

a script from



PURCHASE

SCRIPT

TO

REMOVE

“My Christmas Connection: A Play”

By

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AT

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What	A cast of mysterious characters, some belonging to the traditional Christmas story, some to history and others to modern Day, come to proclaim (and see if the audience can figure out) their connection to Christmas. They tell their stories, reveal their identities, and explain how the gifts of Christmas have changed who they are. Themes: Christmas, Ensemble, Monologues, Redemption, Forgiveness, Truth, Joy, Peace, Freedom, Identity
Who	St. Nick Mary Prisoner Charles Dickens Rahab Grinch Wiseman Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Shepherd
When	This script is written for Modern Day. Each character is presented to the audience as a mysterious character before revealing their true identity towards the end of each monologue.
Costumes	All characters should be dressed in black.
Props	Ski Mask, Chair, End Table, Decorated Christmas Tree, Presents, Red Sac, Cookies, Milk, Baby Wrap, Baby Doll (inside wrap), Bowl and Spoon, Overcoat, Chains, Prisoner Shirt, Garbage Bag, Leather Bound Notebook, Pencil, Top Hat, Scarlet Cord, Bible, Ornamental Head Covering, Bell, Shepherd's Staff, Manger
Sound	There are only a couple of sound cues in this script (Alarms, Sirens, Bells), all of which can easily be found online. I would suggest, if possible, that the bell be an offstage bell that is rung by a stagehand.
Music	This script was originally written to allow for music (specifically a church choir) in between each scene. This is not imperative to the storyline, but would add an extra artistic element.
Why	Isaiah 9:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17

How The script was originally written so that the audience would be unaware of the character's identity at the beginning of each monologue. The character's true identity is revealed throughout the monologue; however, it is never stated directly. If you would prefer to have each character directly state who they are, feel free to adjust the following lines at the end of each monologue.

St. Nick: Who am I? The real St. Nick. And... there is one more rumor. Apparently, I don't use the front door.

Mary: Who am I? I am Mary, the mother of Jesus. (*looking up*) May it be to me as you have said. Right now. Right here.

Dickens: Who am I? Charles Dickens. A man who, (*he looks up*) with God's blessing, is going to make a difference.

Prisoner: Who am I? A convicted prisoner. But I am no longer defined by these chains. I'm free.
Director's note: this character can be played by either a man or a woman

Wiseman: Who am I? A Wiseman in search of the King. (*looking up*) Guide us to thy perfect light.

Rahab: Who am I? I am forgiven. I am redeemed. I am Rahab.

Grinch: Who am I? I'm the Grinch – the one who *tried* to steal Christmas.

HWL: Who am I? I am Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. I heard the bells on Christmas Day, and I remembered.

Shepherd: Who am I? I'm an ignorant, foolish shepherd.

Time 30-40 minutes without music / 90-120 minutes with optional music

Upstage right there is a large decorated Christmas tree. In front of the tree stands a small, yet visible, manger. Next to the tree stands a small end table with a plate of cookies and a glass of milk. Behind the tree, not visible to the audience, there should be a large shepherd's staff with a Christmas bow on it.

Center stage there is a chair.

Song 1 (Music Optional)

Scene 1

A tall slender man enters from behind the audience. He is wearing a black ski mask. He is moving stealthily toward the tree carrying a large red sack full of presents. He enters the stage and moves towards the tree.

Suddenly an alarm goes off. St. Nick is startled and spins around facing the audience.

Sirens begin to sound as a spotlight appears on St. Nick.

He drops the bag and puts his hands up.

St Nick: This is not what it looks like.

The alarm and sirens stop.

He listens.

St Nick: *(as if answering an unseen voice)* No, technically I wasn't invited but-

He listens.

St Nick: *(as if answering an unseen voice)* Yes, there are some expensive items in the bag that are not mine-

He listens.

St Nick: *(as if answering an unseen voice)* This? *(referring to his mask)* It was cold out.

He removes the mask.

He listens.

St Nick: *(as if answering an unseen voice)* Who am I? *(starting to get angry, perturbed that he isn't quickly recognized)* Who am I? It's the night before Christmas. This is preposterous. Ridiculous. Absolutely uncalled for. Instead of relying on everyone taking a long winter's nap, I have to worry about alarm systems.

