



A PLAY IN A MANGER

Created by Steve Moore • Rob Howard • David Guthrie

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Running Time: 45:00

(music begins to “It’s That Time of Year Again”)

(Two TV anchors stand in a TV entertainment show set on one side of the stage. Biff and Christine are over-the-top stars.)

CHRISTINE: **Hi, I’m Christine Glib!**

BIFF: **And I’m Biff Slick!**

CHRISTINE: **And welcome to “Entertainment Tomorrow!” Every year during the holidays, from Radio City Music Hall to the Hollywood Bowl, the stars come out to bring us some of the glitziest entertainment of the year.**

BIFF: **That’s right, Christine! But tonight, our cameras go to a surprising location—a little town that puts on a humble, but special Christmas pageant.**

CHRISTINE: **It’s a Christmas tradition; a play that has been produced without fail for the last 49 years. But this year, there’s a fascinating twist. Here’s our on-scene reporter, Stormie Skye, with the story!**

(Opposite stage, Stormie Skye appears in a spotlight, microphone in hand, reporting from Centerton.)

STORMIE: **Thanks, Christine! I’m here in the town of Centerton, where for the last 49 years, this little village has quietly been producing a beloved Christmas play. But, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their annual pageant, they seem to be shooting for the stars. That’s right, Centerton has secured the services of none other than legendary stage and screen director, Cecil V. DeVille!**

BIFF: **How did they get Mr. DeVille?!**

STORMIE: **Well, I can report that they were able to nab Mr. DeVille because, get this, he grew up in Centerton and as a boy, he himself acted in this play! It appears you CAN go home again!**



BIFF: **A journey back to his roots!**

CHRISTINE: **What a heart-warming story!**

STORMIE: **And DeVille apparently has big plans for this “humble” production.**

(As townspeople run by, she grabs some spontaneous interviews.)

STORMIE: **Excuse me, are you part of the cast for the Christmas play?**

BAILEY: **Yes ma’am, every year for the last three years!**

STORMIE: **You look like you’re very excited!**

TAYLOR: **We are—but we’ve gotta run. We can’t be late! It’s all about to begin!**

(Lights up on stage as the entire town seems to be running toward the set.)

SONG: “IT’S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN”

chorus

It’s that time of year again
We’ve been counting the days
'Til it all begins
Start the auditions, cue the musicians
This play is the greatest tradition
The whole town is wound up to see
The best production they've ever seen
Call backs, rehearsals, memorizing lines
We must admit that we’re on cloud nine
At long last, finally
It’s that time of year again

verse

There’s nothing better than
Late night rewrites
Bright lights, stage fright
The excitement as the audience arrives
We can’t wait for opening night
For weeks we secretly dream of
Curtain calls and all the applause
The best time of year is here



So don't delay because we can't wait

chorus

It's that time of year again
We've been counting the days
'Til it all begins
Start the auditions, cue the musicians
We'd better charge a lot for admission
The whole town is wound up to see
The best production they've ever seen
Call backs, rehearsals, memorizing lines
We must admit that we're on cloud nine
At long last, finally
It's that time of year again

bridge

We sing with all we've got
Of a baby born and a Savior's love
Good news, all the earth rejoice
Let praises ring in our loudest voice
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy

chorus

It's that time of year again
We've been counting the days
'Til it all begins
Start the auditions, cue the musicians
Put our review in the latest edition
The whole town is wound up to see
The best production they've ever seen
Call backs, rehearsals, memorizing lines
We must admit that we're on cloud nine
At long last, finally
It's that time of year again

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(Auditions are beginning for Centerton's annual Christmas play. Kids are milling about. There is a feeling of great anticipation. Stormie Skye is reporting in front, and Taylor and Bailey stand next to her. Both are "over-the-top" amateur actors.)

STORMIE: I'm Stormie Skye back with you in Centerton. With just minutes to go before the first rehearsal, Centerton's theater community, in fact their entire community is beside themselves with excitement. I'm here with Taylor and Bailey, two of Centerton's promising young actors. How do you feel, Taylor?

TAYLOR: *(silly enthralled with being on TV)* I'm beside myself, Stormie.

