

A Colorless Christmas

By Nathan Pralle



A Holiday Play in Two Acts

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DEDICATION



This play and performances are dedicated to the family and memory of my good friend, Sara Geiken, who passed away at the age of 44 on October 9th, 2024, after living with and fighting lung cancer for 5 years.

Sara was an unquenchable light in the darkness of life. She was eternally positive and optimistic, even in the depths of her struggles with disease, parenting, employment, and other challenges. Few would have maintained such a sunny outlook despite literal years of pain, hassle, and disappointments. She maintained a life surrounded by people she loved, was fiercely maternal about her beautiful daughter Paige, and took every opportunity to squeeze life for all it was worth.

I was part of the group of “theatre geek” kids in high school of which Sara and her family were a part. We did theatre, band, choir, speech, and other forms of fine arts and were generally misfits and yet fit together like so many discarded avant garde puzzle pieces. Sara and I always found mutual trust and friendship in each other and though years or distance apart, we always were on “instant-catch up” status. I acted with and against her many times and she is what I think of when I think of quality theatre and acting and performances.

The character Seraphine is modeled after Sara. While nobody can accurately portray the bubbly presence that Sara was, Seraphine encompasses much of what I knew. She saw the good in every situation, every person, no matter how dark and awful it/they might appear. Seraphine is a tribute to that spirit.

She touched many lives, certainly many deeper than mine. But I acutely feel the loss of her presence and hope her memory is long-lived and sweet for all whom she inspired.

– Nathan Pralle, Director and Playwright, November 2024

ORIGINAL CAST - DECEMBER 14 & 15, 2024

Windsor Theatre, Hampton, IA

THE STUDENTS

Natalie Birdsell	SERAPHINE	Bubbly and talkative, always optimistic
Macaean Pralle	SILAS	Dark, mysterious, apathetic, and forceful
Jaliyah Ivey	IRIS	Seraphine's best friend, even-keeled
Ardian Berisha	DOLAN	Friend of Seraphine and Iris, uncertain
Victoria Flores	MARA	Friend of Heidi, prone to influence
Harlee Chrstiansen	HEIDI	Friend of Mara, musical hippie dreamer
Greg Garcia	SIMON	Smart, intellectual, geeky, bumbling

THE TOWNSPEOPLE

Jack Hindin	TRENT	Barista at the coffee shop, "Brewed Awakening"
Lillian Foreshoe	MS DAFFERTY	Math teacher at Marble Brook School
Keston Pralle	KENT	Town maintenance person, practical/industrial
Genevieve Foreshoe	MARY ROSE	Seraphine's mom; gentle, wise, reasonable
Wael Al Habirie	LOU	A lawyer, neat and clipped, yet nervous
Tammy Schirmer	PEGGY	Lou's wife; talkative and quick
Charleigh Schirmer	BARB	Peggy's friend, town gossip, snobby
Autumn Wood	MABEL	Owner/baker at, "Bun Intended", a bakery.
Jamila Jibreel	ELSIE	Librarian; thoughtful, observing
Haylee Hanna	ROZ	Gym-owner and exercise fanatic
Zaarifa Tariq	JUNE	Cheerful, nurturing, daycare owner

THE SPIRITS

Liberty Varrelman	ZIA	Spirit of Christmas
Adison Jorgensen	NOELLE	Spirit of Joy
Miyah Arana	EIRA	Spirit of Winter
Amiah Stevens	HOLLY	Spirit of Tradition
Luna Flores	PAX	Spirit of Peace
Nathalia Flores	GALEN	Spirit of Giving
Bella Duran	LUCIA	Spirit of Light
Evelyn Osborn	FINNIAN	Spirit of Wonder
Logan Folkerds	MERRICK	Spirit of Merriment
Luck Mollenbeck	IVY	Spirit of Hope

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Character Listing

(15 F, 8 M, 5 Any - 28 Total)

STUDENTS

SERAPHINE	Bubbly and talkative, always optimistic
SILAS	Dark, mysterious, apathetic, forceful
IRIS	Seraphine's best friend, even-keeled
DOLAN	Friend of Sera/Iris, uncertain of himself
MARA	Friend of Heidi, usually happy, prone to influence
HEIDI	Friend of Mara, Musical hippie dreamer
SIMON	Smart, intellectual, geeky, bumbling

