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“The Best Christmas Story Ever”

By
Tracy Wells

What Goldman Films is on the brink of shutting down, and Creative Director Avery Moore believes the studio can be saved with a big holiday hit. But with so many Christmas movies being released, Avery knows this year's film needs to really stand out. So with the help of her trusty assistant, Jules, a steady stream of familiar Christmas characters, and a minor bump on the head, Avery sets out to tell the best Christmas story ever and learns along the way that the greatest Christmas story is the one that started it all.

Themes: Christmas, Meaning of Christmas, Christmas Spirit, Comedy, Birth of Jesus, All Ages

Who Avery: a movie executive looking for the next big Christmas hit; any gender
Jules: Avery's assistant; any gender
Mr./Mrs. Goldman: Avery's boss; any gender
Sam Scratchy: toilet paper company owner; any gender
Chilly the Snowman: magical snowman; any gender
Rudy Reindeer: bright nosed reindeer; any gender
Chummy: a human who thinks he's an elf; any gender
The Grouch: rhyming green grump who hates Christmas; any gender
Broccoli: a poorly named shelf sitting scout elf; any gender
Santa: gift delivering man; male
Elves: as many as you would like; any gender
Conductor: conducts the Christmas Train; any gender
Jack Frost: nips at your nose; any gender
Devin: a child left behind; any gender
Nutcracker: nut loving soldier; any gender
Clarence/Clara: an angel; any gender
George Barley: a man who's hit hard times; male
Ebenezer Scrooge: a cantankerous old man; male
Jacob Marley: a prophetic ghost; male
Robbie: wearing pink bunny suit; any gender
Jack McClune: white tank top wearing beat up NY cop; male
Sally: a businesswoman; female
James: a small town bookstore owner; male
Mary: mother of Jesus; female
Joseph: Jesus's earthy father; male

When Modern Day

Costumes Avery, Jules, Mr. Goldman, and Sam Scratchy should wear modern day business attire. All Christmas characters should be dressed to resemble the character they are modeled after. This can be done easily with small accessories, or you could purchase or rent more elaborate costumes. There are several inexpensive onesies for many of these characters as well.

Set The set consists of an office interior. A desk and chair are present. A laptop, and bowl of nuts are on the desk. A small chair is near the desk. There are fictional holiday movie posters decorating the walls. The office is decorated for Christmas, with a small tree and presents.

Props Laptop
Bowl of Nuts
Notebook x2
Pens x2
Wrapped Gifts
Basket of Toilet Paper Rolls
Briefcase
Books x2
Babydoll in blanket
Bible

Why Luke 2

How This play offers a ton of flexibility with the ability to add Christmas characters or remove them. It also works well for an all ages show, by having your youngest performers play elves or other small, minor roles. This play was written to be able to flow seamlessly with the removal or addition of characters. Suggestions for additional Christmas characters are: Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, Gingerbread, Drummer Boy, Sugar Plum Fairy, Candy Cane, Christmas Tree, Toys, Additional Reindeer.

Time 45-50 minutes

Avery is seated at the desk, working on her laptop. Seated in a nearby chair is **Jules**, who takes notes in a large scheduling book or on another laptop.

Avery: Let's move that meeting with legal until next week.

Jules: Will do.

Avery: And if you can get a hold of John and Susan Thompson at Animal Services about those donkeys, that would be great.

Jules: I'll try, but they're being stubborn.

Avery: The donkeys?

Jules: No, the Thompsons.

Avery: Occupational hazard?

Jules: Maybe. All I'm saying is, it might be a while until they meet our terms.

Avery: Just do your best.

Jules: Got it. *(closes the scheduling book or laptop)* That should be it for your afternoon, then.

Avery: Thanks, Jules.

Jules: *(stands)* Is there anything else I can do for you right now?

Avery: No. I'm just going to finish typing up these notes for next year's holiday movie pitch.

Jules: *(excitedly)* Ooh! What's it gonna be this time? An exciting adventure in a wintry wonderland? A classic romance in a hilltop resort? Or a meaningful family comedy with heart?

Avery: Just the usual... Santa, presents, Christmas trees, snow.

Jules: *(disappointed)* Oh.

Avery: What?

Jules: It's just...

Avery: Say it, Jules.

Jules: Isn't that a little... formulaic?

Avery: Of course it is! The formula works. That's why we put out these movies every year.

Jules: As does every other movie studio in town. Some of them put twenty or thirty of them out a year!

Avery: *(dismissively)* Yeah, well, people love 'em.

Jules: I guess so. *(looking at the posters)* But hasn't the world had enough movies about magical snowmen and elves and Santa?

Avery: Can you ever have too much Santa?

Jules: Yes. Yes, you can.

Avery: As long as it pays the bills, that's all I care about.

Jules: But what about trying something new? Something important. Giving the world something it needs instead of a garden variety holiday special?

Avery: Tell me Jules... what does the world need?

Jules: Peace? Hope? Love?

Avery: Our movies have those things. They just also have elves and reindeer and strategically planned product placement.

Jules: Hey, what do I know? I'm not a creative director like you. *(shrugs)* I'm just your assistant.

Jules starts to exit.

Avery: *(calling after her)* You know I appreciate you, Jules!

Jules: Right back at you, Avery.

Jules exits.

Avery: *(as she types)* Speaking of product placement, how am I going to get Kibblemaster Dog Food into the big climactic moment between Santa and the elves? *(thinks)* Maybe the elves switch it out for the reindeer's magic corn? *(shakes her head)* No, that won't work. *(thinks)* Or maybe Mrs. Claus could accidentally feed it to Santa before he heads out to deliver presents? *(likes that idea)* That's it! *(as she types)* And Santa could find it surprisingly delicious. It could open up a whole new market for Kibblemaster!

Avery types furiously as **Goldman** enters, upset, followed by **Jules**, who looks worried.

Goldman: Avery Moore! Tell me you've got your holiday pitch ready.

Avery: *(stands, shocked)* Mr. Goldman! Sir, I thought we were going over pitches next week? *(annoyed)* Jules, you didn't tell me I had a meeting scheduled with Mr. Goldman today.

Jules: That's because you don't.

Avery and **Goldman** turn to **Jules** angrily. **Jules** starts backing away toward the exit.

Jules: I think I hear the phone ringing. *(making ringing noise)* Briiirrgg, briinggg! Yep. There it is. The phone. I'd better go see who it is.

Jules exits quickly.

Goldman: I don't need to schedule a meeting with you, Avery. I'm the head of this studio. I can meet with my Creative Director anytime I want.

Avery: Of course you can, Mr. Goldman. I only meant—

Goldman: So is your pitch ready or not?

Avery: Almost. I was actually just putting the finishing touches on it now. I was planning to run the specifics by a few department heads, maybe put together a small focus group before our meeting next week.

Goldman: I can't wait until next week! I need your idea now and it'd better be good. *(crosses his arms, waiting)*

Avery: But Mr. Goldman, we have plenty of time before next year's holiday movie starts filming. Why the rush?