STORMIE: Taylor and Bailey here are considered two of Centerton's up-and-coming young actors and the future of Centerton theater. I understand that Taylor has actually taken acting lessons.

TAYLOR: *(proudly)* Four!

STORMIE: And Bailey has just returned to Centerton from *Hollywood*. Were you on tour?

BAILEY: Yes, I took the Greyline tour. I saw the Hollywood sign, handprints in concrete and a lot of star homes. What a great vacation! Someday, I want to go there as an actress!

STORMIE: You all really seem to love your Christmas play!

BAILEY: We all do! It's Centerton's most important tradition! My great-grandmother was one of the first angels. My grandmother was an angel for over 20 years, my mother was an angel for 10 years and I have been recreating the role for the last three years.

STORMIE: *(to the camera)* Certainly a cherished tradition! Oh, wait! I think I see him! Yes, it's him. Cecil V. DeVille is arriving for the first production meeting! Let's watch!

(The crowd cheers as Cecil walks on stage self-importantly. Accompanying him are Mayor Flume and Town Councilwoman Briggs. Flume and Briggs are pretty self-important too. DeVille wears stereotypical director clothing, a beret or reversed snap-brim hat, boots and riding pants. He bows somewhat arrogantly. Flume and Briggs step up to a microphone on a stand or a podium.)



FLUME: **Of course, I need no introduction, I am Mayor Flume.** *(waits for applause which begins only after he expects it)* **And with me is Town Councilwoman Briggs.**

BRIGGS: *(interrupting on the microphone)* **And we are proud to have brought to Centerton ...**

(Flume nudges Briggs away)

FLUME: **Thank you! We have worked tirelessly to make this year in Centerton—the year before next year’s election ...**

BRIGGS: **For Mayor *and* Town Council ...**

FLUME: **Yes. The greatest Christmas Centerton has ever seen. And I ...**

BRIGGS: **WE!**

FLUME: **We—are proud to have brought to Centerton ...**

BRIGGS: *(leaning toward the microphone)* **At great expense!**

FLUME: **But not TOO MUCH expense!**

BRIGGS: **The GREATEST director ...**

FLUME: **Not just a great director, but a beloved son of Centerton, the legendary, the one and only ...**

BOTH: **Cecil V. DeVille!**

(huge applause)

DEVILLE: *(pedantically)* **I am humbled by your gracious welcome. Returning to the place of my birth has been a deeply moving experience. The annual Christmas play has always been a fond memory for me, and I hope to give back to my hometown by making the play bigger and better than ever!**

(enthusiastic applause)

DEVILLE: **Are you ready to take Centerton’s Christmas play to the next level?**

ALL: **Yes!**



DEVILLE: **Then, it's time to do something incredible!**

FLUME: *(parroting DeVille)* **Incredible!**

(DeVille whips up the crowd)

DEVILLE: **And we will! We will make our play bigger! Better! We will make it SPECTACULAR!**

BRIGGS: **SPECTACULAR!**

DEVILLE: **And a bigger and better play deserves a bigger and better title. Instead of "A Play in a Manger," now we'll call it "The Marvelous Manger"!**

BRIGGS: **That *does* sound bigger!**

FLUME: **And *better*!**

(music begins to "Bigger Is Better")

SONG 2: "BIGGER IS BETTER"

verse (solo)

Bring on the drama
The camels, the llamas
Just clean up the mess
And I'll acquiesce
Heaven forbid
I don't work with kids
But with everything else, yes
Let's overwhelm them
The more the merrier
Is far superior
I'm not trying to be clever
Bigger is better
Bigger is better
Bigger is better

chorus

Bigger is better
Always and forever
Everybody knows
That's just how it goes
Some say small is the new big
I say everything's better bigger



Bigger is the new big
Bigger is better
Bigger is better
Bigger is better

(dialog 1, beginning at measure 33)

TAYLOR: **Mr. DeVille, here's the costume rack.**

DEVILLE: **No, no, no! These won't do! Where's the glitz? Where's the bling?**

TAYLOR: **But, these are characters from Bible times.**

DEVILLE: **That's exactly the problem. Fashions change! What's this?**

BAILEY: **That's a hat for one of the Wise Men.**

DEVILLE: **This little thing? Bailey, are you catching on yet? I want it what?**

BAILEY: **Bigger?**

DEVILLE: **And better!**

chorus

Bigger is better
Always and forever
Everybody knows
That's just how it goes
Some say small is the new big
I say everything's better bigger
Bigger is the new big
Bigger is better
Bigger is better
Bigger is better

