.

Betty: So?

Frances: So I propose we add a new holiday—a holiday filled with more decorations, more music, more treats, more presents—more of everything a Newvillian could ever want!

Finch: *(wrapped up in the excitement)* And we can call it Finchmas!

Hattie: Finchmas sounds ahh... *(about to sneeze)* ahh... *(sneeze doesn't come)*
ahh... *(sneeze doesn't come)*

Hattie: *(sneezing loudly)* Ahhhhh... mazing!

Hattie starts to wipe her nose on her sleeve, but **Kirby** holds out a tissue, which **Hattie** accepts.

Hattie: Thanks.

Frances: That's right! It *will* be awesome. Trust me, Newvillians will love Finchmas. They'll be no need for Christmas anymore.

Gabby: There will always be a need for Christmas.

Frances: Not once Finchmas comes to Newville.

Betty: But you can't just add a holiday!

Tobias: Wally is right. You don't reside in Newville anymore, Mr. Finch. You reside in the Oldeville Retirement Village.

Frances: I might not reside in Newville... but Elvira does. *(turns to **Finch**)* What do you say, Elvira? Want to bring Finchmas to Newville with me?

Finch: *(thinks, then excitedly)* I do!

Betty: Elvira, no!

Finch: It'll be great, just you wait and see.

Frances: Perfect! Elvira and I will go over the rest of the details at Finch Manor.

Finch: Gabby, you can handle the rest of rehearsal on your own, can't you?

Gabby: I... I guess so.

Finch: Great. There's so much to do and so little time!

Finch exits with **Frances** and **Zelda**.

Hattie: I'll head to the Christmas tree lot to make room for the new trees!

Sally: And I'll make room in my cooler for the macarons!

Sally and **Hattie** exit.

Melody: And I'll contact the choir so we can start learning their songs.

Caroler 4: Aw man! We finally finished learning this one!

Melody and **Carolers** exit.

Wally: I guess it doesn't matter which doll is the baby Jesus now. Here.

Wally hands the doll to **Gabby** and exits.

Tobias: And I'm sure it's time you rested that foot, Betty.

Betty: Probably.

Tobias and **Betty** turn to exit.

Gabby: Wait! What are we going to do? We can't let the Finches steal Christmas again!

Betty: I'm afraid there's nothing we can do, Gabby. The town charter is clear. The Finches can add a holiday any time they like.

Betty and **Tobias** exit as **Gabby** looks at the baby doll.

Gabby: But Miss Finch knows the true meaning of Christmas! She celebrated the birth of Jesus and let his love fill her heart. How could she forget about that now? And why would her father want to replace it with Finchmas?

As **Gabby** looks at the doll, **Kirby** crosses to **Gabby**. Perhaps additional actors can act out the scene as described by **Kirby** in a sort of "flashback."

Kirby: So I hear that you're wondering what makes Finches so fickle. What makes them change Christmas so shockingly quick, well, you just might remember that when Finch was small, Christmas was her favorite holiday of them all. She longed to be in the nativity show, but her dad was too busy, he took Miss Finch home. He bought many presents on that Christmas day, hoping gifts would make Miss Finch forget about the play. But Miss Finch fought forgetting, no she quite remembered, and from that day on, she was known as ill-tempered. As for celebrating Christmas? Miss Finch just said no. And each year at Christmas her resentment did grow. As for old Frances Finch, well this made him quite sad. Believe it or not he was not a bad dad. He forgot that Christmas was about much more than trinkets and doodads you buy at the store. That Christmas was about the birth of God's Son, who was sent here to earth to love everyone. Frances loved his Elvira, he wanted to connect, and yet this time each year, Elvira continued to reject. So now Frances is making up for every past Christmas.

Gabby holds up the doll.

Gabby: Which is why he's added the flashy fake Finchmas!

Kirby: That's right, but the question is what can you do?

Gabby: Just leave it to Jesus... *(holds up the doll)* And Gabby Gazoo!

If using spotlight, it dims and lights come up on the scene. Or lights can fade to black.

