

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(A “Live” Radio Play)

Book, Music & Lyrics
by
Stephen Taft

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A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Whether we wish to admit it or not, theatre is a business. It's my hope that you may find *Storybook Christmas* to be a success artistically and also at the box office. One of the biggest challenges many theatre organizations may have is expanding their audience and their talent pool. It's my belief that this musical contains specific opportunities to aid you in achieving such goals.

Musically, I am a big believer in collaboration and it's been my experience that talented musicians and vocalists can provide their own unique interpretation to a song when given the latitude to do so. I encourage it. Given the country-based nature of this production, the musicians of Nashville, Muscle Shoals, Branson or any community of talented country and bluegrass musicians, know how to get toes tapping, connect to a lyric, bring a tear to an eye, or fill a heart with joy. I encourage musicians to use their knowledge and skills and to ultimately have fun. Lead sheets with melody and guitar chords are provided for each song.

However, should you not have access to such musicians, *know that an instrumental soundtrack of all musical numbers and transitions are available.* This can be particularly helpful for not only balancing sound in performance, but also a valuable resource for rehearsals. Pre-recorded FX sound cues are also available. However, should a company wish to create sound cues "live", doing so may create another entertaining possibility for your patrons.

A "radio play" adaptation of this musical has been created to allow theatre companies that may not have the time, budget or scenic resources to produce an entertaining family-friendly holiday musical.

Storybook Christmas is loosely based on the Christmas classic, *A Christmas Carol*. However, it's my hope you will quickly discover the script and the music to be a fresh and entertaining interpretation. In regard to casting, I encourage theatre companies to embrace the diverse world we live in. As a director, it's always been my philosophy to cast talent, not type.

The characters are not intended to be stereotypes or caricatures, but intelligent, authentic people, each with their own unique personality and life challenges. I encourage you to stay true to who they are. Do so and you will discover the humor, the heart, the joy and the ultimate message behind *Storybook Christmas*.

Break-a-leg!

Stephen Taft

WHAT WAS THE REACTION?

The premiere of *Storybook Christmas* was presented by the Cedar Falls Community Theatre in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

"*Storybook Christmas* is a humorous, heartfelt treat! It's an effective and entertaining re-telling of a familiar story with well-drawn and authentic characters. Ultimately, this is the stuff of Dickens' beloved 'A Christmas Carol' -- life lessons in friendship, love and compassion told with humor and good music. It's a great family treat for the holidays."

- *Waterloo Courier*

"Your work last night was amazing! I enjoyed the entire production and you are certainly to be commended for all the hats you wore to make it happen. I was especially interested in your songwriting before I attended and it was great to hear that side of your many talents."

John V.

Director, UNI School of Music.

"I watched your Christmas Story play twice and was very pleased with it. As I understand you did the whole script, staging and music. What a gifted person you are. We are supporters of both the CF Oster Regent Theater and the Lanesboro, MN Commonweal Theater. I would like to pursue the possibility of finding what I need to do to get the script to the Commonweal group so they can review it."

Kent R.

Oster Regent Patron

"I saw *Storybook Christmas* last night, and although country music isn't usually my cup of tea (and I might not have gone except a ticket came with my season membership), I thought it was great."

Oster Regent Patron

"If you haven't seen *Storybook Christmas* then GO!! It's fabulous! Blessings abound."

Cathy & Leonard U.

Oster Regent Patrons

"I loved it. *Storybook Christmas* is a fun twist on an old favorite with toe tapping songs and a message that reminds us all of the true meaning of Christmas. I came out of the theatre whistling some of the songs and thinking about Christmas in my hometown."

Matt Ray

DJ-KWAY 99.3FM Waverly, IA

"My family loved it! A fun creative, country twist to a Christmas classic. The fact that it was 100% local made it even that more enjoyable."

KVCM 93.5FM The MIX Cedar Falls, IA – owner 11 stations

"*Storybook Christmas* is a new fun-loving holiday show with toe-tapping music, witty lyrics and an unforgettable timeless message."

John L.

General Manager, Oster Regent Theatre

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

MEN

LUCAS BOONE (50-60's): is a cheap, grumpy, middle to upper-middle age man concerned with making money, money and of course, more money. He owns a used car dealership. He has a chip on his shoulder and it won't be easy to knock it off. He's a character in the best sense of the word. Think Jeff Bridges. This is a demanding role as he appears in every scene but one. Boone sings on six of twelve musical numbers. Baritone/Tenor. Lucas is played by WDOG Station Manager, Mr. Black.

JAKE BAILEY (40-50's): is a bit younger than Lucas as he died a few years back. He is Boone's former business partner and not a member of the present world. Jake was the one with the true musical talent, but in truth is a down-to-earth homebody and was the third part of a love triangle. He carries a somewhat heavy burden (literally). Jake is played by WDOG Sports Reporter, Jason.

B.J.THE DJ (mid-20's-early 30's): has a Blake Shelton type of personality and an excellent connection with his radio listeners. He has a sense of humor, is caring, and really loves Anna Sue Bailey (Jake Bailey's daughter). They sing a duet entitled "A Gift of Love." B.J.is played by WDOG Morning DJ, Tony.

CARTER - "The Ghost of Christmas Nit-Wits" (50+): was once a country star at the Grand Ole Opry and knows how to "take stage". We can also tell he's been through the ringer of life. Carter is played by WDOG Station Engineer, Benny.

JOHNNY - "The Ghost of Christmas Guilt" (40's-50's): sings on "The Good Lord's Rules". A bass or baritone voice (singing and speaking) is ideal. Johnny is played by WDOG Custodian, Mike.

YOUNGER CARTER (30's): is a younger version of the older Carter. In a scene of Christmas Past, he is a star at the Grand Ole Opry of yesteryear. He also portrays **SANTA** in the final scene of the musical. He is portrayed by WDOG Salesman, Charles.

YOUNG LUCAS BOONE (late teens): is young looking and a dreamer. He sings with Young Jake on "This Town" and also on "Better Deal". The ability to naturally harmonize is ideal. He is portrayed by WDOG Weekend Announcer, Anthony.

YOUNG JAKE BAILEY (late teens): is handsome and has nice hair. Always the guy everyone knew would succeed. He's a good singer and sings lead on "This Town". He also sings on "Better Deal". He is portrayed by Raymond, a high school senior recruited to be in the show.

WOMEN

NARRATOR (any age): possesses a mature voice and can tell a story and paint a picture using only her voice. She is WDOG Midnight Talk Show Host, Ruby.

BOBBIE JACKSON (early to mid-30's): is a loyal female employee to Lucas Boone. She works as Boone's receptionist, accountant, marketing director, finance officer, camera-woman and more. Needless to say, she's overworked. She is attractive, yet unassuming. Bobbie sings "The Joy Christmas Brings" and on two ensemble numbers. She is played by WDOG Receptionist, Jasmine.

ANNA SUE BAILEY (early 20's): She inherited her father's musical talent and is quite confident in her womanhood. She sings several musical numbers and is also a member of the ensemble number "Merry Christmas to You". She is played by WDOG Social Media Director, Rachel.

LEOMA and LYNNETTE (upper 40's-60's): are sisters, have an internal energy about them, and are members of the local Women's Auxiliary Club and proud of it. They are known around town as the "L & L Girls" and are attempting to raise funds to purchase presents for needy children in the community. They may sing on ensemble numbers, but vocal skills are not essential. However, they are a hoot! Comic timing is important. They are played by Bonnie and Birdie, volunteer community members.

MILLIE - "The Ghost of Christmas Regrets" (30's-40's): was a mechanic at Boone and Bailey's Used Car Sales before her untimely demise. She's not very fond of her former employer. Singing is not essential. She is played by WDOG Sales Manager, Kierra.

MARY BAILEY (late 40's-50's): is the widow of Jake Bailey and mother to Anna Sue Bailey. Mary is a smart, caring, independent woman. She dated Lucas Boone long ago. She sings on "The Good Lord's Rules" and on ensemble numbers. She is played by WDOG News Director, Ms. Cindy.

YOUNG MARY (late teens-early 20's): is a fun-loving friend of young Lucas Boone and young Jake Bailey. She dates Young Lucas and sings "Don't Send Me Roses". She is played by WDOG Marketing Director, Abigail.

TOWNSPEOPLE (ENSEMBLE)

There is one primary ensemble number in Act 1 (with a reprise in Act 2). Non-country singing voices are welcome, as well as character male voices.

RADIO PLAY SCENIC CONSIDERATION: As this version of *Storybook Christmas* takes place on a stage of a local theatre and as a “live” remote broadcast, the setting could be as simple as the equipment that may be necessary for such a broadcast. Creative directors and scenic designers may choose to add whatever their imagination, time and budget may allow.

SCENE BREAKDOWN

ACT 1

| | |
|----------|--|
| SCENE 1 | Exterior - The corner of Main and Bailey Way |
| SCENE 2 | Exterior of downtown shops |
| SCENE 3 | Interior office of Bobbie Jackson at the auto dealership |
| SCENE 4 | Interior office of Bobbie Jackson at the auto dealership |
| SCENE 5 | Exterior - The corner of Main and Bailey Way |
| SCENE 6 | Interior - Lucas Boone’s bedroom - a trailer |
| SCENE 7 | Exterior - Frozen pond (ice-fishing) - <i>The Past</i> |
| SCENE 8 | Interior - Stage of the Grand Ole Opry - <i>The Past</i> |
| SCENE 9 | Interior - Lucas Boone’s bedroom - a trailer |
| SCENE 10 | Interior - A restaurant - <i>The Past</i> |

ACT 2

| | |
|---------|--|
| SCENE 1 | Interior - Control room of a small-town radio station - <i>The Present</i> |
| SCENE 2 | Interior - Lucas Boone’s bedroom - a trailer |
| SCENE 3 | Interior - Funeral home - <i>The Future</i> |
| SCENE 4 | Interior - Lucas Boone’s bedroom - a trailer |
| SCENE 5 | Interior - Lucas Boone’s bedroom <i>and</i> the radio control room |
| SCENE 6 | Interior - Community Center stage (same basic set up as Act 1 / Scene 8) |

TIME

The Past, the Present and the Future - of course.

LOCATION

A community of good country people.

*The radio station call letters in this musical of WKID and WDOG reference fictitious radio stations and do not reflect the station format or personalities of any specific radio station.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT 1

If You Like Nascar.....Boone
 Merry Christmas to You.....Boone and Ensemble
 It’s Up to Us at Christmas.....Boone & Bobbie Jackson
 The Joy Christmas Brings.....Bobbie Jackson
 Better Deal.....Young Lucas, Young Mary, and Young Jake Bailey
 This Town.....Young Jake and Young Lucas
 Don’t Send Me Roses.....Young Mary

ACT 2

I Wish It Was Christmas Every Day of the Year.....Anna Sue
 A Gift of Love.....Anna Sue & B.J.
 The Good Lord’s Rules.....Anne Sue, Mary, Leoma, Lynnette, Boone & Johnny
 Guitar Pickin’ Angel.....Boone
 Storybook Christmas.....Anna Sue & Boone
 Storybook Christmas (Reprise).....Anna Sue & Ensemble
 Merry Christmas to You (Reprise).....Ensemble

INSTRUMENTATION

(if performed live)

- Acoustic Guitar
- Electric Guitar
- Bass Guitar
- Banjo
- Drums
- Piano
- Tambourine

NOTE: Instrumental tracks for each musical number and noted sound effects are available for this production.

*Production tracks performed and produced by Austin Taft.

*Transition music written, performed and produced by Austin Taft.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 1

SETTING:

Radio station WDOG is broadcasting the musical, Storybook Christmas “live” during this holiday season from the stage of a local theatre.

Most of the radio station employees are rather energized in anticipation of the upcoming “live” broadcast and are hustling about getting ready for the broadcast. Lights rise on the cast.

MR. BLACK

(To his employees.)

How are we doing, folks? Are we ready for this?

CAST

You bet. Yes sir. We’re pretty pumped. I’m psyched!!

MR. BLACK

That’s what I like to hear. *(Locating RACHEL on the stage.)* Rachel, how do we know how many folks may be tuning in tonight?

RACHEL

I’m tracking everything on my computer, Mr. Black. I’ll have the final statistics for you shortly after the show.

MR. BLACK

Really?

RACHEL

The wonders of the internet. Folks can even donate during the show if they wish.

MR. BLACK

You do know how to make me smile, Rachel. You’re a wonder.

RACHEL

Thank you, sir.

MR. BLACK

(To the cast.)

Does everyone have their water?

ABIGAIL

(To the cast.)

Bottled water is on the desk right over there if you need one.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(Some cast members retrieve a bottle of water. BENNY, the Station Engineer checks microphones – standing or body mics – with a “check, check”.)

MR. BLACK

(After a couple of moments of this.)

Benny, is everything all set to broadcast the show?

BENNY

Checked and double-checked, Mr. Black.

MR. BLACK

Actors, do you all have your scripts?

CAST

Yes sir. You bet. Got it right here!

RAYMOND

I don't need it.

(Others in the cast roll their eyes.)

MR. BLACK

That's my trouper! All right, line up. *(The cast gathers in a line. MR. BLACK weaves thru the line as he addresses his employees.)* We've worked really hard, folks, and broadcasting this performance “live” is a first for us and the community. So, let's nail it! All we have to do is bring the spirit of the holiday season to these folks. No pressure. Remember, the most precious gift we can give our community is a beautiful holiday memory. We're also in the middle of our fundraising campaign, so let's make sure they have a smile on their face and are humming some tunes at the end of the evening. Remember, we touch their hearts and they touch their wallets and pocket books. Hands in.

(They all gather in a circle and place their hands on top of each other.)

Now, let's give the folks right here in the theatre a hearty W-DOG welcome. ONE, TWO, THREE, WDOG!

(The cast turns and crosses to welcome their audience and “barks” a WDOG welcome. The cast may choose their personal dog/puppy to emulate. Then, a more traditional welcome.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

CAST

Howdy, folks! Welcome to the show. How y'all doing tonight? You ready for a rib tickler of a show? Glad to have you here. Enjoy!

ABIGAIL

Places, everyone.

(The cast cross to their assigned places.)

BENNY

We're live in five, four, three (*Silent, but using fingers.*), two, one (*Pointing to TONY DC.*)

TONY

Good evening, everybody! I'm Tony, your morning DJ. For those of you here watching us live or listening at home, welcome to WDOG's presentation of *Storybook Christmas*. We've had a great time working on it and we want to thank the good folks here at the _____ Theatre for allowing us to broadcast from this beautiful facility. We sure are glad you've joined us for this special holiday treat. It's a great opportunity to see and hear a different side of all of us who work at WDOG *and* a few special friends we've recruited as well. But first, a word from our sponsor. Here's our Sales Manager, Kierra...