(dialog 2, beginning at measure 56)

BAILEY: **I hear we're getting a bigger orchestra this year?**

TAYLOR: **Wow! Who's conducting?**

BAILEY: **Well, usually it's Erin, but I haven't seen her around. Have you?**

TAYLOR: **You know, she's still got a cast on her arm.**

BAILEY: **She does, why?**



TAYLOR: **She was marching in the band for the Thanksgiving parade and she tripped. Poor thing, her instrument fell on her and broke her arm.**

BAILEY: **What instrument does she play?**

TAYLOR: **Piano.**

chorus

Bigger is better
Always and forever
Everybody knows
That's just how it goes
Some say small is the new big
I say everything's better bigger
Bigger is the new big
Bigger is better
Bigger is better
Bigger is better

bridge

Impressive
Excessive
It's festive
That's just how it goes
Indulge us
With surplus
More's not enough
Bigger is better
Bigger is better
Bigger is better

chorus (and bridge)

Bigger is better
Always and forever
Everybody knows
That's just how it goes
Some say small is the new big
I say everything's better bigger
Bigger is the new big
Bigger is better
Bigger is better
Bigger is better



Scene 2

(One week later ... lots of activity on stage. Cast members are getting ready for rehearsal, people are walking around with construction boards and costumes in their arms, etc.)

STORMIE: **Biff and Christine, we are a week of hard work into what many are calling, “The Spectacle in Centerton,” and excitement is high! Neither Mayor Flume nor Town Councilwoman Briggs have missed a rehearsal! This is a big deal in this town!**

BAILEY: **Have you heard?!**

TAYLOR: **Heard what?**

BAILEY: **Mr. DeVille has re-written the play again! It’s bigger than ever. It even has a new title. It’s going to be called ...**

(As Bailey starts to tell everyone, Mr. DeVille walks on stage behind her unnoticed. Everybody holds their breath in anticipation, but DeVille finishes Bailey’s announcement.)

DEVILLE: **“The Marvelous Manger! ... A Cecil V. DeVille Production!”**

(DeVilIe notices Bailey standing there)

DEVILLE: *(to Bailey)* **Young lady!**

BAILEY: **Me?**

DEVILLE: **Yes. What is your name?**

BAILEY: **Bailey, sir!**

DEVILLE: **Bailey, I’ve taken notice of your dramatic skills. I need an assistant director!**

BAILEY: **Y-Y-Yes sir!**

DEVILLE: **First order of business—round up those new costumes I described.**

BAILEY: **What should I do with the old ones?**



DEVILLE: *(smiling)* **I don't think you'll be needing those anymore. You can get rid of them. Next order of business. Camels. I specifically ordered three brown camels. The zoo sent us two tan ones and a white one. We need three browns! Fix it.**

BAILEY: *(unsure)* **Okay ... but how?**

DEVILLE: *(interrupting)* **Who's my prop master? I want to see the manger we're working with.**

TAYLOR: **The prop master? That's Ben. He's been our prop man for years.**

(Ben walks out on stage carrying a small manger.)

BEN: **Here's the manger!**

DEVILLE: **Hmmmm, that's not going to work. Haven't you heard my vision—bigger is better! The play is entitled, "The Marvelous Manger," not "The Miniscule Manger!" You can get rid of that one, we're going big ... no, strike that ... we're going huge!**

BEN: **Mr. DeVille, this manger is where we've laid the baby Jesus every year for the last 49 years. It's the centerpiece for the whole show.**

DEVILLE: **Hmmm, well, call Hollywood and get me some *real* prop builders! I want a two-story manger! In fact, get me my entire Hollywood stage crew!**

(Ben looks on skeptically.)

BAILEY: *(speaks as she writes on clipboard)* **Two story manger! Hollywood stage crew!**

DEVILLE: **Time to rehearse! Act one, scene one shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Places!**

(Everybody scrambles to the wings or to their places. The group of shepherds take their place as DeVille sits in his director's chair, holding a cone megaphone.)