SCENE THREE

*The next day, Christmas Eve. The town of Newville is covered in lights and brightly colored decorations. It is gaudy and garish. The manger is gone. At start of scene, **Kirby** is performing another handyman task. During **Kirby's** monologue, **Tobias, Melody, Sally, Hattie, and Wally** enter, putting the final touches on the décor. They are hopeful, but something doesn't seem right.*

Kirby: *(stops task and turns to audience)* Hello there, dear friends, a new day is here. What was once Christmas Eve is now Finchmas this year! The trees are all tinsel, the lights are so bright, and all eagerly await the pageant tonight. This year's show is going to be something new, full of zing and pizzaz, flair, zip and verve too. The Newvillians have gotten swept up in the glitz, and Frances spent money to put on the ritz. But there's one thing to wonder on this special day... what would become of Newville's own nativity play?

Kirby returns to his work as Tobias, Sally, Hattie and Wally gather in the center.

Tobias: Wow! Would you look at all of this!

Wally: Finchmas has officially arrived in Newville!

Finch enters with **Frances** and **Zelda**. **Finch** carries a large cut out star.

Finch: *(excitedly)* Isn't it wonderful?

Sally: It's something. *(hiccups)*

Hattie: I was practically blinded when I saw Main Street covered in ten thousand twinkle lights. *(sneezes)*

Zelda: It's actually twenty thousand.

Frances: Like I always say... more is more.

Tobias: So is everything all set for today?

Sally: The finest French foods are fit to be feasted on. *(hiccups)*

Frances: I told you they were amazing. Best pastries money can buy.

Melody: And the splendiferous singers are set to serenade!

Frances: Isn't the choir incredible? Worth every penny.

Finch: And how about the decorations?

Hattie: Twenty tinsel trees are twinkling as we tal... *(sneeze doesn't come)* tal...
(sneeze doesn't come) talk! *(sneezes loudly)*.

Finch: If the pine and spruce trees are gone, then why are you still sneezing?

Hattie: From the *(about to sneeze)* tin... *(sneeze doesn't come)* tin... *(sneeze doesn't come)* tinsel! *(sneezes loudly)*

Sally: Hattie's allergic to tinsel too.

Hattie starts to wipe her nose on her sleeve, but **Sally** holds out a tissue, which **Hattie** gratefully accepts.

Hattie: Thanks.

Sally: You're welcome. *(hiccups)*

Hattie blows her nose loudly into the tissue.

Tobias: And is the Christmas pageant ready?

Frances: You mean the Finchmas pageant.

Tobias: I mean the nativity play—the one that celebrates the birth of our savior, Jesus? Is it ready?

Finch: Oh it's ready, and I promise you, it's gonna knock your socks off!

Wally enters, carrying the manger. It is covered in lights and décor. Maybe there is a flashing sign with an arrow that says “Son of God” or “Messiah”. Following **Wally** are **Mary, Joseph, Shepherd** and **Angel** wearing bright, glittering costumes that are quite different than the traditional nativity look. **All** except **Frances** and **Finch** are concerned. **Wally** places the manger in the center of the stage area or where the nativity pageant is taking place.

Melody: Consider my socks officially knocked off.

Tobias: What is that?

Wally: This is the manger. Elvira asked me to whoosh it up a bit.

Elvira: Zhuzh it up.

Wally: That’s what I said—whoosh it up.

Tobias: And it looks like Mary and Joseph and the rest of the gang got whooshed up as well?

Mary: This is a *lot* of glitter.

Joseph: I’m pretty sure Joseph did *not* wear sequins.

Shepherd: I don’t know. I kind of like being shiny. (*wiggles around and gets distracted*)

Angel: (*rolling her eyes*) Of course you would.

Tobias: This is a big change from last year.

Frances: Like I always say, bigger is better.

Wally: I thought you said more is more.

Frances: That too. And now Newville is shinier and glitzier, and well, new-er! And it’s all thanks to my Elvira.

Finch: Thanks, Dad. (*in sing song rhyme*) My love for Christmas could not be contained, but with Finchmas my ideas need not be restrained! Now forever in Newville this holiday can be, an extravagant display—that’s the Finch guarantee!

Frances: That’s right. And speaking of extravagant displays, it should be just about time for the pageant. Isn’t that right, Zelda?

Zelda: The pageant is scheduled to begin in exactly two minutes.

Finch: Everyone to their places!

Mary, Joseph, Shepherd, and Angel take their places.

Finch: *(looks around, worried)* I wonder where Gabby is. She's our assistant director. She should really be here for the show.