Beat.

St. Nick: I know exactly why this is happening. There have been way too many misunderstandings over the years. I think it's time we separated the truth from the lies.

He moves toward the audience.

St Nick: Then we shall see if you can recognize who I am and what my connection is to Christmas.

The spotlight goes down. Lights up on the stage.

St. Nick: Let's start with what I am not. First of all, I'm not fat. I never was. I don't know how that rumor got started, but let the record show: it's not true. I do love cookies, but I understand the need to keep sugar in moderation. Granted around the holidays I put on a few pounds, but who doesn't? *(admittedly)* It's those gingerbread ones that get me every time. Second of all, I don't like being cold. I'd never choose to live in a frozen tundra. I don't know anyone who would. A palm tree, a cold lemonade, that's more my style.

Beat.

St. Nick: Finally, and this one is the most embarrassing of the misunderstandings: I'm not married. There is no Mrs. I'm not sure how this particular rumor began... I have my suspicions of a certain young woman who would have liked that to be true, and maybe suggested such to some so-called historians, but for the record: it is not. And frankly, I am quite proud of my bachelor status and not a little perturbed by this final incorrect 'fact'. These rumors have taken quite a radical turn. With that said...

He sits in the chair.

St. Nick: ...to be remembered is quite an honor, but to be remembered as a fat, old, white-haired man is... well honestly, it's humbling.

Beat.

St. Nick: I do love presents. I love the element of surprise. There's nothing quite like seeing a need and being able to be the one to help -the one to fulfill a dream. The true story is – I once knew this family. They had three young daughters. The father feared his girls would be taken away if he couldn't find them husbands, but there was no money for suitable dowries. I had been blessed by my parents' inheritance so, I decided to anonymously provide the dowries myself. I secretly threw the gold coins in their window.

He stands, grabs the sack of presents and moves toward the tree.

St Nick: The look on their faces as they each married was worth more than any amount I could have given.

He begins to put the presents under the tree.

St. Nick: Our Savior demonstrated that on the cross, with his life. He gave so that we could receive fullness of life. I dedicated my life to showing Christ's love to others.

The final present is the bowl and spoon. They are not wrapped but rather have a simple red bow. He puts these items on the end table next to the milk and cookies.

St. Nick: Every time I give, I hope in some small way, I am reminding others of the ultimate gift.

He reaches inside the sack and removes a red 'Santa' coat. He starts to put it on.

He grabs a cookie.

St. Nick: Gingerbread (*as if he just can't help himself*) - every time.

He dips the cookie in the milk.

St. Nick: Who am I? Well...there is one more rumor. Apparently, I don't use the front door.

He winks at the audience, takes a bite of the cookie, grabs the sack and throws it over his shoulder as he exits stage left.

St Nick: *(softly, as he exits)* Ho. Ho. Ho.

Song 2 (Music Optional)

Scene 2

Director's Note: Mary should appear happy. She should have a light hearted, sweet tone. Perhaps a little flustered and confused like any young mother but she should not be played as discontent.

A young woman enters from upstage right. She is wearing a baby wrap that appears to be holding a small baby. She removes the bow from the bowl and spoon and picks them up.

She moves to center stage, rocking back and forth as if comforting the baby. She holds the large bowl and spoon in one hand and softly pats the baby with the other.

Mary: Who am I?

She moves downstage.

Mary: I don't even know who I am. Not yet. I thought I'd have more time to figure that out before life... happened.

She smiles at the baby then grabs the spoon and starts stirring.

Mary: *(whispering so as not to wake the baby)* Dinner for three. I've always wanted to make dinner for three. I'm not a bad cook- I'm actually pretty good. But cooking while carrying an extra twenty pounds of a sleeping *(admittedly)* usually crying baby, is another thing. I am not quite used to that yet. I thought it would be just the two of us for a little while longer. But surprises happen. And was it ever a surprise! If I'm honest, I was just getting used to the idea of getting married. I've always wanted a husband – and a baby. It's just that it all happened so fast.

Slight pause.

She continues to rock back and forth.

