“The Wisemans”
by Mitch Teemley

What
In this modern take on the story of the Magi, the Wisemans, a family of seekers, discover the true meaning of Christmas. Themes: Comedy-Drama, Christmas, Guidance, Giving, Faith, Love, Wise Men, Magi

Who
Talia Wiseman – (teen) Christmas is her favorite holiday. Still, she senses that something is missing in her and her family’s lives
Colleen Wiseman – Loving wife and mother, but also increasingly aware of an unfulfilled sense of longing
Bill Wiseman – Committed dad whose pride hinders his ability to see that he cannot provide all of his family’s needs, even his own.

When
Present; Christmas

Wear
Casual—nice winter clothing: overcoats, gloves, mufflers, etc.

(Props)
Props: Three large boxes—big enough for a stroller, a crib, and a mobile—plus a few smaller boxes or bags
Setting: May be presented on a bare stage. Or with simple suggestions of a mall at Christmas-time: one or two fake-looking trees, sale signs, canned Christmas music

Why
Matthew 2:1-1; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7-8

How
Talia is at the heart of this piece, drawing out feelings that have been latent in her mother and father.

Time
Approximately 6 minutes
Narration (spoken or on-screen): “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise men came from the east…” (Matthew 2:1) Christmas Eve at Middleton Mall.

The Wisemans enter.

Colleen: I thought the mall’s Holiday Festival of Trees was better than last year.

Talia: Really? It always seems the same to me. We should’ve just bought everything online.

Colleen: And missed the

Talia: Phony trees and plastic snow?

Colleen: Well, look who’s become all jaded! Where did Christmas-is-my-favorite-holiday Talia Wiseman go?

Talia: Seriously, Dad?

Bill: Well, last year—

Talia: Last year me and Maya did Santa-selfies because Santa was her Uncle Kevin. This year it’s just some rent-a-Claus.

Bill: Whoa, when did you suddenly go all moody-broody teenager on us?

Talia: I’m not… (sighs—this has been building up for some time) The mall’s not what I love about Christmas, Dad—you guys are! But even then… Don’t you feel it? (Her emotions growing) It’s like I’m missing something. We’re missing something! Look, I know this is a stupid time to blow up, but I’ve been keeping this inside for so long that I just… can’t anymore!

Colleen: I understand, sweetie. It’s true. I’ve been feeling it too. (Touching her daughter’s hair) We’ll have cocoa and talk when we get home, OK?

Colleen and Talia embrace. Bill waits awkwardly. They finally break.

Bill: So we meet back here at nine, right? Have wish-lists, will buy!

Colleen: (Putting a finger to his lips) A little less fake holiday cheer, honey.

Bill: Yeah, OK. Boy, what’s up with us, huh? (Changing gears) Hey, when we get home Max will be back from the soccer party and we can play a game. (Sudden thought; to Colleen) Oh, were you going to buy something for the contractor who’s putting in our cabinets?
Colleen:  Joe? Yeah, I thought maybe something small. His wife just had a baby, you know.

Talia:  *(Perking up)* Really? You guys, this is crazy-bizarre! I dreamed about that last night, over and over again!

Colleen:  Well, he is a sweet young man.

Talia:  No, I mean, I only met him once, Mom, and I didn’t even know about the baby. But in the dream, I knew! And his wife, she looked right at me and said she had to tell me something!

Colleen:  Tell you what, sweetie?

Talia:  I don’t know, but it seemed really important.

Colleen:  Funny, he actually invited us over. *(To Bill)* Did I tell you? Tonight. Imagine that! They’re so young—just starting out—and they have almost nothing. But he said they read the Christmas Story aloud every year.

Bill:  “Twas the night before Christmas—"

Colleen:  No, honey. The other one. The one in the Bible.

Talia:  Mom, what if that’s what she wanted to tell me? I mean I’ve never heard the actual—

Colleen:  It was only a dream, honey.

The Wisemans stare at one another for a moment, then break away with a nervous laugh.

Bill:  OK, shoppers, start your engines!

All three Wisemans move hesitantly away, each stealing a glance back at the others.

Narration *(spoken or on-screen)*: Two and a half hours later…

Colleen enters with a huge box, plops it down, her face transformed with delight. Waits a moment. Dials her phone.

Colleen:  *(Into her phone)* Hey, done yet? Uh, no, I sort of changed gears.

Talia enters, beaming, a very large bag in her arms.

Colleen:  *(Continuing)* OK, see you in a sec. *(Hangs up. Looks at Talia’s bag, then back at Talia)* You look like the cat that ate the canary.
Talia: It's a mobile, a Christmas mobile! Oh, Mom, it's got a star and angels and a little manger! It's so adorable, I wish I was—

Colleen: And would that be for your 17 year old brother or your 46 year old dad?

Talia: For the baby, silly! Only I kinda—

Colleen: (Looks at Talia's receipt) Only you kinda spent every penny you had?

Bill enters, lugging a huge box. Sets it down. Looks sheepish.

Bill: What? It's a stroller...a really good one. (Defensively) Hey, they're going to need one. (Looks at Colleen's box) And?

Colleen: Crib. I make no excuses! (Turning to Talia) Honey, it's the sweetest little baby crib you ever saw!

Talia: Oh, Mom, this is it! This is what we're supposed to do! We have to go there!

Talia and Colleen turn and look at Bill.

Beat.

Bill: Well, duh! Obviously we have to take these to them tonight!

Talia: Yes!

Colleen: But how? I mean, they live way out at the edge of town.

Bill: I remember their address! Isn't that amazing? It's like a miracle! I mean, I only heard it once and I remember it! I think. Anyway, the car's got On-Star and it'll lead us to them.

Colleen: Gee, I haven't heard the Christmas story since I was little.

Talia: The real Christmas story, the one in the Bible?

Colleen: Yeah. I think I'd like...I think I need to hear it again.

The Wisemans leave together as “We Three Kings” swells up on the mall loudspeakers.