DEVILLE: **Annnndddd ... *(through the megaphone)* ACTION!**

SHEPHERD 1: **Did you hear that noise?**



SHEPHERD 2: **Look, in the sky—it's angels!**

DEVILLE: **Cut! Cut! We need more energy! I'm just not believing you're "sore afraid." We need ... I've got it! Explosions! We need explosions! Get me my Hollywood pyrotechnics experts! Don't bother me until they're ready to go! I'll be in my trailer!**

(DeVille strides off stage.)

TAYLOR: **What just happened? I don't think there were explosions in the Bible.**

BAILEY: **Mr. DeVille was *(makes quote signs)* "taking dramatic license." That's the way it works in the theater!**

TAYLOR: **Well if you ask me, the way the Bible describes the night that Jesus was born is pretty dramatic! Shepherds in the field, an angel of the Lord appears to them, then they're joined by the heavenly host proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest!" The angels had been given the greatest message in history to deliver! The God who created the universe had come to earth as a baby to save His creation!**

(music begins to "Glory in the Highest, Peace on Earth")

SONG 3: "GLORY IN THE HIGHEST, PEACE ON EARTH"

verse 1 (solo)

There were shepherds out in the fields
Watching their flocks by night
An angel of the Lord appeared to them
And they were terrified
The angel said do not be afraid
I bring you good news of great joy
Great joy, great joy

chorus

Today is born in the city of David
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Christ the Lord, the Messiah, our Savior
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
Let the joyful news be heard
Now proclaim the Savior's birth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth



verse 2

The hills were filled with glorias
They echoed throughout the night
The heavenly host was radiant
As dark gave way to light
The angel said do not be afraid
I bring you good news of great joy
Great joy, great joy

chorus

Today is born in the city of David
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Christ the Lord, the Messiah, our Savior
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
Let the joyful news be heard
Now proclaim the Savior's birth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth

bridge

With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King,
Glory to the newborn King."

chorus

Today is born in the city of David
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Christ the Lord, the Messiah, our Savior
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
Let the joyful news be heard
Now proclaim the Savior's birth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth



Scene 3

(A beehive of activity continues as Stormie reports. Rehearsals and construction.)

STORMIE: **Christine, with just ten days to go before the performance, activity in Centerton's 50th anniversary production of their Christmas play is at a fever pitch! It's hard to keep track of everything going on. DeVille is a genius!**

FLUME: **Mr. DeVille!**

DEVILLE: **How may I be of assistance?**

BRIGGS: **Well, it's actually *we* who may be of assistance to *you*.**

DEVILLE: **How so?**

FLUME: **This Civic Center ... it's getting a little dingy and old ...**

BRIGGS: **And we're thinking that maybe your production deserves a more—impressive stage.**

DEVILLE: *(intrigued)* **Go onnnn.**

FLUME: **With all the improvements you're making in the Christmas show, we're concerned that the Civic Center won't have enough seats for all the voters, er, uh, audience.**

BRIGGS: **How would you like to stage the production in the Junior College football stadium? It can seat 20,000! It would take your masterpiece to the next level!**

(Bailey runs up.)

BAILEY: **Mr. DeVille! Good news! The Hollywood prop-master just finished the two-story manger! It looks fabulous!**

DEVILLE: **Tell him to tear it down. It won't be adequate! We'll need it even bigger. I have decided that this spectacular production is too monumental, too immense for the Civic Center—we will perform at the Centerton Junior College football stadium!**

(all cheer)



DEVILLE: **And in honor of the new venue, we will rename the production! The new title will be ...**

(All, except Taylor, hold their breath in anticipation.)

DEVILLE: **“Cecil V. DeVille presents: ‘Manger Magnificence! A Seasonal Spectacular!’”**

(Everyone except Taylor cheers.)

DEVILLE: **Thank you, thank you! But we have no time to lose now! Let’s rehearse! Wise Men scene! Places! And ... ACTION!**

(The three wise men begin walking toward them pantomiming as if they’re riding camels, followed by a procession of gift holder servants behind them, also pretending as if they’re riding camels.)