Mary: I'm so blessed. I know I'm blessed. I'm remembered as being blessed. But there are days... there are days that my inner two-year-old emerges. I didn't know it was still there, but apparently, I can throw a temper with the best of them. *(justifying)* It's just that when the baby's crying and crying and my husband is... unreasonable. It's true what they say -the cobbler's kids have no shoes, and the carpenter's house is never finished. I'm not asking for a palace - but if you're going to put in a doorway it makes sense to finish the threshold, right?

Mary rocks as if the baby has just started crying.

Mary: *(to the baby)* Shhh. Shhh.

She kisses him on the head.

Mary: *(continuing to pat him)* How do I do this? Any of this? What was God thinking?

Beat.

Mary: Sometimes God seems distant and mysterious. And then sometimes he shows up closer than I ever thought he could be. Here. Right here.

She continues to pat the baby.

Mary: How do you burp the son of God? Am I supposed to even do that? *(to the audience in a whisper)* Is that blasphemous to say? What can I possibly teach the all-knowing Creator? I'm still mastering dinnertime.

Beat.

Mary: Who am I?

She looks up.

Mary: I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said. Right now. Right here.

She exits upstage left.

Song 3 (Music Optional / Suggestion "What Child is This")

Scene 3

Director's Note: Dickens is lively, animated and boisterous. Play with this and feel free to create even more physical comedic moments.

A man enters from behind the audience. He is carrying a small, leather bound notebook and pencil. He is mumbling to himself as he walks, as if composing a storyline in his head. He scurries to the left side of the stage tripping up the stairs to the stage. He quickly recovers, turning to the left side of the stage as if to see what he tripped on. As he does, he stumbles backwards into the chair that is center stage. He falls over the chair, landing on his backside and turns toward the audience.

Dickens: Who am I?

He shakes his head, dusts himself off, and stands.

Dickens: A man who wants to make a difference. Someone who wants to say something.

He paces.

Dickens: *(referring to the notebook)* I don't have any space left to write, to speak, to create. It's not that I have writer's block – my brain won't slow down. Trying to answer too many questions. Trying to solve too many problems. I'm not making any sense.

He turns toward the audience.

Dickens: But I have to say something. I have to create something to make them hear, understand. It's not enough to enforce laws. Parliament can't write any law that'll change a man's heart. How can the people of England be so blind? So immoral? These are children! Children we're talking about, working in these horrible conditions.

Defeated. He sits.

Dickens: Political pamphlets aren't enough. I need more. I need to do more.

Putting his head in his hands.

Dickens: How can I make them listen?

Determined to write. He opens his notebook.

Dickens: I have a voice – a louder one than some. I just have to figure out how to use it this time. Another story? Another political pamphlet? I’ve done those before. This one needs to be different. Unique.

Pause.

Dickens: A political drama? No, a comedy.

Frustrated, he pounds his fist into his hand.

Dickens: No. No. Meaning, purpose, virtue – can they even be captured in a fiction? What am I doing?

Pause.

He shivers.

Dickens: It’s freezing in here.

He stands up abruptly and looks toward stageright as if looking out a window.

Dickens: *(mumbling to himself)* How much more snow are we going to get? I hate snow. I mean it’s pretty at Christmas-

An idea has struck him.

Dickens: Christmas. Christmas. A holiday classic would turn heads. One that would be remembered for the ages. It’s so easy.

He sits and starts to write.

Dickens: A story about St Nick-

He scratches out the idea.

Dickens: About a righteous man who knew how to keep Christmas well-

He scratches out the idea.

Dickens: No! A story about a man who did not. Yes! A fool – no, a malicious scoundrel who hated – despised Christmas. What better way to show the importance of the matter...

Getting more excited.

Dickens: Yes, yes! A man whose life is completely and totally devoid of Christmas.

He stands and moves toward the Christmas tree.

He grabs a present and moves back towards the chair as he contemplates.

Dickens begins to act out a scene as he creates it in his head.

He stands on the chair.

Dickens: *(in Fred's voice)* "A Happy no – a Merry Christmas to you, Uncle! God save you!"

He jumps down from the chair, now as Scrooge.

Dickens: "Every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should Be... baked... *boiled* in his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart."

Dickens faces the audience, pleased with his creation.

Dicken: Oh, I like that!

He writes in his notebook. Pauses.

He stands and paces again.