Goldman: Haven't you seen the trades? Heard the rumors? It's all over the internet!

Avery: No. What is it?

Goldman: *(distraught)* Goldman Films is on the brink of ruin! The board is getting ready to vote on a shutdown if we don't deliver a holiday movie that tops the box office. *(slapping both hands down on the desk)* Tell me you've got that movie!

Avery: *(nervously)* I... I don't know. Maybe. I've been working on a few different ideas.

Goldman: Let's hear what you've got.

Avery: Oh, okay. Let's see... how about this one? *(reads from laptop)* It's Christmas time in the big city and Sally is a high powered marketing executive who only cares about making money and advancing her career. That is until her company forces her to take a leave of absence and she meets a small town bookstore owner named James, who reminds her what Christmas, and love are all about.

Goldman: Been there, done that. Seen it a million times. Next?

Avery: I've also got a dramedy about a disconnected family who has lost track of one another until the magic of Christmas brings them back together. It's got a little bit of action, some slapstick comedy and a lot of heart.

Goldman: Boring. What else have you got?

Avery: *(with increased panic)* Alright, how about a stop motion style animated comedy about a magical snowman who touches the lives of a small town on Christmas Eve?

Goldman: Nope. C'mon, Avery. You can do better than this.

Avery: *(fully panicked now)* Fine. How about Santa and his elves and a Christmas tree and snow?

Goldman: What about them?

Avery: I don't know! They make and deliver presents! They eat dog food. It's magical! It's wonderful! It's—

Goldman: Not good enough!

Avery: I'm trying my best, Mr. Goldman, but it's all been done before! Every single Christmas movie has already been made!

Goldman: Then you'd better come up with a new one, and right away. And it had better be the best Christmas story ever!

Jules enters followed by **Sam Scratchy**, who is holding several baskets filled with toilet paper rolls.

Jules: Sorry to interrupt, but Mr. Scratchy is here to see you, Mr. Goldman.

Goldman crosses to **Sam**, holding out his hand, jovially.

Goldman: Sam, so nice to see you. How's the toilet paper business treating you?

Goldman and **Sam** shake hands.

Sam: What can I say? *(with a smirk, holds up a roll of toilet paper)* I'm on a roll!

Sam laughs heartily at his own joke, as does **Goldman**. **Jules** rolls her eyes and looks at **Avery**, who doesn't laugh at first but joins in when **Goldman** looks at her pointedly.

Goldman: That's hilarious.

Avery: Good one, Mr. Scratchy.

Sam: Yeah? You liked that one? *(smiles big)* Then you're gonna love this one. *(leans over to elbow Jules)* Why do toilet paper rolls have trust issues?

Jules: *(bored, monotone)* I don't know. Why do they?

Sam: *(excitedly)* Because they're always getting ripped off!

Sam laughs heartily, slapping **Jules** on the arm. **Goldman** and **Avery** join in on the laughter as **Jules** tries to get away from the slaps.

Jules: *(rubbing her arm)* Ow!

Sam: Well if you liked that one—

Goldman: *(interrupting)* Actually I'd love to know what brings you down to Goldman Films today, Sam.

Sam: *(suddenly solemn)* I'm gonna give it to you straight... I'm hearing rumors your studio is soon to be wiped clean out of the film industry.

Goldman: *(dismissively)* Oh, you know how those online news outlets are. You can't believe anything you hear on the internet.

Sam: Yeah well I'm hearing your board isn't too happy. And I've got board members of my own. I'm gonna need your reassurance that your next movie will be a hit or I'm gonna have to pull my advertising dollars.

Avery: You can't do that!

Goldman: Avery's right. We can't lose your business, Sam.

Sam: Then I want a guarantee that Scratchy's Toilet Paper will be prominently featured in your next Christmas movie. Is that understood?

Goldman: Absolutely. We can do that, can't we Avery?

Avery: Yes, Sir. Of course.

Goldman: In fact, Avery's putting the finishing touches on next year's big Christmas movie right now and it's going to be unlike anything you've ever seen! Isn't that right, Avery?

Avery: *(unconvincingly)* Yep. It's going to be the best Christmas story ever.

Sam: Great. Because if it's not... *(gets in Avery's face)* This whole studio's going right down the *drain!*

Sam laughs hysterically and shoves the basket at **Avery** aggressively. As **Avery** takes the basket, she stumbles into **Jules**, bumping their heads together.

Goldman: *(laughing along)* Good one, Sam.

Goldman steers **Sam** toward the exit then turns back quickly to **Avery** with a grimace.

Goldman: I want that pitch ready first thing tomorrow morning. Got it?

Avery: Yes, Mr. Goldman.

Sam and **Goldman** exit as **Avery** and **Jules** rub their heads.

Jules: Avery, are you okay?

Avery: Yeah, I'm fine. How about you? We bumped our heads together pretty hard.

Jules helps **Avery** up.

Jules: I'm okay.

Avery: Good. 'Cause I have to get to work on this pitch.

Avery sits at her desk as **Jules** crosses to exit.

Jules: Good luck. If you need anything, I'm just outside.

Avery: Thanks, Jules.

Jules exits. **Avery** rubs her head and turns to her laptop.

Avery: How am I going to come up with the best Christmas story ever in one night? *(picks up a roll of toilet paper)* And it has to feature Scratchy's toilet paper too? *(shakes her head)* This is impossible!

Avery lays her head in her hands. Moments later **Chilly** enters.

Chilly: You know what's impossible? A talking snowman. Yet, here I am!

Avery: *(looks up quickly, startled)* Ah! Who are you? And where'd you come from?

Chilly: My name's Chilly. Chilly the Snowman. I think I started out as some magic Christmas snow, or maybe it was an enchanted scarf or a magician's hat or— *(remembers)* Oh! I almost forgot! *(tips his hat and does jazz hands)* Happy Birthday!

Avery: It's not my birthday.

Chilly: *(confused)* Really? Hmm. Must've gotten my snowflakes crossed.

Avery stands and crosses to **Chilly**, with a smirk.

Avery: I see what's going on here. You're one of those singing telegram guys, right? Someone sent you here as a prank? I bet it was Jules. *(calling offstage)* Jules, would you come in here please?

Chilly: Singing telegram? I don't think so. Trust me, you don't want to hear me sing. *(points to his throat)* The old pipes are frozen solid.

Jules enters.

Jules: Yes, Aver— *(stops)* Whoa! There's a giant snowman in your office!

Chilly: A giant *talking* snowman. *(tips his hat)* Name's Chilly.

Jules: Nice to meet you, Chilly.

Avery: Chilly was just about to sing us a little song. Isn't that right, Chilly?

Chilly: *(smiling)* Nope.

Avery: Are you going to stand there and let him get away with this, Jules? I mean, you hired him to do a job. Make him sing.

Jules: I didn't hire him.

Chilly: I'm telling you, I couldn't carry a tune if it were right here in my hat. But if you insist, I'll give it a shot. Let me just warm up first... *(leans in, with a wink)* but not too warm, if you catch my... *drift*. Ha! *(points to himself)* Snow.