Gabby enters, carrying a large wrapped gift. **Betty** enters behind her on crutches.

Gabby: I'm right here.

Finch: Oh, good. You made it just in time. The play's about to begin.

Gabby: No, it's not.

Zelda: Yes it is. It's right here on the schedule, see? *(shows Gabby her note pad or phone)*

Gabby: Well it's going to have to wait a few minutes. *(holds out the gift)* Miss Finch needs to open her gift first.

Finch: *(taking the gift)* A gift? For me?

Gabby: Of course.

Frances: Gifts are amazing. And the more a gift costs, the better it is. Open it!

Finch: Alright.

Finch opens the box. Inside is the baby doll.

Wally: It's Baby Talkington!

Doll Voice: *(offstage, this time sweet)* I love you.

Mary: No. *(smiles)* It's baby Jesus.

Finch: Why did you give me this doll, Gabby? You know we hired a real baby for the pageant.

Gabby: I thought you needed a reminder of what this holiday is all about.

Finch: Finchmas?

Gabby: No, Christmas.

Frances: We don't need Christmas anymore.

Betty: We always need Christmas.

Frances: But Finchmas is bigger and brighter than any holiday.

Gabby: Christmas isn't about being bigger and brighter.

Betty: It's actually a quiet, humble story.

Mary: Of a young mother...

Joseph: Traveling afar with her husband.

Shepherd: Putting their faith in God to guide them.

Angel: And knowing that the most precious gift in the world was God's own newborn son.

Finch: *(quietly, looking at the doll in wonder)* In all the excitement of Finchmas I'd almost forgotten.

Hattie: Me too. *(sneezes)*

Sally: Me three. *(hiccups)*

Wally: Not gonna lie... I kind of miss our old pageant.

Melody: Our *Christmas* pageant.

Tobias: It's not too late to bring back Christmas.

Frances: (*angrily, in sing-song rhyme*) Of course it's too late! Finchmas is here. You can't change your mind, Christmas won't reappear. The money's been spent and the damage is done. Finchmas is here to stay! The Finches have won!

Betty: That's not up to you, Frances.

Zelda: Miss Bunch is correct. You're not a citizen of Newville anymore, Mr. Finch.

Frances: Need I remind you you're my assistant, Zelda? Who's side are you on?

Zelda crosses to stand next to Tobias.

Zelda: I'm on their side—the side that remembers the true meaning of Christmas.

Tobias: And if she wants to, as a citizen of Newville, Miss Finch can save Christmas, once and for all.

Frances: (*angrily, to Elvira*) So what's it gonna be, Elvira? Are you going to tear down everything we've built together? Now that we've finally found a holiday that we can celebrate this time of year, are you going to just throw it all away because a little girl gave you a baby doll?

Finch: I...

All: (*except **Finch**, lean in*) Yes...

Finch: I...

All: (except Finch, lean in further) Yes...

Finch: (hands **Gabby** the doll) I need to think!

Finch paces back and forth, a finger on her chin, thinking. All **Others** follow behind her and lean in, eaves dropping.

Kirby: (turning to audience) And right there in town, on that Christmas Eve day, Miss Finch must decide what becomes of the play.

Finch turns to audience and holds up a finger, as if getting an idea. **Others** stop.

Finch: It's not about presents.

Finch resumes pacing, finger on chin. **Others** follow. **Finch** turns to audience and holds up a finger, as if getting an idea. **Others** stop.

Finch: It's not about trees.

Finch resumes pacing, finger on chin. **Others** follow. **Finch** turns to audience and holds up a finger, as if getting an idea. **Others** stop.

Finch: Not carols or cookies or any of these.

Finch resumes pacing, finger on chin. **Others** follow. **Finch** turns to audience and holds up a finger, as if getting an idea. **Others** stop.

Finch: It's about a Father's love given to us on earth, through the gift his Son's miraculous birth.

Kirby: She saw then and there what she hadn't before—that Christmas couldn't be bought, didn't come from a store. So Miss Finch knew right then that Finchmas was through!

Finch: Come on Gabby! (takes **Gabby's** hand)

Kirby: She said.

Finch: I know just what to do! *(crosses to **Zelda**)* Zelda, do you still have the town charter?