DEVILLE: **CUT! Where are their camels?**

BAILEY: **They’re being painted brown, Mr. DeVille.**

DEVILLE: **Well, I guess we can’t rehearse the camel’s dance number. Oh well, moving on. Wise Men, I notice that you’ve never had very many lines in the past. That won’t do, the audience needs to care about you as people. So, let me hear the new lines I’ve written for you. Annnnd ... ACTION!**

(The scene continues where it left off.)

WISE MAN 1: **We have come from the east, following a star, to give you messages of our wisdom.**

WISE MAN 2: **“A penny saved is a penny earned.”**

WISE MAN 3: **“Never run with scissors.”**

DEVILLE: **CUT! Perfect! Moving on to the next scene!**

TAYLOR: **Seriously? You thought that was perfect?**

DEVILLE: **You’ve just got to see it with the dancing camels, it’ll be a show-stopper!**

TAYLOR: *(to the side)* **I’m thinking this show might need to be stopped.**

DEVILLE: **Excuse me?**



TAYLOR: **Mr. DeVille I don't know where you got the dancing camels and "words of wisdom." The Bible tells us that the wise men saw the star in the east and came to worship Jesus.**

DEVILLE: **Okay, okay, I understand your little concerns. I love the traditional story as much as anybody but trust me, I know what it takes to capture an audience's attention today. Remember, bigger is better!**

(Deville strides off stage and Mason walks the other way, discouraged. He walks up to Ben, leaning on a large sweeper broom.)

BEN: **Don't be discouraged, Taylor.**

TAYLOR: **What's happening to our Christmas play, Ben? Don't people realize he's changing everything? I mean, a gigantic manger, dancing camels?**

BEN: **Well Taylor, when Jesus was born, most folks were expecting something very different ... maybe, bigger. The promised Messiah arrived as a little baby ... in a tiny village ... and instead of sitting on a throne, He was laid in a little manger—like this. Let's give Mr. DeVille some more time. He may "see the light" after all, and that light may lead him right back to this manger.**

(Music begins to "Let It Shine" as Ben puts his arm around Taylor and they walk off stage.)

SONG 4: "LET IT SHINE"

verse 1 (solo)

Wise men living in faraway lands
Saw the star shining in the sky
Across the desert in a caravan
They followed the star through the night

chorus

Oh, let it shine, star of wonder
Oh, let it shine, star of night
Oh, let it lead to the Savior
The long-awaited
Heavenly Child
Oh, let it shine



verse 2

Each brought a gift to give to the Child
Their offering fit for a king
And the star they'd seen shining in the sky
Led them faithfully

chorus

Oh, let it shine, star of wonder
Oh, let it shine, star of night
Oh, let it lead to the Savior
The long-awaited
Heavenly Child
Oh, let it shine

chorus

Oh, let it shine, star of wonder
Oh, let it shine, star of night
Oh, let it lead to the Savior
The long-awaited
Heavenly Child
Oh, let it shine

outro

Oh, let it shine
Oh, let it shine
Oh, let it lead to the Savior
Perfect, holy light
Oh, let it shine

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Scene 4

(Stormie is again reporting. The rest of the cast and characters are present, and they are looking up at the sky.)

STORMIE: Stormie Skye, back with you. With just five days to go until opening night, things are getting exciting at Centerton's soon-to-be-historic 50th anniversary Christmas play. Mr. DeVille is about to rehearse one of the greatest scenes in theater history—according to him.

DEVILLE: Everybody to their places!



BAILEY: *(speaking into a headset, using radio lingo)* **Ground hog to little bird, ground hog to little bird, do you read? *(pause)* Roger. Ready for the drop.**

(Ben walks in and asks Bailey a question.)