KIERRA

Thank you, Tony. (*To the audience in the theatre and listening.*) Don't you hate waiting? Particularly in a waiting room, or for a show to start? So often we just sit and sit and sit. It's particularly difficult if a person should have (*Whispers.*) hemorrhoids. (*The cast has different silent reactions to this.*) Fortunately, we have a solution. Our sponsor this evening is (*With an Italian flair and slightly romantic.*) "Emorroidi Gold". Doesn't that sound romantic? "Emorroidi Gold." Say it with me. (*Encouraging the audience.*) "Emorroidi Gold". Very good. It already relieves the tension doesn't it? Italian scientists developed a dual action formula to make you feel better inside and out. Their formula includes Witch Hazel, Horse Chestnut, Butcher's Broom, Oat Straw and more. The next time you feel the itch to itch or it hurts too much to sit, don't wait, try "Emorroidi Gold". You'll be glad you did. Back to you, Tony.

TONY

(Clears his throat.)

Thank you, Kierra. And thank you to our sponsor. Our narrator this evening is WDOG's midnight talk show host. You know her, you love her and can't get enough of her. We all know her simply as Ruby. And now, *Storybook Christmas*.

(As we enter the world of Storybook Christmas, an underscore is played underneath this first paragraph.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

RUBY/NARRATOR

(A light highlights RUBY standing DR.)

Once upon a time in a community of good country people there lived a man named Lucas Boone, commonly known as *Mr.* Boone around town. It's very early in the morning on Christmas Eve. It's cold and the economy is less than great. We find Mr. Boone pacing underneath a street lamp on the corner of "Main and Bailey Way". He's waiting for Bobbie Jackson to arrive. Ever impatient, Mr. Boone is not happy. The sun is barely up when Bobbie enters in a hurry with a tripod and video camera. She's about to record Mr. Boone's weekly commercial for his used car dealership. At this moment, Bobbie Jackson serves as his videographer.

BOONE

Jackson! You're late! I should dock you for every minute you're costing me.

BOBBIE

Actually sir, I'm three minutes early.

BOONE

Do you see the sun, Jackson?

BOBBIE

Barely sir.

BOONE

Well then, you're late!

BOBBIE

Yes sir.

(FX: The sound of BOBBIE attempting to quickly set up the camera. Pause. BOONE impatiently.)

BOONE

Bobbie, you 'bout ready?

BOBBIE

Yes sir, just a second.

BOONE

Do you know what a second costs me?

BOBBIE

Not really sir.

BOONE

Not really?! You're my accountant, ain't you?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOBBIE

At the moment sir, I'm your camera-woman and...I...I think we're ready.

BOONE

Camera WOMAN?!

BOBBIE

Yes sir. I am a female.

BOONE

I know you are! (*Beat.*) 'Course, now that I think about it, women don't make as much as a man...maybe I need to...

BOBBIE

Get this commercial recorded?

BOONE

Right you are, Bob-a-roo. It's the holiday season. Time to sell, sell, sell, and profit, profit, profit. Got it?

BOBBIE

Got it.

BOONE

Roll it.

BOBBIE

Rolling.

BOONE

Hey there. Need a used car this Christmas?

IF YOU LIKE NASCAR

BOONE

IF YOU LIKE NASCAR AND DRIVING FAST
TAKE A STEP BACK TO THE PAST
GOT A '96 BLACK Z28
305 HORSE, 6 SPEED V-8

I CAN SEE YOU BURNIN' RUBBER THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF TOWN
ENVY OF EVERY REDNECK AROUND
GIRLS WILL LINE UP FOR A RIDE
DON'T HESITATE COME ON DOWN AND BUY

NEED A CAR THIS WINTER I'M THE ONE TO SEE
NO MONEY DOWN MAKES IT EASY

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE continues
 FINANCE HERE MAKE YOUR PAYMENTS HERE TOO
 YOU GOT BAD CREDIT? I'M A FRIEND TO YOU

BOONE (*spoken*)

Boone and Bailey's Used Car Sales, on the corner of Main & Bailey Way. Merry Christmas! (*Brief pause.*) Did we get it?

BOBBIE

Got it.

BOONE

How was I?

BOBBIE

Slicker than snot on a doorknob, sir.

BOONE

Yes! I felt it, Bobbie. I should be on the Grand Ole Opry rather than here selling used cars. What do you think of my lyrics this week?

BOBBIE

Stronger than bear's breath.

BOONE

I thought so. Past, fast, Z-28, V-8. That's rhyming, Bob-a-roo.

BOBBIE

Nashville is kicking themselves, sir.

*(BOONE is not quite sure how to take that last comment.
 HE clears his throat.)*

BOONE

Well, go do your editing thing and get that commercial down to the TV station pronto. Then get the jingle version down to WDOG. I want it on the air by noon today. Got it?

BOBBIE

Got it.

(FX: BOBBIE begins to pack up the equipment.)

BOONE

Well then, move it move it move it!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOBBIE

Moving sir. Moving.

B.J.

Good morning, everybody! This is B.J. *your* DJ at radio station WKID welcoming our early risers. It's gonna be a chilly one today, folks. High of twenty-five and dipping down to 'bout fifteen tonight. On top of that, we got snow coming our way, so it looks as if a white Christmas is in the forecast. How 'bout that? Get your sleds and ice skates out, kids, and remember to bundle up. And Happy Holidays!

(FX: Jingle bells - bells, not the song - transitions us into the next scene.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 2

RUBY

Later that morning in the heart of downtown we find shoppers, a bell-ringer, and a small group of carolers. They're out and about embracing the holiday spirit. However, there's one lone individual sitting on a bench wrapped in a winter coat, scarf and gloves who seems to be irritated by all the holiday cheer. It is, of course, Lucas Boone.

(Describing the action in a play-by-play fashion.)

Mr. Boone rises, he's crossing to a Bell Ringer. He's getting out his wallet, taking out a couple of dollars to put in the kettle...and he...pulls them back out! *(ALL onstage gasp!)*

My heavens. Can you believe it? Well, to be honest, I can. That poor Bell Ringer is shocked! Mr. Boone appears to be embracing what he considers to be funny as he sits back down on the bench. Fortunately, there are others downtown that are sharing the Christmas spirit.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU

CAROLERS

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS,
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU

MAN 1

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

WOMAN 1

BEST WISHES

MAN 2

HAPPY SOLSTICE TO YOU

BOONE

THEY WALK BYE, DON'T SAY HI
TALK BEHIND MY BACK
THEY SAY

BELL RINGER

HE'S CHEAP, RUDE, AND MEAN

BOONE

WELL I AM, IT'S A FACT
BUT I'M RICH, MORE THAN THEY KNOW
I LOVE THE COLOR GREEN
MONEY PUTS A SMILE ON MY FACE
LIKE THEY'VE NEVER SEEN

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE continues

I HAVE A FRANKLIN BLANKET
 TO KEEP ME WARM AT NIGHT
 MY PILLOW IS STUFFED WITH GENERAL GRANTS
 A THOUSAND FEELS JUST RIGHT

CAROLERS

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS,
 MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU
 MELE KALIKIMAKA, BONNE ANNÉE TO YOU

WOMAN 2

IT'S GOING TO BE A GREAT DAY

WOMAN 3

A WHITE CHRISTMAS WE HEAR

WOMAN 4

SHOPPING DONE, TIME FOR FUN

CHORAL GROUP

AND HOLIDAY CHEER

WOMAN 4

MERRY CHRISTMAS

BOONE

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS CAN'T WIN
 I THINK I'M GOING TO VOMIT IF I HEAR MERRY CHRISTMAS AGAIN

CHORAL GROUP

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS,
 MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU

*(BOONE grabs a bag from WOMAN 4, sticks his head in
 the bag and well... you know.)*

MAN 1 & 2

THE ECONOMY SUCKS AND MY BUCK
 ISN'T WORTH WHAT IT USED TO BE

WOMAN 1, 2, 3, & 4

BUT WE DON'T CARE BECAUSE WE'LL SHARE
 THE DAY WITH FAMILY

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

WOMEN 3 & 4

WE'LL START OFF IN THE KITCHEN

WOMAN 1 & 2

BAKING PUMPKIN PIES

MEN 1 & 2

AND WE'LL END UP WITH OUR BELTS UNDONE,
STUFFED AND ABOUT TO DIE

CHORAL GROUP

JOYEUX NOEL, BO NADA, FELIZ NAVIDAD

BOONE

WHAT?

WOMAN 1 & 2

IT'S GOING TO BE A GREAT DAY

MINISTER

PRAISE TO OUR GOD

CHORAL GROUP

MAY PEACE LOVE AND JOY FILL YOUR HEART TONIGHT
MAY YOU FIND THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT TO BE A GUIDING LIGHT

ALL

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS,
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, EVEN YOU, MR. BOONE*(To BOONE.)*

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

BOONE

AHHHHH!

*(Short musical interlude from "Merry Christmas to You
transitions into Scene 3.)*

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 3

RUBY

Our story continues following the cheapest man in town to Boone and Bailey's Used Car Sales.

(FX: A door with a bell leading into the dealership opens and closes.)

The multi-talented Bobbie Jackson greets him.

BOBBIE

Merry Christmas, Mr. Boone.

BOONE

(Groans loudly and rants to BOBBIE.)

Carolers. I hate 'em. Stores are barely open and everyone is singing *(Singing sarcastically.)* "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas to you." Makes me sick.

BOBBIE

I saw sir.

RUBY

That wonderful bundle of joy exits into his office as two fun-loving ladies enter. Miss Leoma and Miss Lynnette.

BOBBIE

Merry Christmas! And how are the "L and L" girls today?

LEOMA

Did you hear that Lynnette, she called us "girls".

LYNNETTE

I did Leoma. Bobbie, you are a charmer.

LEOMA

And sweet! If you were my sister, I'd gobble you up. Gobble, gobble, gobble.

LYNNETTE

Put a damper on it, Leoma. We're doing just fine, thank you, Bobbie.

LEOMA

(Shivers. To LYNNETTE.)

Is it just me or is it colder in here than it is outside?

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BOBBIE

Mr. Boone does like it on the cool side.

LEOMA

Cool? It's so cold my butt cheeks are stuck together.

LYNNETTE

(LYNNETTE is perhaps a bit embarrassed.)

Leoma, perhaps we should return to the task at hand?

LEOMA

You're right, Lynnette. Go on.

LYNNETTE

(To BOBBIE.)

We were hesitant to intrude...given...

LEOMA & LYNNETTE

(Whispers.)

Mr. Boone's reputation.

LYNNETTE

But, it's the holiday season and as vice-president of the Ladies Auxiliary Club...

LEOMA

I'm secretary!

LYNNETTE

...we are hopeful he may find it within his heart to donate this year to the children's toy drive...

LEOMA

...as so many people are out of work...

LYNNETTE

...and we would hate to see any child go without on Christmas Day.

BOONE

(Boone peaks out of his office.)

That would be a shame, wouldn't it?

LYNNETTE and LEOMA

Yes, it would.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Really? What don't they have? A video game? \$100 tennis shoes? I-phone? I-pad? The popular electronic gadget of the day? When I was a kid, we didn't have every little gizmo under the sun and if we wanted something, we got a job and saved for it.

LEOMA

That's the point, Mr. Boone. Jobs are scarce as you know.

LYNNETTE

It's my understanding that Mr. Jamison, an extremely hard worker at our former factory asked you for a job not long ago, any job, and you said no!

BOONE

(Quite quickly a light bulb goes off in BOONE'S head.)

Well, that's because, uh...I have Bobbie Jackson! Bobbie's my receptionist, secretary, accountant... a...

(Snapping his fingers for BOBBIE to chime in.)

BOBBIE

marketing director...

BOONE

marketing director...

BOBBIE

finance officer...

BOONE

finance officer...

BOBBIE

sales associate...

BOONE

Don't press it.

BOBBIE

Camera...woman and part-time mechanic.

BOONE

See, a very talented and valuable employee.

BOBBIE

Why thank you, Mr. Boone.

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LYNNETTE

What's he paying you, Bobbie?

BOONE

Now wait just a dog-gone...

LEOMA

You hold on! Go right ahead, Bobbie.

BOBBIE

I get a nickel over minimum wage.

LYNNETTE

Well, we think *you* need a raise.

LEOMA

We do.

BOONE

If I wanted your advice, I'd let you know. I'm the one who should be receiving charity. Do you know how many people are behind on their payments? How many cars I'm gonna have to repossess this week?

BOBBIE, LEOMA & LYNNETTE

This week!?

BOBBIE

But sir, it's Christmas...

LEOMA & LYNNETTE

And then New Year's Eve!

BOONE

And then Valentine's Day and Easter. Look you knuckleheads, I have a business to run.

LEOMA

But, people need cars to get to work, to make the money to pay their bills.

BOONE

You just said there ain't no work. So, I guess for them folks, cars aren't really necessary, are they?

BOBBIE

But, sir, "putting others before ourselves"?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bobbie. I am thinking of them. If we repossess the cars of folks that can't afford them, then those folks don't have the burden, the incredible pressure of being behind on their payments. And with the money they are saving, they can buy their kids those precious gadgets these young folks crave today. So, in reality Bob-a-roo, we're doing them a favor.

BOBBIE

But sir...

BOONE

But nothing! I want a list by the end of the day.

BOBBIE

Yes, Mr. Boone.

BOONE

Did I live up to my reputation...girls?

LYNNETTE

Why, I never!

LEOMA

Well, we know who's on the naughty list this year don't we, Lynnette?

LYNNETTE

Yes, we do, sister. Looks like Santa and Rudolph can just bypass this place.

BOONE

Santa and Rudolph. HA! Y'all are so gullible. I never did understand that whole Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer thing. I mean seriously, a red nose lights up the sky helping Santa get to where he needs to get? I mean there's nothing to light up. He's in the sky! It's night and very dark up there! When you're driving a car - from Boone & Bailey's Used Car Sales - headlights light up the road, street signs, trees, roadkill. Up in the sky there's nothing around you. What's to light up? The fog? Then you can't see anyway.

LEOMA

(To BOONE.)

You see this purse?

BOONE

Yeah.

LEOMA

Do you know what else it is?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

(Sarcastically.)

What?

LEOMA

A weapon!