Zelda: *(holds out a book)* Right here. *(hands it to **Finch**)*

***Finch** flips through the charter during the next line.*

Kirby: Now remember Elvira Finch’s great-great-great-granddad, he gave Finches a power they never had had. It didn’t just give power to add holidays—

Finch: *(finds the page)* This charter allows me to take them away. On this, the twenty-fourth of December, I officially take away the holiday of...

***All** lean forward in anticipation.*

All: *(except **Finch**)* Yes...

Finch: Finchmas! *(tears a page out of the charter then slams it shut)*

***All** except **Frances** cheer. **Finch** crosses to **Frances**.*

Finch: Why do you look so glum, Dad?

Frances: I... I’m going to miss Finchmas. I created it for you and me, so we could celebrate it together.

Finch: You never needed to create an extravagant holiday.

Frances: But you’ve never celebrated Christmas with me—not since you were a child... not since the day I wouldn’t let you be in the play.

Finch: I was wrong about all that. I let too many years go by, hating Christmas and wanting it gone. But all that changed the day I let Jesus into my heart. *(takes **Frances’s** hand)* And now I’d like nothing more than to celebrate the gift from our heavenly father—the birth of our lord and savior—with my own father. What do you say, Dad?

Frances: I say...

All: *(except Frances, leaning in)* Yes...

Frances: There's no better way to celebrate Christmas than with the annual Newville Christmas pageant!

Finch: *(smiles)* I couldn't agree more.

Wally: Might I suggest we make a few minor adjustments?

Finch: *(smiles)* Be my guest.

During Kirby's monologue, All take down the lights and gaudy decorations. Sally gets her cookies. Melody exits and comes back with the Carolers. Gabby hands Mary the doll.

Kirby: Thanks to Miss Finch, Christmas finally was saved, and now it was time to head to the stage. A humble celebration of the most important thing—God's heavenly love and our own newborn king.

Frances: Then I guess it's time for the pageant to begin. Or is it too late, Zelda?

Zelda: *(looks at the notebook)* Actually— *(smiles and slams the notebook shut)* It's perfect timing.

Finch: Great! *(to Gabby)* Assistant director, why don't you start things off?

Gabby: *(smiles)* Everyone to their places!

Mary, Joseph, Shepherd and Angel take their places. Finch hands Zelda a Bible.

Frances: *(to Finch)* You know, I can see why you wanted to be in this pageant all those years ago. It looks like a lot of fun.

Finch: I'm glad you said that. *(picks up the star and hands it to Frances)* Because we have one last role we need to fill.

Frances: (unsure) I'm not sure where to go.

Betty crosses to Frances. **Finch** hands **Zelda** a Bible.

Betty: (smiles) Just let your heart guide you.

Frances crosses tentatively into manger scene and stands behind the manger, holding the star. **Zelda** crosses with him and holds the open Bible. **Finch, Kirby, Wally, Sally, Hattie, Tobias, Melody** and **Carolers/Townspeople** gather around to watch the play. **Gabby** steps forward.

Gabby: And, scene!

Joseph: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David.

Mary: He went to be registered with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him, and who was expecting a child.

Angel: While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

All look at **Shepherd**, who looks around sheepishly.

Shepherd: Um... line?

Frances: I've got it. (reading) And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

All applaud.

Finch: A humble celebration of a miraculous moment.

Frances: I can't think of anything better.

Hattie: Me (about to sneeze) Ne... . (sneeze doesn't come) Ne... (sneeze doesn't come) Neither! (sneezes loudly)

Hattie starts to wipe her nose on her sleeve. Finch holds out a tissue, which **Hattie** accepts.

Hattie: Thanks.

Finch: *(laughs)* You're welcome.

Hattie blows her nose loudly into the tissue as **Kirby** steps to center and addresses audience.

Kirby: And so the time comes for our story to end. All is right in the small town of Newville again. And Newville is now filled with smiles once more since Christmas in Newville has finally been restored. So on every Christmas we'll honor our King. *(stops and thinks)* Now the only thing left is for everyone to sing!!

Melody: Alright everyone, let's fill these streets with song! *(blows into her pitch pipe)* Joy to the World!

All characters can sing or you can encourage your audience to sing as well.

All: *(singing)* Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

You can sing additional verses or end the singing here.

Finch/Frances: Merry Christmas everyone!

Lights fade to black.

End of play.