Dickens: *(talking to himself)* He should hate even the word. Christmas. Happy Christmas. Merry merry merry Christmas.

He continues to pace.

Dickens: Christmas? Christmas? *(in Scrooge's voice, trying to work out the phrase)* Rubbish. Poppycock. Humbug! *(pleased with the last attempt)* Yes!

He writes.

Dickens: Bah-Humbug.

He writes again.

Dickens: Marley was dead, to begin with. Old Marley was dead as a doornail.

He stands.

Dickens: Where am I going with this? It can start with darkness, but it must end with life.

Putting his head in his hands and rubbing his face.

Dickens: A catch phrase. Something memorable.

He paces.

Dickens: God's with us. No. God goes before us. Blessing to you. God bless you... no, us...

He has an idea. He writes.

Dickens: God bless us - everyone.

He grabs a top hat out of the present.

Dickens: Who am I?

Confidently, he puts on the top hat.

Dickens: A man who, *(he looks up)* with God's blessing, is going to make a difference.

As he exits, he jubilantly calls to the audience.

Dickens: A merry, merry, merry Christmas!

Grabbing his pencil and notebook he quickly exits off stage left.

Song 4 (Music Optional)

Scene 4

Director's Note: This monologue should be the first one of the script that has more of a serious tone. However, it should not match the somber tone of Longfellow. It should be played as serious but hopeful – embodying the peace that it is describing.

A man dressed in a heavy overcoat enters upstage left.

Prisoner: Who am I?

Beat.

Prisoner: It doesn't matter anymore.

Pause.

Prisoner: I am who I am. I've done what I've done. And I'm out of time.

He grabs the chair and turns it around, so that the back of the chair is facing the audience. He straddles the chair, so that he is sitting backwards on the chair facing the audience.

Prisoner: I won't be remembered by my best days. The worst day of my life is what now defines me. My greatest mistakes are how I'll be remembered.

Pause.

Prisoner: It takes more than food and water to keep on living. Hope is...without it, a soul can't survive.

He looks around.

Prisoner: There's no light in these four walls. There's no hope here. Condemned. Guilty. Charged. Forsaken. I'm not saying I didn't deserve it. I'm not a good person. Never was. My whole life people tried to change me. *(quietly admitting)* I tried to change me. But it was no use. You are who you are. There's no fixing or modifying or changing it.

Pause.

Prisoner: So I thought. Left to live out my days in hopeless regret. Until –
He stands.

Prisoner: I found something. Or rather it found me.
Beat.

Prisoner: Peace. *(looks around)* Of all places. I found true peace... here.
And it's not something that can be detained or fettered or bound. It's
free for the taking.

*He moves to the Christmas tree and picks up a present. He shakes it. He then opens it and pulls
out a garbage bag.*

*He kneels down to reveal that his feet have chains on them. These chains should not be
connected but rather one chain on either foot.*

He begins to remove the chains and put them in the garbage bag.

Prisoner: These chains are only temporary.

*He takes off his coat to reveal that he is wearing a striped 'prisoner' shirt as well as chains on his
hands. (Again the chains should be on either hand and not connected.) He takes the shirt off,
revealing a simple black shirt underneath. He puts the prisoner's shirt in the garbage bag.*

Prisoner: Freedom- true freedom, can't be taken from you. Freedom is a gift
given. It just has to be received. Peace can't be seized, arrested and
removed. Peace is a gift.

He takes off the chains on his hands and puts them in the garbage bag.

Prisoner: Who am I? I'm not my chains. I'm free.
Beat.

Prisoner: When the Prince of Peace gives you a gift, no one can take it from you.

He ties up the garbage bag, moves downstage and drops the bag off of the stage.

He exits stage right.

Song 5 (Music Optional)

Scene 5

Director's Note: This should be playful and conversational, as if the Wiseman is speaking to a close friend.

A man in sandals enters from behind the audience.

He makes his way through the audience till he is directly in front of centerstage.

Wiseman: *(to the audience)* Who am I?

Beat.

Wiseman: Where am I going?

Beat.

Wiseman: More importantly, where am I? I have no idea. Isn't that just a metaphor of life? Where are we and where are we going?

Sincerely and more lighthearted.