RUBY

(As in a horse race.)

And they're off!

*(Commotion from BOBBIE, BOONE, LEOMA and
LYNNETTE.)*

It's pandemonium, folks! Miss Leoma is after him, chasing him around the desk, into his office...and back out. WHOA! She almost got him with her purse, it's a big one...and here they come...

LYNNETTE

Get him Leoma!

LEOMA

I got him. You no good, selfish, tight-fisted, son-of-...

BOBBIE

Ladies! Ladies! It's all right. Don't mind him. He's...unique and...and needs our holiday well-wishes.

LYNNETTE

*(Stopping and recovering her breath and sense of
decorum.)*

Bobbie, you are a saint.

LEOMA

You are.

BOONE

Bobbie, I want that list – pronto!

(HE scowls and quickly exits.)

RUBY

And with that, Mr. Boone exits into his office.

LEOMA

I wonder who put sandpaper on his toilet seat this morning?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

LYNNETTE

I think I'm going to faint.

LEOMA

Here, Lynnette...

RUBY

Miss Leoma reaches into her purse and pulls out a flask.

LEOMA

This might help.

LYNNETTE

Why thank you, Leoma. I think it might.

(LYNNETTE takes a swig.)

LEOMA

Bye, Bobbie.

BOBBIE

Ladies, wait...

RUBY

Bobbie is reaching into her purse and giving Miss Leona a \$5 bill.

BOBBIE

...it's not much, but times are tight.

LEOMA

Bless you, Bobbie. You're such a generous soul. Merry Christmas.

LYNNETTE and LEOMA

Merry Christmas. Bye.

(FX: The door to the dealership opens and closes and LYNNETTE takes another swig from the flask. To LEOMA and perhaps in a raspy voice – given what was in the flask.)

LYNNETTE

That was good.

RUBY

Mr. Boone peaks into the room to make sure the L & L Girls are gone.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Bobbie, did you turn the thermostat up?

BOBBIE

Of course not, sir.

BOONE

Well, turn it down a bit. It's hotter than a billy goat with a blow torch. Now, get back to work!

BOBBIE

Uh...Mr. Boone, I was wondering if I might be able to leave a bit early today?

BOONE

(BOONE is astounded BOBBIE would ask such a question.)

What?

BOBBIE

Considering it's Christmas Eve.

BOONE

Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bobbie...you're killing me. Yes, it's Christmas Eve, and I get that you'd like to be home with your family. But some of us...Bobette, some of us put others before ourselves.

IT'S UP TO US AT CHRISTMAS

BOONE

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR WHEN FAMILIES
 GO TO CHURCH AND SING IN A CHOIR
 LATER ON THEY GATHER AT GRANDMA'S
 AND SING CAROLS BY THE FIRE
 THEY EAT TATERS, TURKEY, ALL KINDS OF STUFF
 AND TELL STORIES AGAIN AND AGAIN

I FEEL DEEPLY THAT IT'S OUR DUTY
 TO BE THERE FOR THEM

(Spoken) Yes, I do.

IT'S UP TO US AT CHRISTMAS
 TO GET FOLKS WHERE THEY NEED TO BE

WE'RE 'BOUT BRINGING THEM TOGETHER
 UNDER A CHRISTMAS TREE

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE continues

WE MAKE THE DEALS OF A LIFETIME
DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD POSTPONE?
THE CHANCE TO BUY THE CAR OF THEIR DREAMS
AT A TWENTY-THREE POINT NINE PERCENT LOAN

THINK WHAT A MAN WOULDN'T GIVE
TO LOOK OUT IN THE SNOW
AND SEE A TWO-TON FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE PICK-UP
WRAPPED IN A BRIGHT RED BOW

TEARS WOULD STREAM DOWN HIS CHEEKS
HE'D THANK US FOR BEING HERE
HE'LL LOVE US MORE WHEN WE THROW IN
A FREE CASE OF BEER

(Spoken.) They'll love us!

IT'S UP TO US AT CHRISTMAS
TO GET FOLKS WHERE THEY NEED TO BE
WE'RE 'BOUT BRINGING THEM TOGETHER
UNDER A CHRISTMAS TREE
WE MAKE THE DEALS OF A LIFETIME
WE'RE THE DEALER WITH A HEART
WE LOVE TO HEAR THE KIDDIES CHEER
WHEN THEIR NEW CAR STARTS

PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES
OR BETTER, PUT YOURSELF IN THEIRS
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER BUY A CAR
FROM A DEALERSHIP THAT CARES?

THE ECONOMY'S DOWN, UNEMPLOYMENT'S UP
SO, I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY
THAT BOONE AND BAILEY'S USED CARS
CAN MAKE A CHRISTMAS DAY

(Spoken.) Help me out, Bob-a-roo!

BOONE and BOBBIE

IT'S UP TO US AT CHRISTMAS
TO GET FOLKS WHERE THEY NEED TO BE
WE'RE 'BOUT BRINGING THEM TOGETHER
UNDER A CHRISTMAS TREE
WITH NO MONEY DOWN OR BACKGROUND CHECK
THEY'LL DRIVE AWAY WITH A SMILE

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE
WITH A SHINY SOMEWHAT RELIABLE CAR
AT LEAST FOR AWHILE

BOONE

Do you still want to go home early today, Jackson?

BOBBIE

Well, since you put it that way. I guess not.

BOONE

That's the Christmas spirit! Now, let's work on accentuating the "M" in Christmas.

RUBY

And *(Snaps her fingers.)* just like that the work at Boone and Bailey's Used Car Sales returns to...well, normal. Let's see what's going on down at WKID.

B.J.

Howdy do, folks. This is B.J. your DJ on WKID. Well, the snow is beginning to fall lightly as I look out the station window and the new forecast calls for a dip down to minus ten tonight. So, get that fireplace going and bundle up. And remember, go slow and light on the brakes this afternoon. It could get slippery.

After the top-of-the-hour news we'll return with the all-time top one-hundred holiday classics. But first, a word from our sponsor, Boone and Bailey's Used Car Sales.

(BOONE'S recorded jingle from Scene 1 transitions us into Scene 4.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 4

(FX: We hear a tick-tock, tick-tock of a clock noting the passage of time.)

RUBY

It's been a long day for Bobbie Jackson. Let's see how she's doing.

BOBBIE

Mr. Boone, I have that list of repossessions for you.

BOONE

Give it here.

(BOBBIE hands him the list.)

Bobbie! *(BOONE notices a small table-top Christmas tree on a table in the office.)* What is THAT?!!

BOBBIE

It's a...a Christmas tree, Mr. Boone. Just a small one. Table-top.

BOONE

I can see that. What's it doing here?

BOBBIE

Well sir, it's Christmas Eve and it might brighten the mood...a bit...around here...sir.

BOONE

Are you saying we're not having a good time? That I'm a grouch, a grumbler, a Grinch?

BOBBIE

I wouldn't say that, sir. My kids thought it might be nice.

BOONE

Your kids thought it might be nice? That's so sweet. How many kids do you have, Bob-a-roo?

BOBBIE

Six.

BOONE

Six?!!!! I must not be working you hard enough.

BOBBIE

Yes sir. Would you like to add a decoration to the tree?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

NO!!

BOONE

BOBBIE

Right.

(BOBBIE rises from her chair and steps to a coat rack and begins to put on her coat and hat.)

BOONE

Where do you think you're going?

BOBBIE

Uh...home? It's almost five-o'clock.

BOONE

(Looks at his watch.)

Almost, but not quite. Right?

BOBBIE

Right again sir.

(BOBBIE puts her coat and hat back on the coat rack.)

BOONE

Oh, go ahead. It's the holiday season. Never let it be said I'm not charitable.

BOBBIE

Never sir. I mean, thank you sir.

BOONE

Bob-a-rino? You're on this list.

(BOONE holds out his hands for the keys to BOBBIE'S car.)

BOBBIE

Yes sir, but maybe I can catch up with our traditional...*(Hinting.)* Christmas bonus...

BOONE

Hmmm...I'm not sure I can afford it this year. The heating bill is gonna be flat out insane considering how warm you keep the place.

BOBBIE

Sir, payday is just around the corner...we're only a few days away.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bobbie. I can't believe that you haven't learned the importance of meeting your obligations on time. Even if you pay me on payday, you're still two months behind on your car payment, unless you plan on making three payments by next week? (*Of course, BOBBIE can't.*) I see. I'm...I'm very disappointed.

BOBBIE

But sir, it's my youngest son, Timmy. He's been sick and I've...I've had some unexpected medical bills.

BOONE

(*Looking around.*)

Have you seen my fiddle, Bobbie?

BOBBIE

Sir?

RUBY

I can't believe it. Mr. Boone is sarcastically miming playing a fiddle with a sad look on his face. I swear, I could just...

BOONE

Good night, Bob-a-loo. But, before you go, I need your keys.

BOBBIE

Sir, I live three miles outside of town...it's winter!

BOONE

Call your husband. Tell him to come get ya?

BOBBIE

I can't. He's on a truck run and stuck a few hours west in a storm that's heading this way.

BOONE

Hmmm...well, Bob-a-loo-ee, you're always telling me how cold it is in this here office. Heck, it's in the twenties out there. You're used to it! You're young! Think of the great shape you're gonna be in.

BOBBIE

Actually sir, the temperature is dropping. It gets real cold when the sun goes down.

(*BOONE could care less.*)

Right. Sir, for you.

(*SHE gives BOONE a pie.*)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

What's this?

BOBBIE

It's a pecan pie. I made it for you. Merry Christmas, Mr. Boone.

BOONE

Pecan huh?

(HE takes the pie. Smells it. Looks at BOBBIE.)

I prefer crème pies.

BOBBIE

I'll make a note of it sir.

(BOBBIE begins to exit.)

BOONE

Bobbie...

BOBBIE

(Stops and turns.)

Yes sir?

BOONE

...here.

RUBY

Mr. Boone just handed Bobbie his scarf. Who says he doesn't have a heart?

BOBBIE

Thank you, sir.

(SHE exits. FX: Sound of the door to the office opening and closing.)

BOONE

*(Calling after BOBBIE.)*Enjoy your day off. Some of us have to work on Christmas Day! *(Beat.)* Hey Bobbie, I have a decoration for the tree! *(Laughs.)*

RUBY

And with that, Lucas Boone places Bobbie's car keys on her table top Christmas tree as a decoration.

(FX: The wind begins to blow.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 5

RUBY

On this clear, cold Christmas Eve evening, Bobbie Jackson heads out. As the wind blows, Bobbie makes her way on foot - heading home.

BOBBIE

(Sarcastically.)

“I prefer crème pies. Some of us have to work on Christmas Day.” He just blinds me with his sunshine.

(Church bells ring.)

THE JOY CHRISTMAS BRINGS

BOBBIE

(She smiles and embraces the goodness in her heart and sings.)

HEAR THOSE CHURCH BELLS
RING OUT IN THE WINTER WIND
SMELL THE PUMPKIN PIE
SITTIN' BY THE WINDOW COOLIN'

SEE THAT CHRISTMAS TREE
STANDIN' IN THAT FIELD OF WHITE
WAITIN' TO BE DRESSED UP
ADMIRER ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

IN THE DISTANCE THERE ARE SLEIGH BELLS
SPECIALS AT THE GENERAL STORE
AND MISTLETOE ARE HUNG
IN THE FRAME OF EVERY DOOR
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TOWN SQUARE
RED NOSE FOLKS SING
SONGS ABOUT BETHLEHEM
AND THE JOY CHRISTMAS BRINGS

FAMILIES WILL GATHER
BOW THEIR HEADS AND PRAY
SHARE A CHRISTMAS MEAL
RECALL THE GOOD OLD DAYS

DAD WILL TELL THE STORY
OF HOW CHRISTMAS CAME TO BE
OF A BABY IN A MANGER
BORN FOR YOU AND ME

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOBBIE continues

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TOWN SQUARE
RED NOSE FOLKS SING
SONGS ABOUT BETHLEHEM
AND THE JOY CHRISTMAS BRINGS
AND EVERYONE WILL SMILE
CAUSE THEY'RE HAVING SO MUCH FUN
CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AND
THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD'S SON
YES, WE'RE CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS
AND THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD'S SON

(FX: The wind begins to increase as BOBBIE heads off into the night.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 6

RUBY

Later that evening, we find Mr. Boone at home. Let's see...there's a single bed, a nightstand, a small electric fireplace and a chair. Ever the bachelor, his clothes are thrown over the chair. An acoustic guitar sits in the corner. A WSM Grand Ole Opry sign hangs on the wall. Looks like an antique. Also, on the wall is a high school photo of a young Lucas Boone and Mary. Looking closer there seems to be an "X" crossing out a teenaged Jake Bailey in the photo. Hmm. On this cold winter night, moonlight shines through the window and it dimly lights the room. Lucas seems restless. He's groaning and tossing and turning. I believe he's having a well-deserved nightmare.

BOONE

No, no, no! Wait! What about me? We're great . . . as a team!

YOUNG CARTER

(An other-worldly voice – perhaps with a bit of reverb.)

Bailey's the one that can sing Boone, not you. He's got looks, charisma and good-looking hair. And he writes from the heart. I'm gonna make *him* a star.

BOONE

Noooooooooooooooooo!

RUBY

Lucas Boone awakens. He's sitting up and breathing mighty hard. What's that in the shadows? Wait, it isn't? Yes, it is. *(Whispering.)* It's Jake Bailey. But, how can this be? He's been dead a while, and I must say he looks it. There are chains weaving up his body and around his shoulders including one with a tow hook *(Perhaps we hear them.)*. He's also carrying a large cloth sack. Interesting.

BAILEY

That's quite a howl, Luke.

BOONE

What? Who is that?

RUBY

Mr. Boone grabs his lamp from the night stand to defend himself if need be. He turns it on, gets out of bed, lamp in hand.

BAILEY

(Laughing.)

What are you wearing!?

BOONE

My pajamas!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BAILEY

Looks like a nightgown to me.

BOONE

I like to be...free.

BAILEY

You been living alone way too long.

BOONE

Who are you?

BAILEY

Don't you recognize me, Luke?

BOONE

No. I'm gonna call...

RUBY

Mr. Boone puts the lamp down and reaches for the phone. And yes, it's a land-line phone. It does, of course, save money.

BAILEY

It don't work, Luke. You can't call for help.

BOONE

Wait a minute, only one person ever called me Luke.

BAILEY

That's right. It's me. Jake, Jake Bailey.