Avery: Got it.

Chilly does some elaborate and hilarious vocal warmups during the next few lines.

Avery: You seriously expect me to believe you didn't hire a singing telegram?

Jules: I'm telling you, I have never seen this snowman before in my life. *(thinks)* Unless you count those holiday specials from when we were kids.

Avery: So that's what this must be then! Goldman hired him to inspire me... get the old creative juices flowing. *(nods)* Classy move, Goldman. *(sits in chair, and puts her hands together, ready)* Alright, Chilly, let's get this snow on the road.

Chilly: I see what you did there, and I like it!

Avery: I'm ready. Let me have it.

Chilly: Okay. But don't say I didn't warn you. *(sings loud and horribly*)* La, la, la, laaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

**Alternately you could play a sound effect of cats screeching or nails on a chalkboard or another similar horrible noise. Avery and Jules cover their ears.*

Jules: Make it stop! Make it stop!

Avery: Chilly, that's enough.

Chilly: I tried to tell you.

Avery: So you're really not a singing telegram?

Chilly: Nope.

Avery: Then why are you here?

Chilly: To bring you some Christmas magic!

Avery: I guess I could use a little magic if I'm going to figure out the best Christmas story ever in one night.

Rudy Reindeer enters.

Rudy: Well, if it's magic you want, then how about a flying reindeer with a light up nose?

Jules: *(excitedly)* Hey, it's—

Rudy: Rudy the Bright-Nosed Reindeer! Yep, that's me. *(holds out a hoof)*
High hoof!

Jules: *(unsure)* Oh... ah... okay.

Jules makes a fist and high hoofs **Rudy**.

Rudy: *(rubs her hooves together)* Alright, fill me in. Where are we at with this story?

Avery: We haven't started yet.

Rudy: So you haven't gotten to the part where I save Christmas with my light up nose, then?

Avery: No, but—

Rudy: *(interrupting)* Good. Good. There's actually a lot of details to unpack with that story—where we all were mentally in that moment, what the weather was like, the flight plan... things like that. You're gonna want my firsthand account on that one.

Avery: Actually, I'm not sure that's the direction I want to go in.

Rudy: You don't know the direction you need to go in... not with all that fog! That's why my nose was so important—you'll see. *(clears her throat)* So there I was, in the North Pole stables, six hands deep in a brutal game of Rummy with Vixen and Comet when one of the elves came running in and said—

Chummy enters, excitedly.

Chummy: I like Christmas! Christmas is my favorite!

Rudy: No, that wasn't it.

Avery: Who is this guy?

Chummy: I'm Chummy the Elf. *(leans over with his head in his hands)* What's your favorite color?

Jules: Aren't you a little big to be an elf?

Chummy: Well, it's sort of a long story. You see, when I was a baby—

Avery: No. *(stands)* No more long stories. No more short stories. No more stories of any kind, except the best Christmas story ever, which I'll never figure out if I don't get some peace and quiet!

Grouch enters.

Grouch: All the noise, noise, noise! *(in familiar rhyme)* I really can't take it. I simply will not. The shouting, the laughing, without any thought, to those who are working all day and all night,

Avery: *(quickly interjecting)* Yes!

Grouch: To get Christmas cancelled!

Avery: *(continuing rhyme)* No, that isn't right.

Chilly: *(distraught)* Cutting Christmas? That's cold!

Chummy: He's a grumpy little grump, isn't he?

Grouch: I'm the Grouch, not a grump, though my temper's the worst. I'm here to toss Christmas. *(picks up a gift)* This gift will go first.

Jules rushes over quickly and grabs the gift.

Jules: No, not that one! *(turns away)* This one is special.

Jules places the gift back under the tree.

Chummy: *(reading the gift tag)* To Avery, the best boss ever. From your faithful assistant Jules. *(with a huge smile)* Goodie goodie gumdrops! You got a gift for your mom.

Jules: She's not my mom. I just work for her.

Avery: We're almost the same age!

Chummy: *(shocked)* You mean not everyone works for their parents?

Avery: No! *(to Jules)* Is this guy for real?

Jules: He can't be. *(looks around)* None of them can. They're just make believe.

Avery: Yet, here they are.

Jules: Maybe we should pinch one of them. See if they're real.

Chummy: *(waving his hand)* Ooh! Pick me! Pick me!

Jules: Seriously?

Rudy: *(pointing a hoof at Chummy)* This elf's not very bright, is he?

Chummy: Please! Pinch me! It sounds like so much fun.

Jules: *(shrugs)* If you say so.

Chummy rolls up his sleeve and holds out his arm. **Jules** pinches him. He jumps, then laughs. As this is happening, **Broccoli** enters and perches somewhere, off to the side, unseen. Or maybe she's been there the entire time.

Chummy: Whoa, that was painful! *(holds out his arm)* Do it again.

Jules: Pinch you? No.

Chummy: Pleeaaaaase?

Jules: I'm not going to pinch you, Chummy.

Chummy: Fine. I'll just pinch myself, then. Pinch. *(pinches himself)* Ow! Pinch. *(pinches himself)* Ow! Pinch. *(pinches himself)* Ow!

Jules: Alright, we get it. *(to Avery)* This guy's real. I guess.

Broccoli: I saw that.

All jump and maybe scream.

Chilly: I think I just snowflaked myself.

Avery: Where did you come from?

Broccoli: I've been here the entire time. Watching. Waiting.

Chummy: He's a scout elf! *(aside to **Grouch**, whispering loudly)* That's my dream job.

Grouch: You can't keep still. You can't calm down. You'd be the worst scout elf in all of Christmastown!

Chummy: *(chuckles)* You got that right!

Jules: There's no way you've been here the whole time. I would've seen you.

Broccoli: Trust me, I've seen you, Jules. And I'm reporting everything back to Santa. *(pulls out a notepad and pen and jots down a few notes)*

Avery: If you're a scout elf, then you must have a name.

Broccoli: I do.

Avery: Then what is it?

Broccoli: I'm not saying.

Rudy: Is it a Christmas-y name, like Jingle or Tinsel?

Broccoli: Nope.

Chilly: Is it something fancy like Sparkles or Twinkle?

Broccoli: No.

Grouch: What is it? Just tell us. What is your name? All this waiting is boring. I'm done with this game!

Broccoli: Fine! I'll tell you. But you can't laugh.

Chummy: But laughing is the best! I love laughing! All day and all night. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Jules: Chummy, stop. *(to Broccoli)* What is it?

Broccoli: *(sighs)* It's Broccoli.

Avery: *(chuckling)* Broccoli? Really?

Broccoli: Yep. That's what my family named me.

Rudy: Wow. And I thought Neon Nose was bad!

Broccoli: Apparently they couldn't agree on a name over dinner, so they looked down on their plates and came up with...

Jules: *(laughing)* Broccoli. That's hilarious!