Wiseman: But honestly at the moment I have absolutely no idea where I am. Which is frustrating because when you give up home and reputation, spend a significant part of your lifetime savings... ok all of it- to travel, it's usually a good idea to know where you're going. Truth is, I don't even know my final destination. And I don't know who to ask. Not that I like asking. I'm the wisest guy I know. I'm paid to be. There, I said it. Am I fulfilling a stereotype? So be it. I don't like asking for directions. But it's even harder when everyone thinks your map is a joke, your mission a myth, and your destination a figment of your imagination.

He shrugs.

Wiseman: Maybe it is.

He moves on to the stage. He shifts the chair so that it is once again facing the audience. He sits in the chair, takes off his sandals, and begins to rub his feet.

Wiseman: My feet are killing me. The moor and mountain without a good sole shoe -it's tricky. There are no cobblers on the way to Jerusalem. At least I think that's where we're going. It's harder when your map keeps disappearing. Starless nights are not that uncommon. I didn't really factor that in. How long did it take? How many days, months, years did I travel? I'm not there yet, so even I don't know. If only someone could figure out a way to have a system that didn't depend on weather. A kind of... positioning system that could tell you where you were and exactly where you were going – that is an idea that would make someone rich.

He puts his sandals back on and stands.

Wiseman: Do I have doubts? Of course, I do. Did I risk all – livelihood, riches, my reputation for some desperate hope?

Beat.

Wiseman: I guess we'll see.

He begins to move toward the Christmas tree.

Wiseman: But this hope that there is a King- a King of the Universe born today. If it's true – really true, nothing else matters. We've been studying and watching and now traveling for so long. I have to find him.

He mumbles to himself as he selects a present, opens it and pulls out an ornamented head piece.

Wiseman: I'm starving and tired. If there was just a place to rest and stop. A place with food and a bed – that place would make a killing. Once this journey is done, I'm implementing these ideas.

He puts the headpiece on.

Wiseman: Who am I? A lost man in search of the King. *(earnestly, looking to the sky)* Guide us to thy perfect light.

He starts moving toward stageright, checks the sky then exits off stage left.

Song 6 (Music Optional - Suggestion: "We Three Kings")

Scene 6

Director's Note: This monologue should have a heavy tone. The weight of what Rahab has been saved from should be felt in the way that this monologue is delivered.

A woman enters upstage right. She moves to downstage right and falls on the floor as if begging.

Rahab: Who am I?

Beat.

Rahab: Who am I that you would come to my house? Or show me mercy? But as I have been kind to you, show kindness to me and my family.

She grabs a present and opens it as she desperately moves to centerstage.

She puts the present on the floor next to the chair and pulls out a scarlet rope.

Rahab: Your life for mine.

She desperately ties the scarlet rope to the base of the centerstage chair.

Beat.

Rahab: My life wasn't worth saving. Who was I really? Just a girl who loved her family. A daughter who disappointed her father. A woman with no future and a past better forgotten.

Beat.

Rahab: Who am I? Well, I'm scared of heights. I like to stay on solid ground. I know a thing or two about foundations crumbling. Things that you thought would stand the test of time, walls you were so sure would protect you and keep you safe, I've seen them crumble. Literally. The dust of walls collapsing is a sight you don't soon forget.

Beat.

Rahab: I should have died that day. I deserved to. God alone knows the total destruction my sin caused in my own life as well as in others. A holy God would have been justified in condemning me that day. But instead I was shown mercy. I was forgiven. I was redeemed.

She pulls a Bible out of the present.

Rahab: *(referring to the Bible)* I don't belong here. I don't understand why I'm here – or even mentioned. But here I sit with my name written on the page for all to read - the story of redemption, a life changed. I was the opposite of married. I was anti-marriage. Why would a man want to build a family with me? But... after that day, one man did. And we had a son, and he had a son. And on it went until suddenly I had a family line. A line that meant something, that led to something- to someone. Why me? All I did was believe. When you see thousands of men marching and marching for days and blowing trumpets, and then you see what I saw, all you can do is believe.

Beat.

Rahab: *(confident)* Who am I? I am forgiven. I am redeemed. I have been shown mercy and named in the genealogy of my Lord and my God. The walls of Jericho, which should have claimed my life, instead brought freedom and a saving grace that I didn't deserve.