BOONE

Oh, I get it. (*Laughs.*) Bobbie Jackson put you up to this didn't she? For repossessing her car.

BAILEY

You did what?

BOONE

(*Looking closer at JAKE.*)

Ya do look a bit like Jake, though a bit pale.

BAILEY

I am Jake.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

(Getting serious and irritated.)

All right, enough joking around. Jake died years ago.

BAILEY

Don't you think I'd know that? Look, I like you friend...

BOONE

If you are Jake, you're not my friend. He was nothing but a no good, back-stabbing...

BAILEY

Let's not get into that.

BOONE

Why not? Can't admit it?

BAILEY

You know, I'm beginning to think the need for a fifth finger was created because of you.

BOONE

I should've taken your name off the dealership sign when you died. But no, I'm a loyal man.

BAILEY

You're mean, stingy, and lonely is what you are.

BOONE

But I'm rich!

BAILEY

You're rich off of other folk's misery.

(BOONE doesn't have a comeback. Beat.)

Man, I loved you like a brother.

BOONE

Well, the feeling's not mutual.

BAILEY

That don't surprise me.

BOONE

What do you want?

BAILEY

I'm here to let you know that tonight you're gonna have three visitors.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Visitors? Well, VIS-I-TORS ain't welcome at my house. Ever!

BAILEY

You don't have a house. It's a trailer!

BOONE

It's a Fleetwood double-wide!! Beacon Hill Series!

BAILEY

You always did need to have the biggest and the best, didn't you?

BOONE

Dang tootin'.

BAILEY

Good. Because this Christmas you're getting the best visitors I could muster up.

BOONE

I don't celebrate Christmas, so tell your *friends* they ain't welcome.

BAILEY

I'm not asking, Luke. They *will* be here.

RUBY

Look at this. Mr. Boone is crawling back into bed. Thinks he can just ignore the situation.

BOONE

It's OK, I know I'm sleeping. This is all just a bad nightmare and a horrible case of indigestion. I gotta quit eating them burritos.

BAILEY

(With a bit of reverb.)

I'll be your worst nightmare if you don't listen up!

BOONE

(Turning and sitting up. To BAILEY.)

Well excuse me! Who exactly are these vis-i-tors?

BAILEY

They are the Ghosts of Christmas Nit-Wits, Christmas Regrets and Christmas Guilt.

BOONE

Ghosts? Are you serious?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BAILEY

Well, I could call 'em spirits or specters or phantoms, 'cause they're dead, deader than disco, so ghost seems appropriate.

BOONE

Whatever...ain't I heard this story before?

BAILEY

Yep, just not quite like this.

BOONE

You got that right.

BAILEY

Look, Luke, this is your last chance to make right all the wrongs you done in life. And you best get it right this time.

BOONE

Now wait a minute...

BAILEY

This ain't a debate!! Your journey begins tonight!

BOONE

Tonight? When?

BAILEY

Soon.

(BAILEY begins to exit.)

BOONE

Wait. What are you carrying there? And what's with the tow chain?

(BAILEY turns to BOONE.)

BAILEY

Well, I have some chocolate pudding, a deck of cards, something to wet my whistle, a cassette deck . . . *(Leaning toward BOONE.)* and YOU.

BOONE

Me!?

BAILEY

Yep. You're the burden I carried in life...and carry 'round with me now. I never should of gone solo. I know that. That's why I'm here to tell you that if you don't have an

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BAILEY continues

attitude adjustment soon, I'll be repossessing YOU! And as much as I love you, I'm getting real tired...

RUBY

And just as quietly as he appeared, Jake Bailey disappears into the night.

BOONE

Good riddance. Don't come back! I'm gettin' too old for this.

RUBY

Meanwhile, Lucas Boone turns off his nightstand lamp, lays down and turns over and over and over attempting to go to sleep. Finally, he does. (*HE snores.*) And then...

(*FX: The loud chime of Grandfather's clock.*)

Mr. Boone wakes up and grabs his tiny night stand clock. He looks at it. Shakes it. It's a lot of sound for a tiny clock. He gets up. Looks around, doesn't see anything. Lays back down. Gets comfortable. Then...out of nowhere, his first visitor appears. He leans over, almost touching Boone's face and...

CARTER

BOO!

BOONE

(*Screams.*)

AHHH!

(*CARTER laughs.*)

RUBY

The Ghost of Christmas Nit-Wits has arrived. He is Carter Smith and was once a country music star of the Grand Ole Opry. He crosses to Boone wearing an old rhinestone suit, some fancy dancey boots and a cowboy hat.

CARTER

Howdy, boy!

BOONE

You're ghost number one!! "The Ghost of Christmas Nit-Wits"?

CARTER

Look at you. Smarter than a beagle lickin' dirt. Well, you can relax. I ain't hauntin'! I just had to come visit you – the nit-wit.

BOONE

I'll ignore the insult. (*Beat.*) Jake said I would recognize you. You are...?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

CARTER

You don't recognize me? This outfit don't ring a bell? I was hosting the Opry when you auditioned.

BOONE

Carter? Carter Smith? Now I remember. I always liked your music, although your judgment of people was questionable.

CARTER

Got me there, was married four times.

BOONE

What do you want with me?

CARTER

Lucas Boone, we're all in charge of our own destiny. Now, you're gettin' a shot at changin' the direction you're headin', which just might be... (FX: *Slide whistle – indicating "south"*.) And you better take advantage of this opportunity. But right now, it's time for us to travel...back in time.

BOONE

And how are we supposed to do that?

CARTER

Why, I brought my tour bus. Let's go.

(FX: *Tour bus horn sounds– toot, toot.*)

BOONE

I'm going back to sleep.

RUBY

Stupidly stubborn, Mr. Boone gets back in bed, turns off his night stand light and pulls the sheet over his head. He feels a very cold breeze. He opens his eyes and finds himself without his blanket and sees Carter leaning over him.

BOONE

(*Scared yet attempting to be brave.*)

Let me be!

CARTER

It's time to go! Now!

RUBY

Boone slowly rises. Terrified, he and the deceased Grand Ole Opry star of the past disappear into the darkness as the tour bus departs.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(FX: Tour bus departing.)

B.J.

Howdy folks. B.J. your DJ here. I've been working on the intellectual side of life recently. I've been reading a book. *(Beat.)* If you just fell off your chair, dust yourself off and get back up. Now, I've been reading Willie Nelson's *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die* and I highly recommend it. Now of the jokes I can tell, I thought some of our listeners might be able to relate to this one. "A man came out of an antique store carrying a large grandfather clock. He bumped into a drunk and busted the grandfather clock into a thousand pieces. The guy said, 'Why don't you watch where you're going?' The drunk said, 'Why don't you wear a wristwatch like everyone else.'" *(Chuckles.)* You got to love that Willie.

(Musical transition into the next scene.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT I / SCENE 7

RUBY

Carter Smith and Lucas Boone have traveled back in time. They come across two teenage boys ice fishing on a small lake.

BOONE

I remember this place. We did more talking than fishing though.

YOUNG JAKE

Man, I can't believe it's been cold enough for this lake to freeze. We never get to do this.

YOUNG LUCAS

Yea, I'm thrilled. (*HE'S the perpetual complainer.*) Dang ice will probably melt, I'll fall through...

YOUNG JAKE

Oh, quit your complaining. It's a beautiful day outside. Blue sky, sun's shining and if we're lucky, we'll get a bite...

YOUNG LUCAS

...then we got to clean the fish, cook the fish, eat the fish, and hope you don't get a bone stuck in your throat.

YOUNG JAKE

Give it a rest, Luke.

(*Beat.*)

YOUNG LUCAS

Jake, what do you want to be when you grow up?

YOUNG JAKE

I don't ever want to grow up. I want to be like Peter Pan.

YOUNG LUCAS

You're nuts.

YOUNG JAKE

How 'bout you, Luke?

YOUNG LUCAS

I want to be on the Grand Ole Opry.

YOUNG JAKE

Seriously?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG LUCAS

Yep. I want to be up there with all the great ones.

YOUNG JAKE

I think I'd be fine just fishing, playing ball, and picking my guitar once-in-a-while.

YOUNG LUCAS

(Sarcastically.)

You dream big, Jake. *(Beat)* Don't you ever think about traveling the world? Havin' things? Man, I want a big house, red Corvette convertible, and a touring bus – maybe one with a cool mural on the side. And I...want to walk the beaches of California with lots of gals clawing at me.

YOUNG JAKE

Shoot, everything I need is right here.

YOUNG MARY

(Entering.)

What are you two wild and crazy boys up too?

YOUNG LUCAS

Hey there, Mary. We're just fishing.

YOUNG JAKE

And wishing.

YOUNG MARY

For what?

YOUNG LUCAS

Leavin'. Singin' on the Opry. Checkin' out California. Comin' back to visit after I've made the big time and drivin' a sweet looking machine...

YOUNG JAKE

With a hot lookin' mama by his side – a blonde.

YOUNG MARY

Bleached, no doubt. *(Beat.)* You can't leave. We're a team. We've all been together since first grade.

YOUNG LUCAS

Sometimes you just have to move on. I mean, we ain't kids no more.

YOUNG MARY

Right. *(Somewhat sarcastically.)* High school graduation is in a few months...we're almost over the hill. *(Beat.)* You know, the grass ain't always greener out there.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG LUCAS

I know. Might be a bit warmer though.

BETTER DEAL

YOUNG LUCAS

I COULD STAND AN INCREASE IN THE TEMPERATURE
WALKIN' ALONG A BEACH
BEING BLINDED BY SUN-BATHED BEAUTIES
ALL WITHIN MY REACH

YOUNG MARY

BUT THEY'D NEVER GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY
GIVEN THE WAY YOU WALK
YOU'RE JUST A TRUCK-DRIVING COUNTRIFIED DAYDREAMING BOY
WITH A UNIQUE BOW-LEGGED WALK

YOUNG MARY & YOUNG JAKE

GIVE IT A REST, YOU GOT THE BEST
RIGHT HERE WHERE YOU STAND
WE THREE ARE AS TIGHT AS THE HARMONIES
IN A BLUEGRASS BAND

YOUNG JAKE

THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN WEALTH AND FAME
AND A GIRL AROUND EACH ARM

YOUNG MARY

IF YOU'RE GOING SHOPPING THERE'S A BETTER DEAL
RIGHT HERE ON THE FARM

YOUNG JAKE

(Spoken.)

Now, wait a minute...

YOUNG LUCAS

ARE YOU SAYING A MAN CAN'T DREAM?

YOUNG MARY

I'M SAYING, "TAKE A LOOK AROUND."

YOUNG LUCAS

I HAVE AND I KNOW IF I STAY HERE
I'LL NEVER LIVE IT DOWN
I'VE GOT TO SPREAD MY WINGS
COME WITH ME, GIVE IT A TRY

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG LUCAS continues

I'VE GOT MY BABY-BLUES ON THE TARGET
 READY TO HIT THE BULL'S EYE

YOUNG MARY & YOUNG JAKE

GIVE IT A REST, YOU GOT THE BEST,
 RIGHT HERE WHERE YOU STAND
 WE THREE ARE AS TIGHT AS THE HARMONIES
 IN A BLUEGRASS BAND

YOUNG JAKE

THERE MORE TO LIFE THAN WEALTH AND FAME
 AND A GIRL AROUND EACH ARM

YOUNG MARY

IF YOU'RE GOING SHOPPING THERE'S A BETTER DEAL
 RIGHT HERE ON THE FARM

YOUNG LUCAS

Is that right?

YOUNG MARY & YOUNG JAKE

Yep!

YOUNG LUCAS

(He thinks about it for a bit.)

OK

YOUNG LUCAS

I'LL GIVE IT A REST

YOUNG MARY & YOUNG JAKE

YOU'RE THE BEST

YOUNG LUCAS, MARY & JAKE

TOGETHER WE'LL MAKE A STAND
 WE THREE ARE AS TIGHT AS THE HARMONIES
 IN A BLUEGRASS BAND
 THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN WEALTH AND FAME
 WE'LL STAY DOWN ON THE FARM

YOUNG MARY

FOR ME I CAN'T FIND A BETTER DEAL
 THAN A COUNTRY BOY ON EACH ARM

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG LUCAS & JAKE

It's true!

YOUNG LUCAS & JAKE

SHE WON'T FIND A BETTER DEAL
THAN A COUNTRY BOY ON EACH ARM!

(YOUNG LUCAS, JAKE and MARY laugh.)

YOUNG MARY

Well, what do you boys want to do tonight?

YOUNG JAKE

Let's go bowling.

YOUNG LUCAS

I can't. I have to work.

YOUNG MARY

You're always working. Can't you switch with someone?

YOUNG LUCAS

I volunteered for double-shifts. Makin' lots of money.

YOUNG MARY

Money, that's all you ever think about. *(Looks to JAKE.)* Well, Jake, I suppose that leaves us.

YOUNG JAKE

Guess so. Loser pays.

YOUNG MARY

(To LUCAS.)

You better loan him some of that money you're making.

YOUNG LUCAS

Sure, with interest of course.

YOUNG JAKE

Loan shark.

YOUNG LUCAS

No talent.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG JAKE

(With his best DeNiro impression.)

“You talkin’ to me?”

YOUNG LUCAS

(Doing his best John Wayne impression.)

Ya’ darn tootin’ I am, buck-a-roo!

YOUNG MARY

You boys are crazy.

YOUNG LUCAS

Come on. I got to get to work.

(YOUNG LUCAS, JAKE & MARY exit.)

BOONE

I remember that day. We were great friends.

CARTER

Sure did look like it.

(BOONE looks off-stage.)

BOONE

I’d prefer if we didn’t watch.

CARTER

Why’s that?

BOONE

Snowball fight. I lose.

YOUNG LUCAS

(Off-stage.)

Ouch!

(BOONE and CARTER cringe. FX: Tour bus horn sounds.)

CARTER

Time to go anyhow.

BOONE

Home?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

CARTER

Not a chance.

B.J.

Howdy do, folks. Got another one from Mr. Nelson. “A drunk fell out of a second-floor window. A guy came running over and asked, ‘What happened?’ The drunk said, ‘I don’t know, I just got here.’” (*B.J. laughs*). This is B.J. your fun-loving D.J. at WKID.

(Musical transition into the next scene.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 8

RUBY

The Tour Bus has dropped Carter Smith and Mr. Boone at the corner of Broadway and 5th Avenue in Nashville right outside Tootsie's Orchid Lounge.

CARTER

Don't worry, I don't drink – before five o'clock. We're headin' to the Ryman Auditorium.