BEN: **What's going on?**

BAILEY: **Oh, it's so exciting! The stars from "Americans Can Sing" signed on to be our angels, and Mr. DeVille came up with a *brilliant* idea! He's going to have them jump into the performance from planes in tiny, hard-to-notice parachutes. They'll be wearing wings so they'll look just like angels. The sound of a hundred singing angels in the sky will be breathtaking.**

BEN: **And you're telling me they're up there ready to jump?**

BAILEY: **Oh, no! This is a rehearsal! They're parachuting a sandbag down to see how long it takes to get to the ground, so we can get our timing right for the song.**

DEVILLE: **Proceed!**

BAILEY: *(into her headset)* **Ready for the drop! *(looking, then pointing excitedly at the sky)* It's out! I see it!**

SFX 1: "Sandbag Drop"

(Pantomime over sound effect. All look straight over the audience as the unseen sandbag drops. They all look in unison as it falls at an incredible rate of descent, never slowing down before we hear the thud as their eyes follow it to the ground.)

BEN: **Is that how it was supposed to work?**

BAILEY: **We might want to use a larger parachute.**

BEN: **Or, maybe write a really short song for them to sing.**

DEVILLE: **Aren't you the prop master I fired? Why are you here?**

BEN: **Oh, I'm just helping out with cleaning up and such. I have a feeling that a lot about this show could need "cleaning up."**



BAILEY: *(after listening to her headset)* **The plane wants to know if we want to do the second test drop. I'll just tell him to bring the timpani back to the airport. *(to Ben)* We were going to parachute in the orchestra, too.**

DEVILLE: **Okay, everybody take five while we get this straightened out.**

(Everybody leaves stage except DeVille, Taylor and Ben, who is sweeping.)

TAYLOR: **Mr. DeVille, I'm kind of concerned about the play. Maybe this Bible would help flesh out the actual Christmas story.**

(Taylor hands DeVille a Bible. He takes it and smiles.)

DEVILLE: **You may not know this, but I know the story of the birth of Jesus like the back of my hand. Remember, I first started acting in this very play.**

TAYLOR: **I know. That's why I thought ...**

DEVILLE: *(interrupting)* **But I've since learned that to be successful, plays need to be exciting! They need to have dramatic special effects!**

BEN: **With lots of stories that may be true, Mr. DeVille, but don't you think that with the story of Jesus' birth it's not about special effects but about the special nature of the child in that manger?**

(music begins to "His Name Is Jesus")

SONG 5: "HIS NAME IS JESUS"

verse 1 (solo)

What Child is this, who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

chorus

What shall we call Him?
King of Kings
What shall we call Him?
Lord of Lords
Prince of Peace
The Lord of Love
Is now among us, Jesus



His name is Jesus

verse 2

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king, to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

chorus

What shall we call Him?
King of Kings
What shall we call Him?
Lord of Lords
Prince of Peace
The Lord of Love
Is now among us, Jesus
His name is Jesus

bridge

This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

chorus

What shall we call Him?
King of Kings
What shall we call Him?
Lord of Lords
Prince of Peace
The Lord of Love
Is now among us, Jesus
His name is Jesus
His name is Jesus

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Scene 5

STORMIE: Stormie Skye here, and it is opening night in Centerton! You can cut the excitement with a knife. Never before has Centerton, or any town like it, put so much into such a production. Cecil V. DeVille is about to make theater history!



- DEVILLE: **Places everybody!**
- BRIGGS: **It is so exciting to be backstage before *our* historic production!**
- FLUME: **It is so gratifying to see what *the three of us* have been able to accomplish together!** (*hugs DeVille and Briggs to either side of him*)
- DEVILLE: **Pyrotechnics wrangler!**
- PYRO: **Pyrotechnics reporting, Mr. DeVille.**
- DEVILLE: **Great to work with you again, Pyro! Are we ready with the explosions for the super nova of Bethlehem?**
- TAYLOR: (*to Bailey*) **Super nova?**
- BAILEY: **Yes, Mr. DeVille thought that a “star” just seemed too boring. But a “super nova,” an exploding star ...**
- TAYLOR: (*interrupting*) **You’ve got to be kidding me.**
- DEVILLE: **So, all the explosives are back stage and ready to go, Pyro?**
- PYRO: **Yep! Piles of ’em. Just laying out in the open. Lots of explosives with fuses on them just waiting for a match. All I have to do is get them on stage and light them off when you tell me to!**
- DEVILLE: **Excellent!**
- PYRO: **Anybody have a flashlight? It’s pretty dark back stage and my flashlight seems to have gone out.**
- FLUME: **No, but I’ve got this really big lighter.**
- PYRO: **Oh, perfect! Thanks Mayor Flame, I mean, Flume.**
- (*Pyro flicks the lighter and it doesn’t light.*)
- PYRO: **It doesn’t work.**
- FLUME: **It works, you have to flick it just right, then it ignites with a really big, sparky flame.**
- PYRO: **Okay!**



(Pyro walks off flicking the lighter, which doesn't light on stage.)