Beat.

Rahab: The day of my should-have-been death, brought me to my Savior.

She exits.

Song 7 (Music Optional)

Scene 7

Director's Note: This monologue should be fun. The Grinch is obviously grumpy, but in a fictional, cartoonish way. This monologue should be playful, not heavy or somber in any way.

A man enters from stage left. He slinks over to the Christmas tree and steals a present from underneath it. He looks both ways to see if anyone has spotted him. He then sees that the audience has noticed his theft. He moves downstage.

Grinch: Ok. You caught me. I haven't been very good at this in the past... thought I'd take another stab at it.

Beat.

Grinch: Who am I? *(rhythmically)* Well, I'm not known for my warm hand shake or my freshly baked Christmas fruitcake. I'm as cuddly as a cactus and charming as an eel. I'm the nickname you give people who hate this whole ordeal.

Beat.

Grinch: What's not to hate? *(throwing his hands up in the air)* The freezing weather, the tacky decorations, the singing -the endless singing! Most think I'm just a fictional character, but my essence can be seen vividly during the Christmas season: The waitress with the bad attitude, the impatient traveler, the grumpy old man whose house a caroler would never dare approach.

He puts his hands over his ears.

Grinch: My heart is two times too small to deal with all the caroling. What is it about this season that makes people sing?

He moves centerstage.

Grinch: I'll tell you what it is. It's the one thing I didn't consider when I tried to steal Christmas. It's something that can't be stolen. Apparently. Or even purchased.

He steps downstage and looks both ways as if to make sure no one hears him say the next line.

Grinch: *(whispering to the audience)* Joy.

He cringes, visibly disturbed.

Grinch: Just the word makes my skin crawl.

He shivers.

Grinch: If I could describe how this whole season makes me feel in one word it would be: Stink. Stank. Stunk! Ok. Three words.

Beat.

Grinch: Who am I? I'm the mean one who tried to steal Christmas. But apparently - Joy isn't something that can't be bought in a store, true joy, you see, is about something more.

Looking at the present, then back at the audience.

Grinch: Maybe it'll be something other than socks.

He exits stage left.

Song 8 (Music Optional / Suggestion: "Joy to the World")

Scene 8

Director's Note: This monologue should have a heavy and somber tone, helping to emphasize that though we can't always see God's hand, we can rest assured that He is still working.

A man enters from behind the Christmas tree. He stands at the Christmas tree for a moment and looks at it. He slowly grabs a present and turns toward the audience.

Longfellow: The world is broken. The beauty that I once saw, the joy I once felt, the dreams I once had -all seem futile. Hope is a cruel tease. This is the world. Men are broken. Any attempt to cure that, only leads to despair. We are hopelessly flawed and desperately lost and headed for destruction.

Beat.

He steps towards the audience, as if letting them in on a secret.

Longfellow: This is not the feel-good part of the show. This is the grumpy old man section.

Pause.

Longfellow: Who am I? I'm a broken man trying to navigate this fallen world.

Beat.

He moves center stage.

Longfellow: As a young man, hope was closer. I was idealistic. I once dreamed that the world could be better, that I had a place in it – that I had a chance to make a difference. But the older I get, the more pain seems closer, and men's hate grows stronger.

He moves stage left, looking past the audience.

Longfellow: War seems inevitable. The good Book says that it is, but to see it-

Slight pause. He shakes his head in dismay.

Longfellow: To actually see men, line up to kill each other ...We are made in the image of God, and yet we can do unspeakable things to each other. I don't see God's image in any of this.

Beat.

Longfellow: The one person who used to help me see the good - she's gone. *(he looks to heaven)* Taken from me.

Beat.

Longfellow: Where is God? Why doesn't He act? Does He see? Doesn't He hear?

A bell tolls.

Longfellow quickly looks toward the tree.

He slowly moves back toward center stage and looks at the audience.

Longfellow: And then, I heard them. It was Christmas, and my life was full of grief and despair and hopelessness. The world seemed to be falling apart before my very eyes. And then... there they were, loud and clear and persistent. Their sound persisted through the despair, ringing louder and louder, stronger and more resilient. The world is not spinning out of His control. He is still Sovereign.

He opens the present and pulls out a Christmas bell.