Broccoli: *(writing a note on his pad)* Keep it up, Jules, and you're gonna end up on Santa's naughty list.

Santa enters with **Elves**, who run around, grab the toilet paper rolls, throw them, make mischief, etc.

Santa: Now, Broccoli, you know I don't like to put anyone on the naughty list.

Chummy: *(excitedly)* It's Santa Claus! I know him!

Elves: We know him! We know him!

Avery crosses to **Santa**, takes his arm and starts pulling him to the exit.

Avery: Nope. No more. My office is overrun with Christmas characters.

Santa: But I'm Santa!

Elves: Santa! Santa!

Avery: Sorry, Santa, but you've got to go. *(looks around the room)* And the rest of you too. I have work to do! Jules, please help me out here.

Jules crosses to exit and starts swinging her arm, directing all Christmas Characters to exit offstage. **Avery** crosses to her desk and sits.

Jules: Alright everyone, it's time to go. I don't know where you came from—

Santa: The North Pole!

Jules: —but you can't stay here. Let's go!

All except **Avery** and **Jules** start to exit.

Chilly: We were only trying to help Avery find Christmas movie magic!

Rudy: We're filled with bright ideas!

Jules: Thanks, but Avery's got to figure out this one on her own.

Grouch: You heard the lady. Get out of here. Scram! Avery doesn't like Christmas. She's a grouch like I am!

Avery: I'm not a grouch, I'm just very, very busy.

Chummy: *(clapping his hands, excitedly)* Ooh! Maybe we could decorate your office. *(as he exits)* We can make paper snowflakes and hang candy canes, and paint ornaments and hang lights and...

Jules takes toilet paper rolls from exiting **Elves**.

Jules: I'll take those. Thank you. And that one too. Thank you.

Once all **Christmas Characters** have exited, **Jules** crosses to **Avery** and puts the toilet paper on her desk or in the basket.

Jules: I'll be just outside your door with those festive fruitcakes if you need me. *(crosses to exit)*

Avery: Thanks, Jules. I just need a little quiet.

Jules exits. **Avery** leans back in her chair and puts her hands behind her head.

Avery: And peace.

Jack Frost enters.

Frost: Nothing quite as peaceful as a fresh covering of snow.

Frost perhaps tosses a handful of snow.

Avery: *(exasperated)* Not again!

Conductor enters, holding a train whistle.

Conductor: Now, Mr. Frost, you and I both know that peace can be found in more than just snow. In fact, my favorite place to find a little peace during the holiday season is right in my Bible.

Frost: You're always trying to spoil my fun! Don't you have a Christmas train to conduct?

Conductor: Right now I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be. *(smiles at Avery)*

Frost: So tell me, Avery, what can I whip up for you? A little snow covered hill for sledding? A nice ice rink for skating? Or maybe just a light snowfall to watch outside your window while you sip on some hot cocoa?

Conductor: I can help with the cocoa. I have some back on the Christmas Express!

Avery: Sorry guys, but I don't think even snow can help me now.

***Frost** crosses to **Avery**.*

Frost: Perhaps a little nip at your nose is what you need!

***Frost** reaches out to touch **Avery's** nose but she recoils in horror.*

Avery: There will be no nipping of noses in my office.

Conductor: Then what can we do to help? We are at your service.

Avery: There's nothing you can do. I'm just feeling down right now. I think a lot of people feel like that at Christmas.

Conductor: Christmas is a very busy season. There's so much to do and not enough time. It's easy to feel you're running out of steam.

Frost: Tell me about it! It's not like snow just falls out of the sky all by itself!

Conductor: People worry if their guests will enjoy the meal they have planned or if they'll like the presents they've gotten.

Avery: I hear that.

Conductor: You have to remember what's important so Christmas doesn't turn into a train wreck.

***Avery** crosses to her desk.*

Avery: I know. I try, trust me. The lights and the music and the food and the presents are great. But it can be overwhelming. Sometimes I wish it would all just go away.

Devin enters, running and screaming. He stops and faces the audience, putting one hand on each side of his face.

Devin: Ahhhhhhhh!

Conductor: This child appears to be alarmed.

Devin: Be careful what you wish for. It could really happen!

Avery: *(sighs)* Let me guess. You must be—

Devin: I'm Devin. My parents left me home alone. I wished they would all just disappear and then they did!

Avery: I'm pretty sure they're just on a trip to Paris. They'll be home soon.

Devin: You don't know that. I might be home alone forever! *(to Avery)* Do you have parents?

Avery: I do.

Devin: You're lucky. I don't have a family anymore.

Avery: Yes, you do! And they're on their way home. Trust me. I've seen this a million times before.

Devin: You have? Really?

Avery: Don't worry about it.

Devin: I miss my family. On Christmas Eve we would exchange presents and then sit around and tell each other what we like most about Christmas.

Avery: *(intrigued)* Really?

Devin: My older brother Fuzz is a real pain. Last year on Christmas Eve he snuck a mouse in his pocket. Once we said our favorite things he let it go free and my mom was running around the living room screaming, *(screaming and acting it out)* "A mouse! Get it! Get it!"

Nutcracker enters to the sound of music from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" ballet. Perhaps he does so in a ballet-like way. The music plays over the next few lines. As he searches the room, The **Nutcracker** marches or performs a humorous interpretive dance.

Nutcracker: A mouse? Where! *(looking for mouse)* Is it over here? *(looking elsewhere)* Or here? *(facing audience, perhaps with a sword held high in the air)* Show your face, Mouse King, for the Nutcracker is here to stop you. I shall have no peace in this world until you are found and captured once and for all!

Avery: *(rolling her eyes)* So I guess we're doing this, now.

Frost: *(to Nutcracker)* Hey, Nutchopper, there is no mouse.

Nutcracker: No mouse with a crown and a sword? Are you sure?

Frost: Quite sure. *(saluting)* At ease, soldier.

Nutcracker: *(salutes)* Thank you. *(relaxes)* I've been so busy chasing that Mouse King that I haven't had a moment to relax, *(clutches his stomach)* or grab a bite to eat. I'm feeling a bit peckish. *(sees bowl of nuts and gets excited)* Ooh! Nuts!

Nutcracker eats/cracks nuts wildly while others look on in amusement/horror.

Avery: (wryly) Go ahead. Help yourself.

Conductor: He's gone off the rails, isn't he?

Frost: He's cracked all the nuts.

Nutcracker looks around wildly.

Nutcracker: More! I need more!

Frost: I think the Nutcracker's cracked!

Devin: He's gone nuts! (puts his hands on either side of his face) Ahhh!

Nutcracker chases **Devin** around the room. **Conductor** and **Frost** march behind **Nutcracker**. It's noisy and chaotic. **Santa** enters, with **Elves** following. They join in the marching/chaos, tossing toilet paper rolls, etc. **Santa** crosses to **Avery**.

Santa: A parade! No Christmas parade is complete without Santa!

Elves: Parade! Parade!

Avery crosses to **Santa**, takes his arm and starts pulling him to the exit.