RUBY

A half-block up 5th Avenue and there it is, the Ryman - in all of its back-in-the-day historical charm. Inside they observe themselves - a young Jake Bailey and Lucas Boone standing down center on the legendary stage getting ready to audition for Carter Smith, back in his prime and dressed to the nines. I'm beginning to think Porter Wagoner might have stolen a fashion idea or two from Carter. The boys are looking out at the Opry in awe!

YOUNGER CARTER

This is it boys, where dreams come true and stars are made. The Ryman Auditorium! Home of the Grand Ole Opry! Only the best make it here. Eddy Arnold, George Jones, Patsy Cline, Minnie Pearl and of course, yours truly – Carter Smith.

JAKE & LUCAS

Yes sir.

YOUNGER CARTER

Well, let's hear what you got?

JAKE & LUCAS

Yes sir.

THIS TOWN

JAKE

SUNSHINE GRACES OUR TOWN MOST SUMMER DAYS
WALK DOWN THE STREET YOU'LL BE GREETED WITH A SMILE
WE'RE FAR ENOUGH OFF THE BEATEN PATH TO BE SMALL
CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE CITY TO BE IN STYLE

THE MUNICIPAL BAND PLAYS IN THE PARK EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT
OLD AND YOUNG SIT BENEATH THE STARS
WE SING ALONG AND KNOW THAT THE GOOD OLE DAYS
ARE IN THE HERE AND NOW AND WHERE WE ARE

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

JAKE & LUCAS

IF IT AIN'T HEAVEN, IT'S PRETTY CLOSE
 YOU'RE WELCOME TO VISIT AND STAY A WHILE
 WE LIVE LIFE WITHOUT REGRETS, WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET
 AND WHAT YOU GET CAN ONLY BE FOUND
 RIGHT HERE IN THIS TOWN

JAKE

FAMILY IS A WORD CLOSE TO OUR HEART
 THOUGH PERFECT WE DON'T CLAIM TO BE
 WE DO THE BEST WE CAN WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH
 AND OFFER TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

WE LIKE TO LAUGH AND PLAY TRICKS ON OUR FRIENDS
 WE GO TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY RELIGIOUSLY
 WE STILL HAVE A DINER AND A DOLLAR MATINEE
 WE LIKE LIFE THE WAY IT USE TO BE

JAKE & LUCAS

IF IT AIN'T HEAVEN, IT'S PRETTY CLOSE
 YOU'RE WELCOME TO VISIT AND STAY A WHILE
 WE LIVE LIFE WITHOUT REGRETS, WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET
 AND WHAT YOU GET CAN ONLY BE FOUND
 RIGHT HERE IN THIS TOWN

YOUNGER CARTER

Who wrote that song?

JAKE

Uh, I did sir.

YOUNGER CARTER

Well, I'll tell you son. I didn't hear nothing 'bout trucks or drinkin' and nothin' 'bout cheatin'...

(JAKE and LUCAS look at each other . . . worried.)

...but...it's a dang fine song. Reminds me of my younger days and my home town. (To LUCAS.) And what's your specialty son?

LUCAS

Well, I sing harmony...and I play a mean kazoo!

(HE grabs a kazoo from his pocket and begins to play, but JAKE gently stops him.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

JAKE

Sir, we're a team.

LUCAS

I also write...and do comedy. I got a great one: "She Dumped Me and I Feel Like Trash."

YOUNGER CARTER

(Not really interested.)

That's OK.

JAKE

(Persistent.)

How 'bout, "It's Tough to Think of Me as Macho, When I Got Dishpan Hands"?

YOUNGER CARTER

We already got a Ray Stevens, boy, and I got a tight schedule. *(Stepping to LUCAS.)*
Now, it takes a bit of a track record to play the Opry...*(The boys are disappointed.)*but, it takes an *idiot* not to recognize talent! And Jake, I'm no idiot. The song's got possibilities, you sing well enough, and the girls will like you. I'm gonna make you a star, boy.

RUBY

And before you know it, Carter Smith wraps his arm around Jake's shoulder and begins to walk off.

JAKE

But, what about my friend?

YOUNGER CARTER

Stars have to have roadies, son. Make him a roadie!

LUCAS

(Calling after JAKE and CARTER.)

I heard that! Ain't gonna be no roadie! I drove us up here, Jake! Well...you can walk home!

RUBY

Let me tell you folks, there is mad and there is mad and Lucas is beyond mad. *(Beat.)*
Wait, what's he doing? He can't do that. He's taking the WSM Grand Ole Opry sign.
Holy Moly!

RYMAN AUDITORIUM EMPLOYEE

Hey, boy, get back here. Bring that back!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

CARTER

You stole the WSM sign?!

BOONE

Yeah.

CARTER

(Shakes his head.)

Whoa, you are a nit-wit.

BOONE

It's in my trailer. Been feeling guilty for years.

CARTER

Hmmm, I guess being left out didn't sit too well with you, did it?

BOONE

Dang right it didn't. I wasn't gonna be no roadie! I should've been there right beside him. I could write songs, you know. Still do.

CARTER

(Perhaps not impressed.)

Yeah, I've heard your jingles.

BOONE

Jake had a number one hit. The town named a road after him...

CARTER

And then what?

BOONE

He gave it all up! Moved back here.

CARTER

Why'd he do that?

BOONE

Because he was crazy! He had it all right there in front of him. *(Beat.)* How could he turn his back on all that?

CARTER

You could have told him to go back to Nashville...keep writin' and singin'. He would've played the Opry, maybe become a member.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

I know! *(Beat.)* But, I was mad...and jealous. If I couldn't have it, then why should he? At first, I was thrilled when he gave up on his music and went into business with me, but then... *(Pause.)*

CARTER

What?

BOONE

Never mind. He had a big heart, though. Too big, I guess. Died before his time. He's a guitar picking angel now.

CARTER

Hmmm. Guitar picking angel? Not a bad title.

(FX: Tour bus horn sound – toot, toot.)

Well, I got to run son. My best to you.

BOONE

Wait...wait. Get back here!

(Musical transition into the next scene.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 9

RUBY

Well, that was an interesting first visitor visit. Lucas Boone is back in bed now and tossing and turning once again. Was it all just a dream?

BOONE

Wait, don't go!

RUBY

He wakes in a sweat! Looks around and shakes his head.

BOONE

I'm working way too hard.

MILLIE

You don't know what hard work is.

RUBY

Visitor #2 has arrived. "The Ghost of Christmas Regrets". Her name is Millie. She's a former mechanic at Boone and Bailey's Used Car Sales. She's dressed in oily, grey denim bib overalls with tools hanging and clanging from her well-filled tool belt. It's my understanding she has no problem telling it like it is.

BOONE

Millie...is that you?

MILLIE

Yep, it's me.

BOONE

You could use some makeup.

MILLIE

(Reaching for a wrench.)

This wrench and your head. Say it again. Come on...

BOONE

I was just joking. You're a bit . . . pale.

MILLIE

You best be careful, nit-wit.

BOONE

You're my second...visitor?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

MILLIE

I am. (*Scary, in a humorous way.*) “The Ghost of Christmas Regrets.”

BOONE

What do you want?

MILLIE

The question is...what do you *regret* in life?

BOONE

I don't regret nothin'.

MILLIE

Let me ask it another way. What do you *need* in life?

BOONE

Need? I don't need anything. But, I'd love to be left alone.

MILLIE

Seems like you got that. Now, since you'd *love* to be left alone, I gotta ask...have you ever really loved Mr. Boone?

BOONE

Getting a tad personal, ain't you Millie?

MILLIE

It's not like you can fire me.

BOONE

Well, it's none of your business.

MILLIE

I beg to differ.

BOONE

If you must know, I have loved and I do love. I love money!

MILLIE

(*In tribute to Gomer Pyle.*)

Surprise, surprise, surprise!

BOONE

And I love my business. And a . . . (*Saluting.*) I love the red, white and blue!

MILLIE

I give you that last one, Mr. Boone. But, has there ever been that special someone?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

MILLIE continues
(*She smiles.*)

A woman?

BOONE
Millie, this conversation is gettin' just a bit weird.

MILLIE
I'm not talking about me!

BOONE
Oh. Well, as a matter fact, there was someone.

MILLIE
(*Totally shocked.*)

Really?

BOONE
Yep.

MILLIE
All right, now we're gettin' somewhere. Who was she?

BOONE
It's none of your business!!

MILLIE
Just because you can drive a tractor in a field of corn, it don't make you no Colonel.
Now, who was she?

BOONE
Look, that's in the past and I've moved on.

MILLIE
You have, have you? Well, if you're not gonna tell me, I guess we'll just have to go see.
Come on. (*MILLIE exits.*)

BOONE
Where are we going?

(*MILLIE doesn't answer. BOONE follows her - just a tad frustrated.*)

Dag nabbit, Millie, where are we goin'? Millie...!

(*Musical transition into the next scene.*)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 10

(Soft music plays underneath the dialogue.)

RUBY

Well, this is more like it. It's Christmas Eve. Nice restaurant, soft lights and music playing in the background. Ahh, look there, it's Mary. A beautiful young Mary. A dozen red roses lie on the table. Quite romantic. Wonder who she's waiting for? *(Brief pause.)* Ahh, here comes our answer. It's young Lucas Boone. In the shadows are Millie and Mr. Boone.

BOONE

I recognize this place.

LUCAS

(Entering.)

Hi Mary, sorry I'm late. Merry Christmas.

YOUNG MARY

(Irritated.)

It's almost closing time.

(HE sits. MARY remains silent.)

LUCAS

I said I'm sorry.

YOUNG MARY

I know. I got the flowers – as I always do.

LUCAS

Do you like 'em? They cost a pretty penny.

YOUNG MARY

Well, that's surprising considering how you hate parting with pennies.

LUCAS

Look, Mary, I'm working hard so we can have a future.

YOUNG MARY

I know, but a future with what and for what? You're a phantom. You're never around. How many times have you promised we'd go dancing?

LUCAS

Honey, that was like a...a campaign promise!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG MARY

Don't you honey me. And don't you treat me like some gullible voter. You care more about your business than you do me. You do nothing but work. You're so cheap your trailer's...

LUCAS

It's a double-wide!

YOUNG MARY

Your trailer's as cold as a frosted frog. (*Beat.*) I'm not sure I really know who you are.

LUCAS

Sure, I'm a bit tight with my money. But one day, you'll be thankful. (*Beat.*) Look, I'm trying to make it right here. Flowers, our favorite table, soft lights.

YOUNG MARY

I know. I appreciate the effort, but . . . (*SHE pauses.*)

LUCAS

But what? Come on, spit it out.

BOONE

(*To MILLIE.*)

It's time to leave.

MILLIE

Shhh . . .

DON'T SEND ME ROSES

YOUNG MARY

AGAIN, YOU SEND ME ROSES, INVITE ME OUT TO DINE
 HOPING THAT I'LL BELIEVE IN ALL YOUR FANCY LINES
 I'VE CLOSED MY EYES A DOZEN TIMES ALONG THE WAY
 BUT YOUR GIFT OF GUILT CAN'T REBUILD
 A LOVE THAT'S WITHERED AWAY

DON'T SEND ME ROSES WHEN I'M TORN APART
 DON'T SAY WITH LOVE WHEN IT'S NOT FROM THE HEART
 DON'T SAY YOU NEED ME 'CAUSE THIS IS GOODBYE
 THE SOFT PETALS YOU SEND ME ARE JUST A THORN IN MY SIDE

WAS I GIVING TOO LITTLE, ASKING TOO MUCH
 FOR ME TO BE THE ONLY ONE TO FEEL YOUR TOUCH
 THE COST OF LOVE IS MORE THAN WE CAN PAY
 IT'S TOO HARD TO MEND A HEART THAT BENDS
 SO MUCH THAT IT BREAKS

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG MARY continues
 DON'T SEND ME ROSES WHEN I'M TORN APART
 DON'T SAY WITH LOVE WHEN IT'S NOT FROM THE HEART
 DON'T SAY YOU NEED ME 'CAUSE THIS IS GOODBYE
 THE SOFT PETALS YOU SEND ME ARE JUST A THORN IN MY SIDE

LUCAS

Hmmm...maybe this will soften the thorns a bit.

RUBY

Thinking he can buy Mary off one more time, Lucas slides a jewelry box over to Mary.

YOUNG MARY

What's this?

LUCAS

Open it.

YOUNG MARY

(Disappointed, but not surprised.)

Earrings. They're beautiful. But, I can't accept them.

LUCAS

Why not?

YOUNG MARY

I . . . I just can't.

LUCAS

What are you trying to say?

YOUNG MARY

(Pause.)

We're through.

LUCAS

What? Why? *(Beat. Then it hits him.)* Oh, I get it. You're kidding ain't you? *(Laughs.)*
 This is good, like in the old days with me and Jake.

YOUNG MARY

The old days? The old days weren't that long ago. And no, I'm not kidding. It's over.

LUCAS

I can't believe this! You know, there's never been anyone other than you.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

YOUNG MARY

Really? I've seen you dance with your money, kiss your money, and caress your money! Your money might as well be another woman. It's a little strange.

(MILLIE looks at BOONE. It is strange.)

LUCAS

Oh yeah . . . well, wait till I tell Jake you're leaving me.

YOUNG MARY

(Pause.)

He knows.

LUCAS

What?

YOUNG MARY

He knows.

LUCAS

He knows? *(Beat, then HE realizes.)* How could I be so blind? He didn't turn his back on his music and come home to be with his best friend. He came back for you.

YOUNG MARY

Not at first. He came back to be in a town he loves and to be around people he cares about. He went into business with you!

LUCAS

Yeah, he got into my business all right.

YOUNG MARY

(FX: SHE slaps LUCAS.)

That's not fair. He's a true and loyal friend.

LUCAS / BOONE

How can you say that? He stole you away from me.

YOUNG MARY

He didn't steal anything from you, because you never really had me. All you care about is money.

LUCAS and BOONE

What's wrong with that?

MARY

You probably even sleep with money.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

LUCAS

I . . .

RUBY

Apparently, Lucas Boone does sleep with his money.

YOUNG MARY

Well, I hope it keeps you warm.

RUBY

Mary's rising and hands Lucas the jewelry box.

MARY

Here, I'm sure you can get a refund.

(FX: MARY walking off.)

LUCAS

(HE sits there. Pause. Then, to himself...)

I can't. They were on clearance.

BOONE

(Cringing but realizing.)