DEVILLE: **People! People! We go on in 30 minutes! Start getting to your places!**

PYRO: *(off stage)* **Oh, there it goes! Boy that really is a big flame!**

SFX 2: "Explosion"

(A huge boom is heard. Smoke and people come staggering out from behind the stage.)

ALL: *(What was that?, Oh my!, etc.)*

(Ben comes out with some others.)

BEN: **There was some kind of explosion near the pyrotechnics area!**

(Pyro staggers out, sooty and smoky.)

FLUME: **How could that happen?**

PYRO: *(he obviously can't hear)* **Huh? You say something?** *(speaking too loudly)* **Here's your lighter, by the way. It works.**

(Bailey comes out.)

BAILEY: **The camels have stampeded! The explosion spooked them! They knocked down the manger and ran off toward the edge of town! I didn't know camels could run that fast!**

(Taylor comes out, drenched. She's holding a doll's dress. As she does, Bailey answers her cell phone in the background and pantomimes talking.)

TAYLOR: **The costumes all got drenched! A water pipe blew and soaked all the costumes. And they shrunk! Look!**

(Shows the doll's dress.)

BAILEY: **Mr. DeVille! The pilot of the angel drop plane just called. He said there's too much smoke overhead and they can't possibly fly in the area.**

DEVILLE: *(devastated)* **Oh, then that's it! The play is ruined. It's over.**



BRIGGS: **I'm very sorry, Mr. DeVille. We'll be sure to explain to everyone that you tried your best.**

FLUME: **There is only so much *one man* can do. Very sorry about *your* production.**

BEN: **Mr. DeVille, maybe all is not lost. Let's not forget why this has been the most-beloved show for the last 50 years. We may have lost the special effects but we haven't lost what really makes it special. We still have the heart of the story. And *that's* the good news that all those people out there need to hear.**

(music begins to "The Heart of the Story")

SONG 6: "THE HEART OF THE STORY"

verse 1 (solo)

In a tiny village called Bethlehem
A little baby was born
It was a humble birth that brought
Peace to earth
And joy to all the world

chorus

At the heart of the story we know
God so loved the world
He sent His one and only Son
Our Savior, Christ the Lord
Laid in a manger
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
The Son of God was born
It was a humble beginning
For a King who came willing
To give His life for us
But that's the Father's love
At the heart of the story

verse 2

Lowly shepherds alone in the hills
Were first to hear the news
Leaving their sheep to the manger they ran
To see if the story was true

chorus

At the heart of the story we know
God so loved the world



He sent His one and only Son
Our Savior, Christ the Lord
Laid in a manger
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
The Son of God was born
It was a humble beginning
For a King who came willing
To give His life for us
But that's the Father's love
At the heart of the story

bridge

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

chorus

At the heart of the story we know
God so loved the world
He sent His one and only Son
Our Savior, Christ the Lord
Laid in a manger
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
The Son of God was born
It was a humble beginning
For a King who came willing
To give His life for us
But that's the Father's love
At the heart of the story

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Scene 6

DEVILLE: *(thinking out loud)* **We still have the heart of the story ... You may be right, Ben. Where's that Bible Taylor gave me ... there still may be time to get this right. Bailey, did you get rid of those old costumes yet?**

BAILEY: **Oh, no Mr. DeVille, I've been so busy with camels and airplanes and ... I'm sorry. I'll ...**