Avery: No! No! No! We're not doing this right now.

Santa: But I'm Santa!

Elves: Santa! Santa!

Avery: Sorry, Santa, but you've got to go. I have work to do!

Santa: (sadly) Alright. (to **Elves**) C'mon Elves. Let's go.

Elves: (sadly) We're going. We're going.

Santa and **Elves** exit dejectedly.

Avery: *(calling out)* And tell Jules I need her!

Jules enters, carrying her notebook.

Jules: What's going on in here?

Avery: There's more of them!

Jules: I can see that!

Avery: Just make them stop. Please!

Jules rips a piece of paper out of her notebook or rolls it up into a tube shape and makes a train whistle sound in it. All stop and look at her.

Conductor: That sounds like a train is here. Time to take you back home to your parents.

Devin: *(hopefully)* We're going to see our parents again? *(with excited arm motion)* Yes!

Avery: No, that's not a train whistle and your parents aren't here.

Devin: Aw, man!

Avery: If you guys are going to show up and invade my office, the least you can do is help me figure out the best Christmas story ever. *(sits and gets ready to take notes)* Devin, you said your family always shares their favorite thing about Christmas. What were some of their answers?

Devin: Well, my sister Meg's favorite thing about Christmas is the food and the twins like the presents. My brother, Fuzz, says his favorite thing is breaking all my new toys.

Frost: Wow, that's pretty cold.

Devin: But I always liked my mom's answer the best.

Avery: *(pen at the ready)* What was it?

Devin: She said it was the sense of peace that came over her when we all gathered around the tree to hear the story of Jesus's birth.

Avery: Yeah. We used to do that too. My mom would bring out the nativity set and as my dad read the story we would each take turns putting the little figures in their places. *(smiles)* I'd forgotten about that.

Nutcracker: I'd love to hear that story.

Conductor: *(excitedly)* It's a great story filled with peace and love. I'd be happy to tell it if you would oblige an old train conductor. *(crosses to center)*

Avery: Please do.

*Perhaps the lights dim except for a spotlight on him. Or maybe **Jules** and **Avery** turn on their phone flashlights and angle them toward **Conductor**.*

Conductor: *(prepares himself, then looks up)* And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel—

Avery stands. *The lights suddenly return to normal.*

Avery: Thanks, Conductor, but I don't really have time for a Bible story right now.

Conductor: But you said you wanted—

Avery motions for **Jules** to help her.

Avery: My assistant Jules will show you out.

Jules: That's right. I have some activities for the kids and...

Jules looks from **Nutcracker** to **Avery**, unsure. **Avery** holds up the empty bowl of nuts.

Jules: *(understanding)* And a fresh supply of nuts that need cracking.

Nutcracker: *(saluting)* Yes, ma'am!

Nutcracker marches to exit.

Devin: These activities you mentioned... any chance they involve flame throwers or hot tar?

Jules: *(taken aback)* Um, I don't think so, but I can see what I can do.

Devin: *(with excited arm motion)* Yes!

Frost: This kid's on thin ice!

Jules exits with **Devin** and **Frost**.

Conductor: Are you sure you don't want to hear the rest of the story?

Avery: What I need is hope... hope that the best Christmas story will find me.

Conductor: Maybe it already has.

Maybe the lights change again.

Avery: *(groans and calls out)* Jules!

Conductor: *(solemnly)* An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone all around them, and they were terrified.

Jules enters, holding a bell.

Jules: *(ringing bell)* Conductor! Let's go!

Conductor: *(as he exits)* But the angel said to them—

Conductor and Jules exit. Clarence enters.

Clarence: Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings.

Avery: *(exasperated)* You have got to be kidding me!

Clarence: Now I know you're busy and stressed, Avery, but that's no way to talk to a guardian angel.

Avery: You're my guardian angel?

George Barley enters.

George: No he's not. But he is *my* guardian angel.

Clarence: Now George, surely you can share me, just for today. *(crosses to Avery)* It looks like Avery, here, could use my help.

Avery: I don't need your help.

Clarence: You mustn't talk like that. I won't get my wings with talk like that!

Avery: *(stands, angrily)* Listen, buddy—

Clarence: The name's Clarence.

Avery: Listen, Clarence. I don't care about your wings. I care about my movie.

George: But we can help you. Just know we can.

Avery: *(waving a hand, dismissively)* Bah!

Clarence: It's true! You asked for hope, and that's just what we've brought.

Scrooge: *(from offstage, loudly)* Humbug!

*The sound of bells ringing is heard. Perhaps the lights change. Perhaps a fog rolls in. **Jacob Marley** enters, terrifyingly.*

Avery: *(annoyed)* What do you want?

Marley: *(ghostly)* Much!

Avery: *(sits)* Get on with it then.

The lights change back to normal.

Marley: *(confused)* Don't you want to know who I am?

Avery: Oh, I know who you are. *(as if reciting, bored)* In life you were Scrooge's partner, Jacob Marley. You wear the chain you forged in life. You made it link by link, yard by yard, blah blah blah.

Marley: Seriously?

Avery: Don't look so surprised. I took Nineteenth century English Lit in college.

Marley: Well, humbug!

Ebenezer Scrooge enters.

Scrooge: That's my line.

Avery: Scrooge! You're here too?

Scrooge: Well I'm not an undigested bit of beef if that's what you mean.

Avery: Why is this happening to me? *(puts her head in her hands)*

Scrooge: Surely you need to change your miserly ways and learn from your past, present and future so you can become a more kind and generous person.

Avery: I'm pretty sure that one's just about you.

George: Perhaps you need help seeing what a positive impact you've had on the people around you.

Avery: I don't think so.

Robbie enters wearing a pink bunny suit.

Robbie: Maybe you need help convincing your parents to let you have that BB gun you've been wanting.

Avery: That's *definitely* not it! *(with a smirk)* You'll shoot your eye out with one of those.

Robbie stomps his foot and crosses his arms.

Robbie: I will not!

Clarence loudly snickers, but tries to cover it up.

Robbie: What?

Clarence: *(trying not to laugh)* Nothing.

Marley and **Scrooge** look at one another and laugh.

Robbie: What are you laughing about?

Marley: I'm not laughing. *(points at Scrooge)* He is!

Scrooge: *(suppressing a laugh)* Not me. I've changed my ways! I'm kind now.
(snickers)

Robbie: It's my bunny suit, isn't it? *(turns to **George**)* C'mon. I know you want to laugh too.

George: *(stifling a laugh)* I happen to think it's a very nice bunny suit.

*All erupt into laughter, except **Robbie**, who is upset.*

Robbie: My aunt gave it to me for Christmas. My mom said I had to wear it.

Avery: And you're wearing the heck out of it!

*All laugh again. **Robbie** crosses his arms, mad.*

Robbie: I hope you're happy!

Clarence: *(remembering)* Hope! Yes, that's why we're all here. Avery said she needed hope in order to find the best Christmas story ever.

Avery: That's right! And if I don't come up with an idea in the next few hours, the whole studio will go under and it will be all my fault!