He rings it.

Longfellow: God is not dead, nor does He sleep. I heard the bells on Christmas Day-

Pause.

Longfellow: And I remembered.

He exits stage left.

Song 9 (Music Optional, Suggestion: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day")

Scene 9

Director's Note: The shepherd should come across as a tough, gruff character. However, he is not necessarily unhappy. This is a normal, day to day conversation for him, thus this monologue should not be somber in any way.

A man enters from behind the audience.

He mumbles to himself, clearly agitated. He keeps looking behind him as if someone might be calling after him.

Shepherd: *(he shouts behind him, shrugging off a mocking voice)* Don't worry, I don't want to come back.

He enters center stage.

Shepherd: *(to the audience, referring to the unheard voice behind the audience)* Cidiots.

Pause.

Shepherd: What? Never heard that one? They're idiots that live in the city.

Pause.

Shepherd: *(to the audience)* Don't look at me like that. They have names for me too. I'm out in the sun all day and my neck gets a little red. That's what happens when you have dirt under your fingernails and work for a living. But they're not really offended by my unique tan. They're implying that I'm stupid, ignorant, and uncultured.

He shrugs.

Shepherd: Maybe I am. But maybe they're educated beyond their intelligence so much so that they've lost all common sense.

Beat.

Shepherd: Who am I? I know who I am. And I know I don't get along with everyone - especially those guys.

Beat.

Shepherd: I know what people think of me. And most days it's not worth arguing about it. I don't need anyone else's approval. Not that I'd get it if I did. I work hard. It takes sacrifice, courage, grit. (*admittedly, smelling his shirt*) Ok. It smells. I'll grant you that. I didn't take on the family business because it made me look good -or smell good. Others may think this is a job that just anyone can do - and that may be true. But not everyone can do it well. I'm good at my job. Even if no one else wants it.

Slight pause.

Shepherd: They need me to do it. Those pretentious religious types, they need me to be good at it. Where else would they find a sacrifice?

Beat.

Shepherd: The ironic thing is: my job is messy, dirty, and it keeps me from being clean. But they need me - to make them clean.

Beat.

Shepherd: We're the dirty outcasts taking care of the spotless sacrifices. We're the outsiders. Literally. Outside. Far away from the city.

Beat.

Shepherd: They never come to us. We always have to go to them.

Long Beat.

Shepherd: *(softer)* But God – God came to us. To the outsiders. The rejects on the hillside. The watchmen that guard the sacrifices while the city is allowed to sleep. He came to us. To me.

Pause.

Shepherd: *(humbled)* Who am I?

From behind the Christmas tree he grabs a shepherd's staff that has a red bow on it.

Shepherd: I'm an ignorant, foolish man. Unworthy of the heavenly choir sent to us. Unworthy of the Son of God, King of the Universe who revealed himself to us – to me.

Shepherd turns slightly toward the tree so that the audience can still see his face.

Shepherd responds as if the angel choir has just come to the shepherds. He startles, shielding his eyes.

He holds in a stage freeze.

St Nick enters and moves to centerstage.

All other characters, besides the Shepherd and St Nick, enter from upstage left and stand in a diagonal line starting mid-stage left to downstage left.

St. Nick: *(looking out to the audience)* Who are we? The birth of the Savior and our choice of kneeling to him and acknowledging him as Lord defines who we are. I am part of the family of God. I am a saint.

Stage lights do not go out, but rather slightly dim as a spot light appears on the manger.

The other characters start to kneel in succession toward the manger, as they say their final line.

Mary: I am chosen.

Dickens: I am blessed.

Prisoner: I am free and at peace.

Wiseman: I'm not lost; I am found.

Rahab: I am saved.

Grinch: I am offered joy.

Longfellow: I am never alone. I am seen.

Shepherd: I have been shown unmerited favor.

St. Nick: *(looking out to the audience)* Our connection to Christmas and the Savior determines how our lives will be lived and remembered. But the true question is not who are we, but rather: *(referring to the audience)* Who are you? How will you be remembered?

St. Nick *looks toward the manger.*

St. Nick: Rather than just a red suit, think of me as one who chose to kneel.

St. Nick *turns toward the manger and kneels.*

Song 10 (Music Optional)

The End.