I was a nit-wit. How could I be so stupid?

MILLIE

(Looks at BOONE in disbelief.)

It's a mystery.

RUBY

(To the audience.)

Yes, theatre can make you laugh, cry, think or simply stay out of the clearance aisle when you're buying something for your loved one this holiday season. We'll return for Act 2 after a ___ minute intermission. And now, more Christmas classics from WDOG.

LIGHTS FADE.

(Intermission music selected by the presenting organization begins.)

END OF ACT I

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 2 / SCENE 1

(Short introductory music.)

RUBY

Welcome back, folks, to WDOG's presentation of *Storybook Christmas*. We return for Act 2 in the "Present", along with Mr. Boone and Millie observing the control room of WKID, everyone's favorite radio station. It's here on this Christmas Eve evening where we find B.J. and the beautiful Anna Sue Bailey.

B.J.

Howdy, folks, and a Merry Christmas to everyone. This is B.J. your DJ coming to you from radio station WKID with a special Christmas Eve gift. (*Beat.*) Tonight, it's Christmas Karaoke featuring a couple of original tunes written by a talented little lady I know. Just like her daddy, this little girl writes from the heart and paints with her lyrics. So, let's gather 'round the radio like in the old days, grab a sugar cookie and a cup of cider and enjoy Miss Anna Sue Bailey, daughter of our very own Jake Bailey, may he rest in peace. (*Pause.*) Take it away darlin'.

ANNA SUE

Thank you, B.J. you *handsome* DJ. This first one is titled, "I Wish It Was Christmas Every Day of the Year."

I WISH IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVERYDAY OF THE YEAR

ANNA SUE

THE WEATHERMAN SAYS IT'S SEVEN BELOW
OUTSIDE THE GROUND HAS A BLANKET OF SNOW
THE POND AT THE PARK IS COVERED WITH ICE
THE MALL HAS GREAT SALES ON ALL MERCHANDISE

DECORATIONS ARE ALL OVER TOWN
THE NIGHT AIR IS FILLED WITH JINGLE BELL SOUNDS
REHEARSALS ARE ON FOR THE CHRISTMAS PLAY
LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS, WAIT FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

IT'S CHRISTMAS, THAT TIME OF YEAR
FOR SANTA CLAUS AND A RED NOSE REINDEER
STREETS ARE LINED WITH COLORED LIGHTS
CAROLERS SING, O HOLY NIGHT
AT CHRISTMAS, HEARTS CAN FORGIVE
CEASEFIRES ARE CALLED SO SOLDIERS MAY LIVE
CHURCHES ARE FULL, LOVED ONES ARE NEAR
I WISH IT WAS CHRISTMAS, EVERYDAY OF THE YEAR

FLAMES IN THE FIRE ARE DANCING IN TIME
PRESENTS ARE WRAPPED, CHRISTMAS CARDS SIGNED

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ANNA SUE continues

*IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE IS ON ONCE AGAIN
FOLLOWED BY BING IN HOLIDAY INN*

IT'S CHRISTMAS, THAT TIME OF YEAR
FOR SANTA CLAUS AND A RED NOSE REINDEER
STREETS ARE LINED WITH COLORED LIGHTS
CAROLERS SING, O HOLY NIGHT
AT CHRISTMAS, HEARTS CAN FORGIVE
CEASEFIRES ARE CALLED SO SOLDIERS MAY LIVE
CHURCHES ARE FULL, LOVED ONES ARE NEAR
I WISH IT WAS CHRISTMAS, EVERYDAY OF THE YEAR

B.J.

(During the instrumental break.)

Anna Sue, you know I love you. I always have. Will you marry me?

ANNA SUE

Of course.

RUBY

B.J. is opening a box with a ring and putting it on Anna Sue's finger. Oh no, the "On Air" light is still on!

AT CHRISTMAS, HEARTS CAN FORGIVE
CEASEFIRES ARE CALLED SO SOLDIERS MAY LIVE
CHURCHES ARE FULL, LOVED ONES ARE NEAR
I WISH IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVERYDAY OF THE YEAR
I WISH IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVERYDAY OF THE YEAR

B.J.

How 'bout that folks? That was lovely, Anna Sue. Seems like you inherited your daddy's gift for writing and singing. And I must say, if it was Christmas every day of the year, the world would be a much better place. You have one more for us, right?

ANNA SUE

You know we do, B.J., we've been rehearsing all week.

B.J.

Well, here's a first, folks. B.J. and Anna Sue teaming up with . . .

ANNA SUE

Don't you mean Anna Sue and B.J.?

B.J.

We kid, we kid at WKID.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(ANNA SUE gives him “that” look. An uncomfortable pause.)

B.J.

But she’s not kidding. *(Clears throat.)* Take two, folks. Here’s Anna Sue Bailey and B.J. with “A Gift of Love.”

RUBY

Isn’t that sweet, Anna Sue just kissed B.J. on the cheek.

A GIFT OF LOVE

ANNA SUE

SNOW IS FALLING ON THE WINDOW SILL
SOFT AS COTTON AND THERE'S A CHILL
IN THE AIR, IT'S IN THE AIR
IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME, SLEIGH BELLS RING
RED NOSE FOLKS ARE CAROLING
IT'S A TIME TO SHARE, AND I'D LIKE TO SHARE

BUT ALL I HAVE IS A GIFT OF LOVE
AND THREE LITTLE WORDS I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH
WRAPPED IN A KISS GOOD AND TIGHT
JUST FOR YOU ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

THIS GIFT OF LOVE WILL CURE HEARTACHES
IT'S GUARANTEED NOT TO BREAK
SO, WON'T YOU TAKE
THIS GIFT OF LOVE

B.J.

I'D LIKE TO BUY YOU FANCY CLOTHES
FURRY SLIPPERS TO WARM YOUR TOES
A PARIS GOWN THAT YOU COULD WEAR UPTOWN
ON NEW YEAR'S EVE WE COULD DANCE
SET NEW STANDARDS FOR ROMANCE
THEN RIDE AWAY IN A RED AND WHITE CUSTOMIZED SLEIGH

BUT ALL I HAVE IS A GIFT OF LOVE
AND THREE LITTLE WORDS I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH
WRAPPED IN A KISS GOOD AND TIGHT
JUST FOR YOU ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT
THIS GIFT OF LOVE WILL CURE HEARTACHES
IT'S GUARANTEED NOT TO BREAK
SO, WON'T YOU TAKE THIS GIFT OF LOVE

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ANNA SUE AND B.J.
WON'T YOU TAKE THIS GIFT OF LOVE

B.J.

Merry Christmas from all of us at WKID. May your day be blessed with love and happiness . . . and we W-KID you not.

BOONE

That's Jake's daughter? She grew up.

MILLIE

How come you don't know the child of the man that was your best friend?

BOONE

I...I lost track of time...got too involved in my work. I...it was hard to face the family after Jake passed. And quite honestly, I couldn't look Mary in the eye.

MILLIE

(Sarcastic.)

I couldn't look Mary in the eye! *(Getting angry.)* Well, how difficult do you think it was trying to raise a little girl without her daddy!? As always, you're thinking more about yourself than others. You know sometimes life is about making choices. I mean, you might be able use a wrench to pound in a nail, but a hammer will do a heck of a lot better job.

BOONE

Are we done?

MILLIE

Not quite.

(Lights fade up on the Control Room.)

B.J.

It's B.J. here on WKID, folks. This just in, I'm hearing through the grapevine that Lucas Boone is putting a damper on the holidays for several folks in town. Starting Christmas day, he'll begin repossessing cars if owners are one payment late. I'd suggest you hightail it out of town and visit a relative, but we have a whopper of a snowstorm coming and it's so cold my Grandpa's teeth were chattering...in the glass! So, let me just suggest you just stay put. In the meantime, we'll just hope ole Mr. Boone can't get through to you. For WKID, this is B.J. your helpful DJ wishing you a happy holiday season.

(B.J. puts on an instrumental Christmas classic below the dialogue. Jingle bells ring.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

RUBY

Oh, look here. We have some folks visiting the radio station. There's Mary, Anna Sue's mom - along with the L & L Girls.

MARY

Is it OK to be here, B.J.?

B.J.

Sure, come on in.

LEOMA

Whew! It's getting rough out there.

MARY

We were listening to the broadcast on the way over and well did you...a...I mean...

LEOMA

Oh, spit it out Mary.

MARY

Did you propose to Anna Sue tonight?

B.J.

I sure did.

LEOMA & LYNNETTE

Ooooh...! Congratulations! Get on over here! Let's see that ring. That's wonderful, darling.

*(ANNA SUE shows her engagement ring to the LADIES.
They are thrilled and are quite giggly.)*

LYNNETTE

Anna Sue, you sounded wonderful on the radio.

ANNA SUE

Thank you.

(B.J. clears his throat fishing for a compliment from the ladies.)

LEOMA

Oh, you were fine too, B.J., just fine.

LYNNETTE

You must be thrilled, Mary.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

MARY

I am. B.J.'s a good man, and they make a beautiful couple. (*Beat.*) What a blessed evening it is. You know, it's easy to forget the true meaning of Christmas in difficult times, and although we always appreciate unwrapping presents, the gifts of friendship, love, compassion, and family are the most precious. (*To ANNA SUE*) I wish your daddy were here at a time like this.

LYNNETTE

He was so good looking. A dazzling white smile...

LEOMA

pretty eyes...

LYNNETTE

a great singing voice...

LEOMA

(*To LYNNETTE.*)

and a cute little tush.

(*The ladies giggle.*)

LYNNETTE

High five to that!

(*All the women high-five. B.J. is left out.*)

B.J.

Well, I feel like a saddle that's been rode hard and hung up wet.

LYNNETTE & LEOMA

Are you not getting enough attention?

ANNA SUE

Don't worry, honey. I think you're just fine.

B.J.

(*Cuddling up to ANNA SUE.*)

You do, do you?

ANNA SUE

I do.

LYNNETTE & LEOMA

Mistletoe time!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(LYNNETTE gets a mistletoe out of her purse and holds it over ANNA SUE and B.J.'s heads.)

B.J.

Why thank you, ma'am.

(B.J. and ANNA SUE kiss.)

RUBY

And there you have it. A beautiful moment topped off with a sweet kiss.

MARY

Now, with that all of that said and done, I know we'll have some disappointed children if they don't have a present under their tree tomorrow. Thankfully, *(referring to LYNNETTE and LEOMA)* the Ladies Auxiliary Club has done an excellent job of fundraising from some of our more generous members in the community.

LYNNETTE

Mr. Boone isn't one of them.

LEOMA

Right you are, sister.

MARY

We still have a lot of gifts to deliver.

B.J.

I have my four-wheeler, but I think we'll need more than one.

MARY

Perhaps Lucas will help us?

LYNNETTE

Who?

MARY

Lucas...Lucas Boone...Mr. Boone.

LYNETTE

Oh, that's right. You were on a first-name basis with him once-upon-a-time. You two... dated?

MARY

We did, a lifetime ago, it seems. Now, back to the matter at hand...

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

LYNNETTE
Well, he won't help.

LEOMA
He won't...

LYNNETTE
Never...

LEOMA
Ever.

LYNNETTE
"He has not so much brain as ear wax."

MARY, ANNA SUE & B.J.
What?

LEOMA
Shakespeare. Once-upon-a-time sister was an actress.

LYNNETTE
Troilus and Cressida, Act 5, Scene 1.

BOBBIE
I did not know that.

BOONE
(To MILLIE.)
Don't believe a word they say.

B.J.
I'll ask him. I bought my pick-up from him last year.

BOONE
That's true. He did buy it from me. Gave him a special single-digit interest rate! 9.9%.

(FX: The wind is picking up. Lights flicker in the control room.)

B.J.
Man, it's a heck of a storm brewing out there.

(FX: MARY'S cell phone rings. She answers.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

MARY

Hello...

(There is a worried look on her face.)

ANNA SUE

What is it, Mama? Mama?

MARY

(MARY ends the call.)

B.J., the presents will have to wait.

*(LIGHTS FADE on MARY, ANNA SUE, B.J. and the LADIES.)**(FX: A cell phone rings. It's MILLIE'S. She answers it.)*

MILLIE

Hello...yep...got it...on it.

BOONE

You have a cell phone?

MILLIE

Spooky, isn't it? Gotta run.

BOONE

Wait! What's going on?

MILLIE

Can't tell you.

BOONE

You mean you won't tell me!

MILLIE

I *can't* tell you!

BOONE

At least tell me why you came here tonight?

MILLIE

(Beat.)

You remember that day you fired me for being late?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Not really. You were late a few times.

MILLIE

Picky, picky, picky. I was trying to fix my brakes that morning and I had to get my boy to school. I was rushing to get the job done 'cause I knew you'd be madder than a puffed-up toad if I was late for work. When you're a mechanic, it's not good to rush. You always miss something. Well, I got my boy to school all right, but I was late getting to work. A whole six-and-a-half-minutes – and you fired me...on the spot. I was less than pleased 'bout that. I tore out of there and was heading home...maybe driving a bit too fast. Anyway, my brakes went out. It's not a good thing to happen when there's ice on the roads. All because I was six minutes late?!

BOONE

You remember the sign in the shop that says, "If you're early, you're never late and can't get in trouble"?

MILLIE

(MILLIE grabs her wrench – again.)

Yeah, I remember. You remember what I said about a wrench and a head? *(HE gets the point.)* Anyway, I was thinking maybe you regret what you did.

BOONE

What happened to your boy?

MILLIE

He was raised in a foster home.

BOONE

Where was your husband?

MILLIE

If I'd a known that I might not have been working for a no-good, cheapskate like you! Anyways, the boy grewed up fine. You know him. He's B.J. the DJ at WKID.

BOONE

B.J. is the son of Millie?

MILLIE

Yep.

BOONE

I'm sorry.

MILLIE

What the heck is that supposed to mean!?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

No, no. I mean, I'm sorry about what happened...to you.

MILLIE

Really?

BOONE

Yeah.

MILLIE

Hmmm...well, that's a start.

LIGHT'S FADE.

(Musical transition into the next scene.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 2 / SCENE 2

RUBY

Our next scene finds Mr. Boone in bed. Not asleep but peeking out from under his blanket - waiting...and waiting...and waiting. He gets out of bed...looks around...nothing. Just as he's about to get back in bed, he hears something. Is it a train? (*FX: Train.*) It is! It's coming closer and closer...and here it is, pulling in next to his trailer. (*The train slowly stops.*) Mr. Boone is terrified and jumps back into bed, under the covers and then...peeks out.