George: I know what it feels like to have the weight of the world on your shoulders Avery. Trust me. But I'm telling you... the story you're looking for is right there, in front of you.

***George** gestures in front of **Avery**, but accidentally gestures towards **Scrooge**, **Marley** and **Robbie**.*

Avery: If you mean A Christmas Carol, that one has been done... to death.

Marley: Hey! Don't speak ill of the dead.

Avery: And sorry, Robbie, but your Christmas story has been told... and told and told and told. There's only so many times I can watch your friend lick that flag pole.

Robbie: Trust me. I get it.

Avery: I need something different. Something special. Something people haven't seen on repeat every Christmas Eve.

Santa enters with **Elves**. **Elves** grab toilet paper again.

Santa: Twas' the night before Christmas when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a—

Elves: (wrapping **Santa** in toilet paper) Mouse! Mouse!

Avery crosses to **Santa** and starts unraveling him.

Avery: Absolutely not!

Santa: But that poem is a beloved tale of Santa Claus!

Avery: Sorry, Santa, but I'm looking for something different.

Avery takes **Santa** by the arm and walks him and the **Elves** to the exit.

Santa: But my cheeks are like roses... my nose like a cherry!

Elves: Roses! Cherries!

Avery: Well you can take your cherry nose right out of my office. Bye!

Avery waves as **Santa** and **Elves** exit dejectedly. **Avery** crosses to her desk and puts her head in her arms.

Avery: This is hopeless!

Marley and the others cross to **Avery** in support.

Marley: That's the message the angels were bringing to the shepherds in the fields—a message of hope.

Robbie: They had been waiting so long.

Scrooge: They were ready for a change.

George: But they were afraid.

Clarence: The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

George: Now it's your turn to bring the good news to the people, Avery. Just shake the dust off those old ideas and see what turns up!

Avery: But how?

Clarence: *(with a smile)* I have a feeling you'll figure that out. *(to others as he starts to exit)* Come along, everyone.

Marley: *(eerily)* Remember what has passed between us!

George: *(as they exit)* Was that really necessary?

George, Clarence, Scrooge, Marley and Robbie exit.

Avery: Time is running out and I still don't have an idea!

Jules enters.

Jules: Um... so an angel, a ghost and a bunny just walked into the waiting room. *(thinks)* Which sounds a little like a joke...

Avery: It is a joke! This whole night is a joke! A cruel, twisted joke which has no happy ending... not unless I can find an idea for this movie and soon.

Jules: If anyone can do it, you can Avery. No one loves Christmas movies more than you... *(thinks)* well, except for me. *(quickly)* But I'm just your assistant.

Jules sighs and starts to exit. Just before she exits, she stops and turns back.

Jules: I do love them, though.

Jules exits.

Avery: *(has an idea)* Love! Maybe that's the answer. What if I've had the idea all along and just didn't realize it? *(reading from laptop)* It's Christmas time in the big city and Sally is a high powered marketing executive who only cares about making money and advancing her career. That is until her company forces her to take a leave of absence and she meets small town bookstore owner James, who reminds her what Christmas, and love are all about.

Sally enters, dressed in business attire and holding a briefcase.

Sally: I can't believe my company forced me to take a leave of absence. I'll never land that big client now!

Avery: *(shocked)* Sally?

Sally: *(rudely)* Yeah? So what's it to you?

James enters, dressed casually and holding two books. He crosses to Sally.

James: Hey, Sally. I found that book on corporate mergers you were asking about.

Avery: James?

James: *(turns to Avery)* I'll be right with you, ma'am. *(turns back to Sally)*

Avery: *(offended)* Ma'am?

James: *(shyly)* I hope you don't mind, Sally, but I also grabbed this book on local scenic lighthouses. *(fumbling over his words)* I thought maybe you and I could check them out later... maybe take a picnic lunch... get to talking a little... maybe fall in love?

Sally: A picnic lunch on Christmas Eve? *(chuckles)* Why, James... we'll freeze!

James: I've got a blanket in my pickup truck. We could share.

James and Sally look at one another, alternating between shyness and love.

Avery: *(stands)* Okay, no. Sorry. That's not going to work.

James: But the blanket's really big. I'm sure it will cover both of us. *(looks back at Sally and smiles)*

Avery: Not the blanket! Just... all of it! There are a ton of movies out there just like this one. I need to come up with something new... something important. I need to give the world something it needs. *(puts her head in her hands and sighs)* Jules was right.

Jules enters quickly.

Jules: Sorry to interrupt, but did I just hear someone say that I was right?

Sally: *(points at Avery)* That would be her.... the grumpy one.

Avery: I'm not grumpy. I'm just exhausted. I've been wracking my brain all night! I've got no ideas, even though I've been visited by characters from every type of Christmas movie ever made!

Jack McClune enters in action movie hero style. Maybe somersaults? Then he stands and strikes a heroic pose.

Jack: Not every Christmas movie!

Jules: Is that....

Jack: *(proudly)* Jack McClune! A cop from the mean streets of New York City trying to save my family and the citizens of New York from a group of hostile terrorists— *(winks at audience)* on Christmas Eve, baby!

Jules: Yeah... that's not a Christmas movie.

Jack: Yes it is! Ask anyone, they'll tell you.

Jack turns to **Sally** and **James** for help.

James: Sorry. Haven't seen it. I prefer sensitive tear-jerkers to action flicks.

Sally: Oh, it's definitely a Christmas movie. *(crosses to Jack)* And can I just say, Officer McClune, how safe I feel knowing you're patrolling the streets? *(smiles at Jack)*

James: Hey! This is supposed to be *my* love story!

Avery: Love—that's right! *(to Jules)* That's what it's all about at the end of the day, isn't it?

Jules: I hope so.

Avery: *(stands, excitedly)* And hope! It's like you said before, Jules—the world doesn't need more product placement... it needs hope!

Jules: *(to herself)* Wow. You give your boss a piece of your mind, but you don't think she'll actually listen!

Avery crosses to **Jules**, excitedly.

Avery: And peace! During all the hustle and bustle of the holidays, and with everything going on in the world around us, what people really need is peace.

Jules: *(smiles)* It sounds like you're on to something.

Avery: I think I might be. *(excitedly)* Are all those Christmas characters still out in the waiting room?

Jules: Unfortunately, yes. *(leans in)* And can I just say, those elves are a nuisance!

Avery: Bring them in.

Jules: Which ones?

Avery: *(excitedly, almost yelling)* All of them! Whoever is still out there! I'm going to need their help.

Jules: If you say so.

Jules crosses toward exit.

Jack: What are we? Chopped liver?

Avery: I'm going to need your help too.

Jack: *(excitedly)* Yippee-ki-yi-yay!

Jules: *(calling offstage)* You heard her, folks... everyone come on in!

Grouch enters followed by **Elves, Santa, Chilly, Rudy, Chummy, Broccoli, Conductor, Scrooge,** and **Clarence**, minimally. Each says their line as they enter. **Santa** enters holding a wrapped gift. Any number of **Christmas Characters** (or All) can also enter, depending on the size of your performance space and your casting. You can assign "Character" lines as desired.