- DEVILLE: *(interrupting)* **Excellent! Get them and bring them back stage right away! And Ben, we still have that most important prop piece, right?**
- BEN: *(smiling)* **Sure do, Mr. DeVille.**
- DEVILLE: *(as he walks off stage)* **Alright. I've got some quick writing to do ... or maybe, un-writing!**
- STORMIE: *(on side stage)* **Biff and Christine, the show is just about to begin here in Centerton. In my exclusive interview with Cecil V. DeVille earlier this afternoon, he told me to expect some BIG surprises. And from what I know so far, I expect them to be bigger and better than we could even imagine. Right now, I'm sure Mr. DeVille is backstage delivering one of his legendary inspirational speeches.**
- FLUME: **This is indeed a disaster! We have no show! And has Mr. DeVille left town?**
- BRIGGS: **He probably snuck out the back and “departed to his own country another way!”**
- BAILEY: *(As Bailey and DeVille return)* **I think everyone is in their places.**
- FLUME: **Mr. DeVille! You're still here?**
- DEVILLE: **Of course! It's time for the show to start, and we have a lot of people waiting for us to begin.**
- BRIGGS: **Waiting for a “Seasonal Spectacular” that is no longer going to be very spectacular, I'm afraid.**
- BEN: **I wouldn't be so sure about that, Councilwoman Briggs. This show may have just gotten smaller, but something tells me it's just gotten better.**

(music begins to “Away in a Manger Medley”)

(During the medley, the Nativity characters assemble worshipfully around the manger.)

SONG 7: “AWAY IN A MANGER MEDLEY”

reader 1

“And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were



accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”

verse 1

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down
His sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down
Where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

reader 2

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.”

reader 3

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

verse 2

The first Noel the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

reader 4

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven the shepherds said to one another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”

verse 3

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,



O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

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Scene 7

STORMIE: This is a very moved Stormie Skye. Something amazing just happened in the town of Centerton. A very simple, uncomplicated and clear story was told tonight. There were no explosions, no special effects, no mass choirs, and the only set piece was a simple manger which held the baby Jesus. But this simple play in a manger was possibly the most powerful thing this reporter has seen. Mr. DeVille ... Mr. DeVille! How did you have the creative vision to know that staging such a simple retelling of the birth of Jesus could be so powerful?

DEVILLE: Stormie, you might say that it just kind of went “boom,” and there it was. *(laughs)* Actually, I have to admit that I didn’t have the vision. My vision was clouded by all of my self-important dreams of success. In fact, my “vision” for the show was so “over-the-top,” you might have missed the whole story if we’d done it my way. But thankfully, the Author of this script brought us all down to earth.

BEN: And the Son of God coming down to earth to save sinful people is the simple, beautiful story we’ve been telling for 50 years.

(Bailey and Taylor come running in.)

BAILEY: Mr. DeVille, the crowd just keeps applauding!

TAYLOR: Maybe you should come out and take a bow?

DEVILLE: I think we should all go out and bow ... at the manger, that is.

(Pyro reappears, tapping his ears with the palms of his hands.)

BAILEY AND TAYLOR: Pyro, where have you been?



(music begins to “A Play in a Manger Curtain Calls”)

PYRO: *(excitedly)* **Hey! My hearing came back! And I’m pretty sure I hear the encore song starting. We’d better get out there!**

ALL: *(Yeah! Let’s go! etc.)*

SONG 8: “A PLAY IN A MANGER CURTAIN CALLS”

“The Heart of the Story”

chorus

At the heart of the story we know
God so loved the world
He sent His one and only Son
Our Savior, Christ the Lord
Laid in a manger
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
The Son of God was born
It was a humble beginning
For a King who came willing
To give His life for us
But that’s the Father’s love
At the heart of the story

bridge

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

chorus

At the heart of the story we know
God so loved the world
He sent His one and only Son
Our Savior, Christ the Lord
Laid in a manger
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
The Son of God was born
It was a humble beginning
For a King who came willing
To give His life for us
But that’s the Father’s love
At the heart of the story



“Glory in the Highest, Peace on Earth”

chorus

Today is born in the city of David
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Christ the Lord, the Messiah, our Savior
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
Let the joyful news be heard
Now proclaim the Savior’s birth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth

bridge

With th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King,
Glory to the newborn King.”

chorus

Today is born in the city of David
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Christ the Lord, the Messiah, our Savior
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
Let the joyful news be heard
Now proclaim the Savior’s birth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth
Glory in the highest, peace on earth

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THE END.