Through the steam of the train, we see him. Black pants, black shirt, black boots, black hair and black guitar. He is the Ghost of Christmas Guilt.

JOHNNY

Hello, my name's Johnny. Johnny...

BOONE

I know. You're the "Ghost of Christmas Guilt"?

JOHNNY

I am. You learn anything yet?

BOONE

I'm not sure...maybe.

JOHNNY

Well, it took me a while too. You ready?

BOONE

I suppose.

JOHNNY

Then let's go. All aboard!

(FX: The train pulls out of the station.)

Lights fade.

B.J.

Howdy, folks, this is B.J. at radio station WKID with an important announcement. Bobbie Jackson has not arrived home this Christmas Eve. Now, with all this crazy weather, the freeway's been closed and it's my understanding her husband Ross won't be rolling his rig this way till the weather clears. She was last seen this evening walking up Farm Road 297 toward home. However, she never made it. So, if you have a snowmobile or four-wheeler, it's time to roll.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 2 / SCENE 3

(FX: We hear the train pull up.)

RUBY

Johnny and Mr. Boone have arrived at the local funeral home. At the far end of the room is a casket. Flowers surround it. Mary Bailey, Anna Sue, Ms. Lynnette and Leoma are present along with members of the community.

BOONE

What's this?

JOHNNY

Time to walk the line, son.

BOONE

What?

JOHNNY

Bite the bullet. Face the music. Eat some cranberries.

BOONE

Cranberries?

JOHNNY

Cranberries! *(Shivers.)* Oooh . . . I never did like 'em. Anyway, because you repossessed Bobbie's car and made her walk home in below freezing temperatures and a snow storm, she...well, she never made it. They found her on the side of the road.

BOONE

What?!

(BOONE is stunned.)

JOHNNY

Yep, frozen like one of those ice sculptures...holding a picture of her little boy, Timmy.

BOONE

I didn't know it was gonna get that cold.

JOHNNY

It don't matter. *(Angry.)* How stupid and selfish can you be!? What did you get out of making her walk home? Hmmm? Did you think that would make your business stronger? Did it put money in your pocket?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

I...I didn't really think...

JOHNNY

Dang right you didn't! You didn't really need to repossess her car. Were you gonna make Bobbie walk back and forth to work all winter? Did you think that would help her be on time? *(Beat.)* You know, this year folks had the opportunity to remember what Christmas is all about - each other. Heck, these folks are just trying to feed their families and keep warm. Man, you screwed this up more than I ever could. And I was pretty good at it.

(Lights rise up full on the funeral home.)

MARY

There's not much one can say at times like this. It's certainly not the Christmas we were expecting. We're all gonna have to pitch in and help.

LYNNETTE

We'll take care of the food. Leoma's a great cook.

LEOMA

Oh, no I'm not.

LYNNETTE

You are too.

LEOMA

Well...I'm OK.

LYNNETTE

You're more than OK. Your food is scrumptious. It's delectable, mouthwatering and flat out lip-smacking delicious.

LEOMA

Well, if you say so.

LYNNETTE

I do and it is.

(The L&L girls hug.)

MARY

I'll take Timmy to the doctor when he needs to go, and Anna Sue and I can watch the kids when Ross is out of town.

ANNA SUE

Momma, I've heard through the grapevine that Ross is going to sell his eighteen-wheeler.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

MARY

He can't do that!

ANNA SUE

He figures it's the only way he can pay for Timmy's operation and be there for the kids.

LYNNETTE

I heard Ross was so angry, he took a Louisville Slugger and was about to do a number on Mr. Boone's cars.

LEOMA

The Sheriff didn't arrest him, but he did force him to play chess with him – all night!

LYNNETTE

That had to be worse than sitting in jail.

LEOMA

I hope Mr. Boone rots in a manure patch, gets dug up, tossed around and becomes lunch for the local critters.

MARY

No, you don't.

LEOMA

I do.

MARY

You don't.

LEOMA

I do.

MARY

(Firmly, yet softly.)

You don't.

LEOMA

I guess not. *(Beat.)* Can he at least go straight to the devil?

MARY

That'd be easier than seeing me. *(Beat.)* I know what Ross is dealing with because I've been there. *(To everyone.)* But don't let our hearts harden. Not like his. Forgive and the emotions we're feeling, and I know Ross is feeling, will fade...in time. *(Beat.)* Now, folks will be arriving soon. Let's take a moment to bow our heads.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(After a moment ANNA SUE begins singing. It can also be an option for MARY to sing lead on this song.)

THE GOOD LORD'S RULES

ANNA SUE

MOMMA USE TO READ ME BIBLE STORIES
SHE'D PRAY WITH ME WHEN IT WAS TIME FOR BED
SLOWLY I'D DRIFT OFF TO DREAMLAND
AND HEAR FOR MYSELF THE WORDS MY MOMMA READ

SUDDENLY I WAS LISTENING TO JESUS
FROM A MOUNTAINTOP I COULD HEAR HIM SAY
"LOVE THE LORD GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART
AND MY FATHER WILL REWARD YOU ONE DAY."

HE'D SAY: LOVE YOUR FELLOW MEN AND DO UNTO THEM
AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU
LEND A HAND TO THE WEAK
YOUR VOICE TO THOSE THAT CANNOT SPEAK
AND HEAVEN'S LIGHT WILL SHINE ON YOU
IF YOU FOLLOW THE GOOD LORD'S RULES.

BOONE *(to JOHNNY)*

THERE WAS A TIME, I BELIEVED
BUT THAT WAS SO LONG AGO
THEN ON MY WAY DOWN THE ROAD TO GETTIN' RICH
I FOUND THE GREEN BUT LOST PART OF MY SOUL

JOHNNY

BEEN THERE, SON, BUT THE LORD FORGIVES
I CAN TELL YOU, PRAYER IS WHERE YOU START
PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER AND TALK TO HIM
REMEMBER HE'S RIGHT THERE IN YOUR HEART

ANNA SUE/MARY/LYNNETTE/
LEOMA/BOONE & JOHNNY

LOVE YOUR FELLOW MEN AND DO UNTO THEM
AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU
LEND A HAND TO THE WEAK
YOUR VOICE TO THOSE THAT CANNOT SPEAK
AND HEAVEN'S LIGHT WILL SHINE ON YOU
IF YOU FOLLOW THE GOOD LORD'S RULES

LOVE YOUR FELLOW MEN AND DO UNTO THEM
AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ANNA SUE/MARY/LYNNETTE/
LEOMA/BOONE & JOHNNY

LEND A HAND TO THE WEAK
YOUR VOICE TO THOSE THAT CANNOT SPEAK
AND HEAVEN'S LIGHT WILL SHINE ON YOU
IF YOU FOLLOW THE GOOD LORD'S RULES

*(LIGHTS FADE on the funeral home, but still highlight
BOONE and JOHNNY.)*

BOONE

What's with the boy, Timmy?

JOHNNY

Well, he's pretty sick and needs constant care from a doctor.

BOONE

What's wrong with him?

JOHNNY

I don't know the details, but he's been sick for a while and those medical bills have been piling up on Bobbie and Ross, which is why they've been a bit behind on them car payments. Timmy needs a very expensive operation. But of course, there was a slim chance they could afford it with Bobbie working for you. But now, it sure as heck ain't gonna happen.

BOONE

She never told me.

JOHNNY

She tried, but you wouldn't listen. Have you ever even met Ross or the kids? *(No response.)* I thought not.

BOONE

How is Ross gonna support 'em? There ain't much work 'round here and if he sells his truck...and what about Timmy?

JOHNNY

Good questions. You'll have to figure out them answers on your own.

(FX: A train whistle sounds.)

Well, I hear the train a comin'...

JOHNNY

(FX: Another train whistle.)

Yep, it's comin' round the bend...

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(FX: We hear the train approaching as well. JOHNNY approaches the train.)

BOONE

Wait! You were showing the future. What would or could happen. It doesn't have to happen. Right? Right?!

(JOHNNY turns and speaks.)

JOHNNY

You're running out of time, and I don't know if you can change things or not. It's not for me to say.

BOONE

Well then, who can I talk to? Who?

JOHNNY

I think you know.

(FX: A final train whistle and we hear the train depart.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 2 / SCENE 4

RUBY

Is this all a dream or a nightmare Lucas Boone is having? Let's find out. We next find him back in his bedroom. It's the middle of the night. He sits in a chair near his bed. Next to the chair is his guitar and a bottle of bourbon. He pours a glass, raises it up, but then slowly sets it down.

BOONE

(To himself and full of frustration.)

Idiot! Not Bobbie. *(HE looks up.)* Make it me. I'm ready.

RUBY

Mr. Boone closes his eyes and sits for a moment. He then grabs a pen and a pad of paper.

GUITAR PICKIN' ANGEL

BOONE

(Slowly the words come to him.)

TO SIT AND WONDER WHY CAN DRIVE A MAN INSANE
I KNOW A FEW SHOTS OF BOURBON WON'T ERASE THE PAIN
BUT I FEEL BETTER KNOWING THAT ON HIS JUDGMENT DAY
THE LORD GAVE HIM A FENDER STRAT AND SAID, "ROCK THE NIGHT
AWAY."

(The tune and lyrics magically come to him and the rhythm picks up.)

THERE'S A GUITAR PICKIN ANGEL ROCKIN' UP IN HEAVEN
A GOLDEN VOICE DJ SPINNING THE TOP TEN
ST. PETER LEADS THE CHOIR SINGING "ROCK OF AGES"
WHILE THAT GUITAR PICKIN' ANGEL
ROCKS WITH A COUNTRY BAND

THERE'S MARTY ROBBINS ON THE KEYBOARD,
STRINGBEAN ON BANJO
IN THE SPOTLIGHT IT'S ONLY RIGHT
TO HAVE THE KING OF ROCK N' ROLL
BUDDY HOLLY WRITES THE MUSIC AND SINGS HARMONY
WHILE THAT GUITAR PICKIN' FRIEND OF MINE
IS CRANKING OUT THE LEADS

THERE'S A GUITAR PICKIN ANGEL ROCKIN' UP IN HEAVEN
A GOLDEN VOICE DJ SPINNING THE TOP TEN
ST. PETER LEADS THE CHOIR SINGING "ROCK OF AGES"
WHILE THAT GUITAR PICKIN' ANGEL
ROCKS WITH A COUNTRY BAND

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE continues

LATE AT NIGHT WHEN ALL IS STILL LOOK OUT AMONG THE STARS
YOU MAY SEE AN ALL-STAR BAND ON GLORY BOULEVARD
THEY'LL ALL BE WEARING HALOS AND THEIR GOWNS OF WHITE
RAISIN' HELL IN HEAVEN AND ROCKIN' OUT ALL NIGHT

THERE'S A GUITAR PICKIN ANGEL ROCKIN' UP IN HEAVEN
A GOLDEN VOICE DJ SPINNING THE TOP TEN
ST PETER LEADS THE CHOIR SINGING "ROCK OF AGES"
WHILE THAT GUITAR PICKIN' ANGEL
ROCKS WITH A COUNTRY BAND
THAT GUITAR PICKIN' FRIEND OF MINE IS
ROCKIN' WITH A COUNTRY BAND

*(BOONE is emotionally drained. From the shadows...
CARTER, MILLIE, JOHNNY and JAKE emerge.)*

CARTER

That's pretty good, son. It's a lot easier to write when it comes from the heart.

MILLIE

Your jingles still stink!

CARTER

(Softly scolding MILLIE.)

Now, Millie.

MILLIE

Sorry.

JOHNNY

You know it takes more work to frown than to smile. Elvis knew that. And you been working way too hard.

JAKE

That was a good song, friend. You finally learned how to write. Learn anything else tonight?

BOONE

I sure did, Jake. I'm sorry, 'bout everything. I am so, so sorry.

JAKE

That's good to hear, Luke. But, words don't mean much without action. It's time to make a difference.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 2 / SCENE 5

(FX: The chimes of a church bell.)

RUBY

It's morning. The sun shines bright and streams through the window. It's a new day. It's Christmas! What's this? Mr. Boone is lying on the floor – curled up, asleep. Look at him. Sleeping like a little baby. Oh, he's waking up. He slowly rises.

BOONE

What a night.

RUBY

He's getting dressed. On the floor, he sees the pad of paper he scribbled lyrics on. He slowly sings a line...

BOONE

“There's a guitar pickin' angel...rockin' up in Heaven.”

RUBY

He sits on his bed...on something.

BOONE

What the...what is that? It's a wrench! Millie! I wasn't dreaming. I can't believe it! *(Suddenly remembering.)* Bobbie!!!

(HE turns on the radio.)

B.J.

Merry Christmas, everybody, from WKID. B.J. your holiday DJ here and it's a great day. The storm was a whopper and laid a ton of powder on us last night. Today will be a great day to get out and do some sledding kids. The sun is shining and best of all, Bobbie Jackson made it home safely last night.

BOONE

(BOONE dances around, stops.)

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!

RUBY

Look at that. Mr. Boone is dancing. He actually looks happy.

(BOONE looks up.)

BOONE

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you! Where's my phone?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

B.J.

Yes-sir-ee folks, Jim Johnson was running the county snowplow up near Goose Gap and spotted Bobbie Jackson trudging along in knee-deep snow and picked her up. Bobbie was cold and a bit tired, but some hot coffee, a warm bed and she's doing fine this morning. And I hear her husband Ross made it home safely, pulling his eighteen-wheeler in just a bit ago. We now open our lines if you'd like to send Holiday wishes to any of our listeners.

(Noticing the phone line lighting up.)

B.J.

Whoa, you folks are fast. We have a caller.

(HE answers the call.)

WKID, good morning to you. Who would you like to send Christmas wishes to?

BOONE

(Sounding angry.)

I'd like to make a correction to a report you made yesterday, B.J.

B.J.

Mr. Boone?

BOONE

That's right. You reported I'd be out today repossessing cars. Well...that is entirely false and I'm gonna sue WKID for making such a statement!

(Pause – B.J. is stunned.)

B.J.

Mr. . . . Mr. Boone . . . I . . .

BOONE

I'm joking! *(Laughs.)* This is the W-KID ain't it? *(Laughs.)* For all you folks out there behind on payments, I want you to know you don't have another payment until...March! And come on down and see me after New Year's and we'll refinance your loan. How about...10.9%? *(Pause.)* Just kidding! *(Laughs.)* Who'd ever thought I'd be a kidder? *(Laughs.)* Folks, come on down by January 3rd and I'll give you a new, honest and fair... 3.9% loan. Now that's for old and new customers.