Grouch: At last we are needed—they'll be no more waiting. These elves are annoying. My nerves they've been grating!

Elves: Santa! Santa!

Santa: Ho! Ho! Ho! Don't worry, Santa is here and at your service.

Chilly: (*tipping his hat*) Happy Birthday!

Avery: I told you, Chilly, it's not my birthday!

Chilly: I know. (*chuckles*) It's just so fun to say.

Rudy: Here we *glow* again!

Chummy: (*laughing*) Good one, Rudy! (*to Avery*) I love reindeer. Reindeer are my favorite!

Broccoli: Everything is your favorite, Chummy. (*to Avery*) The entire time we were out there, Chummy was pointing out things in the waiting room and saying they're his favorite.

Chummy: Because they are! Chairs are my favorite. Staplers are my favorite. Plants are my—

Avery: Sorry you were waiting so long.

Broccoli: That's alright. Waiting is my favorite. (*thinks*) Well, not my favorite actually, but it's what I'm known for.

Conductor: You're much more than just your occupation, Broccoli. You're a complex being with thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Broccoli: Um... okay. Thanks, Conductor.

Conductor: My pleasure, Broccoli.

Scrooge: What are we doing here again? Is this a vision? *(looks around)* Ghost? Where are you, Ghost? What lessons are you trying to teach me?

Clarence: I think we're here to help *Avery* learn a lesson, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge: *(recoiling in fear)* Which ghost are you? Past? Future? Present? Metaverse?

Clarence: I'm not a ghost. I'm an angel. *(leans in with a smile)* I'm gonna get my wings!

*At this point the **Christmas Characters** should be grouped as follows: Group 1 animated family classics: **Rudy, Grouch, Chilly, Broccoli, Conductor**; Group 2 family movies with a heart: **Chummy, Clarence, Scrooge**; Group 3: holiday movies grown ups love: **Sally, James, Jack**. Group 4: **Santa** and **Elves**. Other holiday characters can be added to groups as desired, except Group 4.*

Jules: Alright, *Avery*, everyone's here.

Avery: Great. *(crosses to center)* Since all of you decided to appear in my office uninvited, the least you can do is help me finalize my idea.

Character: Sure thing, *Avery*.

Character: How can we help?

Avery: Each of you are Christmas characters, right?

Chummy: I'm not a character. I'm an elf.

Broccoli: *(looking around)* Who's going to tell him?

Character: Not me!

Character: No way!

Grouch: I'll happily tell him, since none of you can. *(crosses to **Chummy**)*
Chummy you're not an elf, sir, cause you're a hu-man.

Chummy: *(chuckles)* I have no idea what he's talking about, but I love the way he rhymes. *(to **Grouch**)* Say, you'd make a really great children's book author, Grouch. I can talk to my dad if you want.

Avery: We're getting off track. As I was saying, you are all Christmas characters.

Chummy: If you say so.

Avery: And each of your stories are different. *(crosses to **Group 1**)* You guys come from beloved animated Christmas classics. You show kids that Christmas is a time for magic, but also a time for peace and joy.

Rudy: And we've got music too!

Avery: *(crosses to **Group 2**)* You guys come from family movies that combine humor and heart. Your stories make us laugh but also make us think about what's going on around us. You make us hope for a better world but also remind us to stop and appreciate the small things.

Scrooge: I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year.

Avery: *(crosses to **Group 3**)* Your movies appeal to adults, who sometimes need a reminder to put aside their stresses in life and focus on what matters most—love, and the people in our lives.

Jack: Then you agree... my movie *is* a Christmas movie!

Sally: *(smiling at Jack)* Of course it is, snookums.

James: Seriously?

Santa: What about me and the elves?

Avery: You seem to show up in all types of movies, Santa. And that's great. But I want this movie to be something that the world needs more of. A story maybe people know, but one that sometimes gets pushed aside while we're focusing on all the bright and shiny things that the holiday brings.

Jules: A story about peace, hope, and love.

Avery: That's right! And while at their heart, your movies include these, I want to tell a story that unites all three. *(pacing and thinking)* Peace, hope, and love. *(thinks)* What is a story that people need to hear that is all about peace, hope and love?

Jules: Actually, I know a story just like that.

Jules crosses to the Christmas tree and picks up the present from earlier. She crosses to **Avery** and hands it to her.

Jules: Here. This is for you *(nervously)* I worked really hard on it.

Avery opens the box. Inside is a script.

Avery: *(looks up at Jules in surprise)* You wrote this?

Jules: *(smiles)* I did. I thought maybe people needed a reminder of what Christmas is really all about. Not the presents, or the decorations or the lights, but the birth of our savior, Jesus.

Mary and **Joseph** enter and cross to center. **Avery** and **Jules** stand nearby. **Mary** holds a baby wrapped in a blanket. Perhaps the lights dim on all except **Mary** and **Joseph**.

Mary: This very night the most wonderful thing has taken place

Joseph: My wife Mary and I had traveled a great distance to Bethlehem for the census.

Mary: I was pregnant with the son of our Lord, and due to give birth any day.

Joseph: We tried to find a place to stay, but there was no room in any inn. A kind innkeeper took pity on us and offered us lodging in his stables.

Mary: That night, in the warmth of the hay and with the stars shining overhead, *(looks down at baby doll)* our son Jesus was born.

Santa: The greatest gift the world has ever known.

Chilly: *(smiles, then says sweetly)* Happy birthday.

Joseph: And with his birth, Jesus fulfilled God's promise of a Messiah who would bring peace, hope, and love to the world.

Avery: Peace, hope and love. *(turns to Jules)* It's perfect, Jules.

Jules: You think so?

Avery: I know so.

Conductor: What about the shepherds?

Avery: The shepherds?

Conductor: *(to Mary and Joseph)* If I may?

Mary: *(smiles)* Please do.

Conductor crosses to stand next to **Mary** and **Joseph**. He clears his throat, the recites:

Conductor: Now there were shepherds nearby living out in the field, keeping guard over their flock at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them...

Clarence crosses to **Conductor**.

Conductor: And the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were absolutely terrified. But the angel said to them,

Clarence: "Do not be afraid! Listen carefully, for I proclaim to you good news that brings great joy to all the people: Today your Savior was born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

Conductor: Suddenly a vast, heavenly army appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*Possibly all **Christmas Characters** step forward and say the following lines. Alternately, **Conductor** or **Clarence** can say the line.*

Characters: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom he is pleased.

Joseph: *(smiles)* Couldn't have said it any better myself.

Conductor: And that's the true meaning of Christmas.

Avery: The best Christmas story ever.

Jules: So... are you going to pitch the idea to Mr. Goldman?

Avery: Nope.

*A beat. **Jules** looks shocked and a little hurt. Then **Avery** smiles and holds out the script to **Jules**.*

Avery: But you are.

Jules: Me? But I'm just your assistant.

Avery: Not anymore, you're not. Starting today your new title is Associate Creative Director. You're going to work on ideas of your own, Jules. You're ready.

Jules: Oh, thank you, Avery! You have no idea how much this means to me.

Avery: Well don't thank me yet! If you want that job, then we've got a studio to save.

*We suddenly hear **Goldman** laughing loudly from offstage.*

Avery: And here comes Goldman now. *(turns to **Christmas Characters**)* You guys just be quiet and try and stay out of the way.

Chilly: Don't worry. We'll be chill.

Broccoli: I'm a master at staying out of the way and keeping quiet.

Chummy: I'll keep it zipped! *(zips his lips like a zipper)*

Avery: Great. Thank you.

***Goldman** and **Sam** enter, already in conversation.*

Goldman: That's a good one, Sam. Avery, Jules, listen to this hilarious joke Mr. Scratchy just told me.

Sam: What did the toilet paper say at the end of a long day?

Avery: I don't know. What did it say?

Sam: *(with a smirk)* I'm all wiped out!

Sam laughs heartily at his own joke, elbowing first **Avery**, then **Jules**. **Goldman** also laughs heartily along with **Chummy**, **Chilly** and **Elves** and **Santa**, who "Ho, Ho, Ho's". **Grouch** and **Scrooge** do not. Other **Christmas Characters** present can also laugh if it suits their character.

Chummy: Did you hear that? The toilet paper says he's all wiped out! *(laughs)*

Grouch: Yes, we all heard it. It really was punny, but one thing that joke was, or wasn't was funny!

Rudy: You could even say it stinks!

Avery: I thought I told you guys to be quiet!

Character: Sorry, Avery.

Goldman: *(to Jules)* Who is she talking to?

Character: Don't mind us.

Character: Yeah, nothing to see here... literally.

Character: Just go about your business.

Jules: *(unsure how to respond)* Oh, um... well... *(then quickly)* It's been a long night.

Avery: You mean you can't see them?

Sam: See who?

Character: Not a whole bunch of Christmas characters. That's for sure.

Goldman: What's going on here?

Jules: Nothing to worry about, Mr. Goldman. Avery's just a little tired and she hit her head earlier when Mr. Scratchy handed her the basket of toilet paper and—

Sam: Oh no! She hit her head! Are you alright, Avery?

Avery: I'm fine, Mr. Scratchy, really.

Goldman: Good. Because Goldman Films can't afford an HR nightmare right now.

Avery: I promise you, it's nothing. Just a little bump. *(smiles)* And honestly, I'm kind of glad it happened.

Sam: You're glad you bumped your head?

Avery: Yes. I think it helped me see what's most important right now.

Goldman: And what's that?

Avery: *(smiles)* Telling a story the world needs.

A bell rings.

Santa: I think she's got it.

Clarence: *(reveals wings)* And I just got my wings!

Chilly: Then our job is done.

Avery, Jules, Goldman and Sam should be apart from the **Christmas Characters** and focused on the script and one another. Slowly and quietly, unseen by **Avery** and **Jules**, the **Christmas Characters** exit during the next few lines. **Santa** is last. Just before **Santa** exits, he sets the present down near the Christmas tree. Make sure to time this so there is a break in dialogue when this happens. Perhaps spotlight the moment.

Goldman: So what is this story the world needs to hear?

Avery encourages **Jules** to step forward.

Jules: The best Christmas story ever is the one that started it all. The story of a man and a woman who traveled many miles over dangerous terrain.

Goldman: So far so good.

Jules: With a baby due any minute and nowhere to stay, the couple took refuge in a stable.

Sam: Adventure! Intrigue!

Jules: Later that night, under the cloak of darkness, their baby was born.

Avery: A very special baby.

Jules: A baby the world had been waiting for.

Goldman: *(excitedly)* Who was it? Who was this special baby?

Jules: Jesus.

Goldman: Jesus? As in the Son of God.

Jules: Yes.

Sam: Wow, that is quite a story.

Avery: A story of peace, hope, and love. Just what the world needs.

Goldman: What is this movie called?

Jules: *(holding out the script)* The Best Christmas Story Ever... The Story of the Birth of Jesus.

Avery: By Jules Fleming.

Goldman: Jules came up with that idea?

Avery: She sure did. What do you think?

Goldman: *(smiles)* Sounds like just the idea we were looking for. *(to Sam)* What do you say, Sam? Can you back this movie and save the studio?

Sam: I'd love to!

Avery: That's wonderful.

Sam: I just have one question... where in the movie are we going to put the toilet paper?

Goldman: Maybe we should skip the toilet paper this time... let the movie speak for itself. Don't you think?

Sam: Yeah, I guess you're right.

Goldman: But don't worry, we'll be sure to feature your products in the next big movie idea Avery comes up with. Isn't that right, Avery?

Avery: Sure thing. *(puts an arm around Jules)* Jules and I will get to work on it first thing in the new year.

Jules: I can't wait.

Sam: Sounds great. Let me know if you need any toilet paper jokes for your movie.

Avery: *(laughs)* Will do.

Sam: Speaking of which— *(turns to Goldman)* say Goldman, do you know why toilet paper jokes don't always work?

Goldman: No, why?

Sam: *(with a smirk)* Because they're *tear-able*!

Sam laughs heartily at his own joke as he and **Goldman** exit, elbowing **Avery** and **Jules**, who both stumble and bump their heads together. **Sam** and **Goldman** do not notice. **Avery** and **Jules** rub their heads.

Avery: Are you alright, Jules?

Jules: Yeah, I'm fine. You?

Avery: Trust me, my head doesn't hurt near as bad as that joke did. I'm surprised Chummy didn't laugh.

Avery looks around and realizes the **Christmas Characters** are gone.

Avery: Wait! They're all gone!

Jules: Where did they go?

Avery: *(looking around and calling out)* Chilly? Rudy? Broccoli?

Jules: They're not here.

Avery: Chummy? Conductor? Clarence?

Jules: Disappeared.

Avery: Even Santa and the Elves are gone!

Jules: Not gonna lie... if I never see Santa's elves again it will be too soon.

Avery: But where did they all go?

Jules: Could it be that they were never here? Maybe those bumps on our heads were worse than we thought!

Avery: I don't know. I feel fine. And it seemed so real.

Jules: It really did.

A beat while they think about all that transpired.

Jules: *(yawns)* Well, it's been a long night and I'm sure both of us could use some sleep.

Avery: I... I guess so.

Jules: *(as she crosses to exit)* I'll see you on Monday. Thanks again for the promotion. I can't wait to get started.

Avery: You deserve it. Have a great weekend.

Jules exits. Avery looks around. Confused.

Avery: It all seemed so real. *(sees the present and crosses to it)* Where did this come from?

Avery opens the gift. Inside is a Bible with Luke 2 marked. She holds it up and smiles.

Avery: The Best Christmas story ever.

Avery opens the Bible and begins to read as lights fade to black.

End of play.