B.J.

Does that mean I can refinance, Mr. Boone?

BOONE

Sure. *(Serious.)* However, there's a catch.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

B.J.

Uh huh...a catch. And what might that be?

BOONE

I want to sing a duet...with Anna Sue Bailey at the Community Hall *tonight*. And I'd like to invite everyone to come hear it.

B.J.

Really?

BOONE

Really. And I'd like WKID to broadcast it live.

(Pause. There is not an immediate response from B.J.)

Refreshments will be provided.

B.J.

Well, in that case...and what would you like to sing?

BOONE

A Christmas song I wrote.

B.J.

A Christmas song? You wrote? Ohhh...K. I guess that can be arranged.

BOONE

Good. You'll talk to Anna Sue and get her in contact with me?

B.J.

Sure, I'll do that.

BOONE

7:30 sound good?

B.J.

Uh, sure.

BOONE

Good. Talk it up. I'd like a lot of people there.

B.J.

We'll do our best to get folks out there, but Mr. Boone, it's Christmas after all.

BOONE

B.J., aren't you just a bit curious?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

B.J.

Yes sir, I guess I am.

BOONE

Well, they will be too.

B.J.

I see your point.

BOONE

Excellent. Merry Christmas to everybody and a special shout out to the Jackson and Bailey families. Oh, one more thing...if my favorite "L and L" girls are listening, call that fella you told me about and tell him to come see me. I could use some help at the dealership.

(BOONE hangs up.)

B.J.

Well, folks, you heard it here on the W-KID, but we're not kidding. Come on down to the _____ Theatre this evening at 7:30 for what I am sure will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Now, let's start the hour off with a Christmas classic guaranteed to make you smile.

(FX: A traditional Christmas instrumental softly plays under the dialogue. BOONE calls the station again. They are not on the air.)

B.J.

Merry Christmas, WKID.

BOONE

B.J., it's me again.

B.J.

Yes sir. What can I do for you?

BOONE

Did ya ever get those presents delivered to those needy kids?

B.J.

Not everyone, Mr. Boone. The plows are still clearing some of the back roads, but how did you know...?

BOONE

Long story. How about you stop down to the dealership after your shift and we'll fill up one of my Suburbans with the presents and get them delivered pronto?

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

B.J.

Uh, OK. See you 'bout one o'clock?

BOONE

How many families?

B.J.

We have a little over 25 families to still get presents too. We had over 50.

BOONE

Whoa...that's a lot of presents.

B.J.

Yes, it is. We have a lot of needy folks in this little community of ours.

BOONE

I'm guessing those kids that didn't wake up to presents this morning may have been pretty disappointed, so how about I also give each of 'em a card with a \$20 bill in it?

B.J.

I'm sure they will be delighted, Mr. Boone. Thank you. And Merry Christmas to you.

BOONE

Merry Christmas to you as well, B.J. See you at one o'clock.

(BOONE hangs up.)

B.J.

(Stunned. Slowly hangs up the phone.)

Bye.

(FX: BOONE dials again – another number)

BOONE

Hello, Henry. Lucas here. *(Beat.)* Boone. *(Pause.)* Yes, my first name is Lucas. *(Beat.)* Henry, quit laughing. It's a good name. *(Beat.)* I'm calling because I need about fifty turkeys. Yeah, today. Hmm...how are you on ham? OK, I want your best meat. Turkey, ham, duck, and if you run out of that, grab some steaks. Your best, you hear. And all the fixins – taters, dressing, lots of buns. Oh, and no cranberries. Deliver what you got down to the dealership pronto by one o'clock. I'll make it worth your while. And Henry, Merry Christmas.

(HE hangs up and dances. HE is one happy fellow.)

I'm happier than a tick on a fat pig!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

(FX: We hear the sound of a clock ticking as a few hours have passed.)

B.J.

Good afternoon, everybody! This is B.J. your Merry Christmas DJ! Thank you to the many generous folks in town that helped make this a pretty special Christmas for a lot of youngsters out there. I trust my bowling buddies are 'bout ready to bust a gut after what I am sure was a top-notch, A-1 prepared Christmas dinner in their household. My beautiful fiancée, Anna Sue, brought down my favorite ice-box desert for me just a bit ago and all I can say is Mmmm, Mmmm...! It's been a storybook Christmas so far and I'm here to tell you it just got better. Ross Jackson called and said an anonymous donor just made it possible for his son, little Timmy, to get the care he needs, all expenses paid! And Ross and his wife Bobbie want to pass on their heartfelt thanks to that very, very special person, as do all of us down here at WKID.

(Brief musical transition into Scene 6.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

ACT 2 / SCENE 6

RUBY

I must say, folks, we've had some astounding developments in this little story. I'm sure y'all are just as curious as I am to see how this little event at the community center is going to go. So, let's check in on it. (*Brief pause.*) Let's see...oh, look here. They sure have decorated the place beautifully. Wreaths, garland, Christmas bells and a whole lot more.

In attendance, we have a lot of community members as well. There's Bobbie Jackson's family, the L & L Girls, Mary Bailey and oh...in the shadows, I see Jake Bailey, Carter Smith, Millie and Johnny. Mr. Boone and Anna Sue are off to the side of the stage. And now, stepping up to the microphone is B.J.

B.J.

Welcome everyone, to our very own Opry, broadcasting live and remote. I'm B.J. your...

(ANNA SUE holds up a sign inviting the audience & others on stage to join in with the following.)

ANNA SUE & AUDIENCE

HANDSOME DJ!!!!

B.J.

And tonight, I promise we'll see something special. Now, every big act needs an opening act. And we have just the thing.

ANNA SUE

Who would that be, B.J.?

B.J.

Why it would be SANTA CLAUS! Come on out Santa!

(Santa enters. FX: Applause.)

SANTA

Merry Christmas, everybody! Ho Ho Ho! I hope y'all had a great day. The Reindeer and I needed a bit of rest after a very busy, busy night. So, before we head back home to the North Pole, we thought we'd stop by and say, "howdy". And if you happen to have a little hot chocolate and a cookie or two...

B.J.

or three?

SANTA

or more. That would be great!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

B.J.

I believe that can be arranged.

SANTA

I do love “believers”, B.J. Thank you for believing. But, I also love the sounds of the holiday season. So, before I head back home to Mrs. Claus, I wonder if everyone could help me out with a bit of “Jingle Bells”?

B.J.

I believe we can, Santa. Whether here or listening at home, we’d like you all to join in. Don’t be shy. Let me hear you! Ready? Here we go!

(Song: ALL engage in rip-roaring version of Jingle Bells led by SANTA.)

JINGLE BELLS

SANTA & ALL

DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW IN A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH
O’ER THE FIELDS WE GO LAUGHING ALL THE WAY
BELLS ON BOB TAIL RING MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT
WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE AND SING A SLEIGHING SONG TONIGHT!

JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS JINGLE ALL THE WAY
OH, WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE IN A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH, HEY!
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS JINGLE ALL THE WAY
OH, WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE IN A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH!

(INSTRUMENTAL / DANCE BREAK)

JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS JINGLE ALL THE WAY
OH, WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE IN A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH, HEY!
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS JINGLE ALL THE WAY
OH, WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE IN A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH!

(SANTA heads offstage into the night.)

SANTA

Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas!

B.J.

How about that? Thank you, thank you, thank you, Santa, and to all of you here and at home. Whoo! That was FUN! Y’all were great! And up next, you know who!

(B.J. crosses to MR. BOONE.)

Uh, I need to announce Anna Sue first.

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

Or else you'll be in hot water, right?

B.J.

Right. How do you know that?

BOONE

(Smiles.)

Freaky, ain't it?

B.J.

Yes, it is.

(B.J. at the microphone.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, are y'all ready for another holiday treat?!

(FX: Audience applause.)

Well then, please give a big hometown welcome for Miss Anna Sue Bailey!

(FX: Applause. ANNA SUE steps forward.)

And, of course... *(with lesser enthusiasm)* Mr. Boone.

(Dead silence or a spattering of applause. BOONE steps forward.)

Well sir, the mic is yours.

BOONE

(BOONE steps to the microphone. Hesitant.)

I uh...I want to thank all you folks for coming out here this evening. Particularly on short notice. It's always been my dream to sing at the Grand Ole Opry. But for Jake Bailey, there were more important things in life. Well, when he came home years ago he tried to teach me the Opry could be wherever we wanted it to be as long as we were around good people, family and friends...like his wife, Mary...and Bobbie Jackson over there. It's good to see you, Bobbie.

(BOBBIE is a little surprised at the acknowledgement, but nods to MR. BOONE and smiles.)

Now Bobbie, I can't give you the keys to your old beat up vehicle back. *(Beat)* But, I've been thinking. Without you, I'd a lost that dealership years ago. How would you like to be a Sales Associate?

BOBBIE

(Rather stunned as is everyone else.)

An Associate?

BOONE

Yep!

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOBBIE

Uh...yes sir. I'd like that very much.

BOONE

Best thing about being a salesma . . . uh, saleswoman, is you get to drive one of our best SUV's – for free. You need something to get your kids everywhere they need to go. Oh, and I'll guess you'll need some *new* keys! (*BOONE tosses BOBBIE a set of car keys. HE engages the audience.*) And how about a raise for Bobbie Jackson?!!

(B.J. encourages the live audience. FX: Lots of applause!)

BOBBIE

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Boone! I don't know what to say.

BOONE

Nothing needs to be said. Just remember . . . if you're early . . .

BOONE and BOBBIE

you're never late and can't get in trouble.

(BOBBIE smiles at MR. BOONE. Beat.)

BOONE

(To the audience.)

Now, folks, I can be a little hard-headed sometimes. And there may have been times when I said or did something that made some folks out there, or up here, want to sock it to me over the years. But, I promise that this year I'm gonna do my best to be nice *and* kind. You know, I think I finally understand what Jake was saying when he came back to town. This song is dedicated to the best friends I ever had, Jake Bailey and his wife, Mary. And also, to you folks, the ones that make our town so special! I also want to thank Anna Sue for teaming up with me this evening. She's pretty brave, ain't she? I hope you enjoy it. It's called "Storybook Christmas."

(ANNA SUE steps up to the mic with BOONE.)

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

IF YOU LISTEN CLOSE YOU CAN HEAR
JINGLE BELLS THROUGHOUT OUR TOWN

ANNA SUE

AND THE BIGGEST SNOWFLAKES YOU'LL EVER SEE
FALL GENTLY TO THE GROUND
AND ON A COLD CLEAR FULL-MOON NIGHT
IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR TOWN SQUARE

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

BOONE

WE DECORATE AN EVERGREEN
 RISING THIRTY FEET IN THE AIR
 WE TRIM THE TREE WITH ORNAMENTS
 AND HAND-MADE POPCORN CHAINS

ANNA SUE

BRIGHT RED BOWS, COLORED LIGHTS
 AND OVERSIZED CANDY CANES

BOONE

WE GENTLY PLACE A TWINKLING STAR
 AT THE VERY TOP

ANNA SUE

AND PLACE BEAUTIFULLY WRAPPED CHRISTMAS GIFTS
 FROM SARAH JANE'S GIFT SHOP

BOONE & ANNA SUE

WREATHS HANG ON THE GAZEBO
 NEARBY CHURCH BELLS RING
 CAROLERS FILL THE NIGHT WITH SONG
 WELCOMING ALL AROUND TO SING

IT'S THE KIND OF STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS
 WE READ TO OUR KIDS AT NIGHT
 PICTURE PERFECT NORMAN ROCKWELL
 PAINTED WITH CANDLE LIGHT

BOONE

TRADITION CALLS FOR A PARADE
 LED BY SANTA CLAUS
 THE HIGH SCHOOL BAND STEPS IN TIME
 AND IS GREETED WITH APPLAUSE

ANNA SUE

SNOW FALLS SOFT AS COTTON
 MIDNIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE
 STARS DANCE IN THE MOONLIGHT
 IT'S ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BELIEVE

BOONE AND ANNA SUE

WREATHS HANG ON THE GAZEBO
 NEARBY CHURCH BELLS RING
 CAROLERS FILL THE NIGHT WITH SONG
 WELCOMING ALL AROUND TO SING

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

IT'S THE KIND OF STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS
WE READ TO OUR KIDS AT NIGHT
PICTURE PERFECT NORMAN ROCKWELL
PAINTED WITH CANDLE LIGHT

BOONE AND ANNA SUE continue
PICTURE PERFECT NORMAN ROCKWELL
PAINTED WITH CANDLE LIGHT

(Applause. BOONE is obviously touched by the response.)

ANNA SUE

Mr. Boone . . .

BOONE

Please, call me Luke. That's what your daddy used to call me.

ANNA SUE

Mr. Luke... B.J., that *very handsome* DJ and I will be getting married in the near future.
And since daddy's not here to walk me down the aisle...I was wondering if you would?

BOONE

It would be my honor.

(HE is really touched. SHE gives him a hug.)

RUBY

Anyone have a tissue? *(Beat.)* Look! Look at that! Ladies and gentlemen, the "burden"
Jake Bailey has been carrying all these years is just...disappearing. Carter, Millie, Johnny
and Jake all seem mighty happy right now.

ANNA SUE

WREATHS HANG ON THE GAZEBO
NEARBY CHURCH BELLS RING

(Church bells do ring.)

ANNA SUE & BOONE

CAROLERS FILL THE NIGHT WITH SONG
WELCOMING ALL AROUND TO SING

ALL

IT'S THE KIND OF STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS
WE READ TO OUR KIDS AT NIGHT

STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS

PICTURE PERFECT NORMAN ROCKWELL
PAINTED WITH CANDLE LIGHT

ANNA SUE & BOONE
PICTURE PERFECT NORMAN ROCKWELL
PAINTED WITH CANDLE LIGHT

RUBY

Folks, the W-DOG thanks you for tuning in tonight whether right here with us or listening at home.

CAST
(The CAST all "bark" their thanks.)

TONY / B.J.

And now, from all of us to all of you...

ALL
MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU
HAPPY HOLIDAYS, BEST WISHES, HAPPY SOLSTICE TO YOU
MAY LAUGHTER FILL YOUR HEART AND CHARITY LIFT YOUR SOUL
MAY YOU FIND YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE DEAR UNDER A MISTLETOE
MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS, MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO YOU, MR. BOONE!

Merry Christmas!!

FADE TO BLACK.

CURTAIN CALL

(Music during curtain call.)

THE END