TOWNSPEOPLE

TRENT	Barista at coffee shop Brewed Awakening
MS DAFFERTY	Class teacher at Marble Brook School
KENT	Town maintenance person, practical, industrial
MARY ROSE	Seraphine's mom, Gentle, wise, reasonable
LOU	Townsperson, lawyer, neat and clipped
PEGGY	Lou's wife, chipper, talkative, bubbly
BARB	Peggy's friend, town gossip, snobby
MABEL	Outgoing, loud, full of opinions, owner of bakery
ELSIE	Librarian; thoughtful, observing
ROZ	Gym-owner and rat, fit and festive
JUNE	Cheerful, nurturing, daycare owner

SPIRITS

ZIA	Spirit of Christmas
NOELLE	Spirit of Joy
EIRA	Spirit of Winter
HOLLY	Spirit of Tradition
PAX	Spirit of Peace
GALEN	Spirit of Giving
LUCIA	Spirit of Light
FINNIAN	Spirit of Wonder
MERRICK	Spirit of Merriment
IVY	Spirit of Hope

Character Line Counts

STUDENTS

SERAPHINE	114
SILAS	55
IRIS	59
DOLAN	24
MARA	30
HEIDI	38
SIMON	16

TOWNSPEOPLE

TRENT	24
MS DAFFERTY	38
KENT	68
MARY ROSE	31
LOU	16
PEGGY	12
BARB	34
MABEL	12
ELSIE	10
ROZ	18
JUNE	11

SPIRITS

GODMOTHER	0
ZIA	9
NOELLE	15
EIRA	17
HOLLY	11
PAX	11
GALEN	11
LUCIA	11
FINNIAN	11
MERRICK	11
IVY	11

ACT 1

SCENE 1: It's a Pig Deal

Exterior - Marble Brook City Park, Daytime

(KENT, the city maintenance worker, is scooping snow on the sidewalk of the city park, with several pine trees in the rear and sides. He makes a few scoops and then stops and faces the audience.)

KENT: Well, well, well... what do we have here? A whole crowd come to see little Marble Brook, eh? Can't say I blame you. It's a sweet little place. The kind of town where everybody knows your name, where the coffee shop always has a fresh pot brewing, and the streets twinkle just a little bit brighter around Christmas time. That's Marble Brook, although you'd be sorely pressed to find any sort of brook, creek, or river around here made of marble, lined with marble, near marble, or full of marbles.

(He leans into the crowd and says in a whisper) I think the first guy who ever lived here *lost* his marbles, if you get me? *(He makes a cuckoo sound.)*

But no mind! We're all pretty sane here today, as far as I know.

(He goes and puts the scoop against a tree and grabs a broom and continues to sweep up. LOU enters, dressed well, quick walking with a briefcase.)

KENT: Hey, Lou!

LOU: M-Morning, Kent. *(he rushes on)*

KENT: Where are you off to today in such a hurry?

LOU: *(spinning around, rushed, annoyed)* Big case – big, big case, you know – it's, like...huge.

KENT: Oh yeah? What's it about this time?

LOU: Huge case! Big...uh, big huge...criminal case involving a...a pig.

KENT: A pig?

LOU: Yes! Yes, a pig. Huge pig! No, not a huge pig, a huge case! A huge case about a relatively small pig.

(MABEL enters and crosses over to where KENT and LOU are standing, eavesdropping on their conversation.)

KENT: How small?

LOU: Well, uh, you know, technically-speaking — that is, speaking in terms of pigs, and sizes, and relative sizes, and growth profiles, and feed conversion rates....

KENT: A pig.

LOU: Yes, yes, very small pig, upset ladies, crushed dreams, ruined weekends. Very big case, very small pig.

KENT: Dreams crushed, you say.

LOU: Terrible! White linen, blueberries, hoof marks, the whole shebang.

MABEL *(butting in)*: And that was some of my best work, too!

KENT: Mabel! I didn't even see you there.

MABEL: Oh, Kent, that's fine, I was just walking by, as you do, and overheard what Lou was working on! It's MY work, of course.

KENT: The pig?

MABEL: Oh, goodness no, the blueberries!

KENT: You made the blueberries?

MABEL: No, no, just the woven pastries that they were in. Fresh that morning, too! Peggy wanted them for her fundraiser.

LOU: Oh, this...this is very interesting. *(gets out a notebook and starts taking notes)*

KENT: A fundraiser for what?

MABEL: Uhm, I think she said new hats for the girl scouts? Anyway, they were as fresh as could be, which is probably why that pig launched right into them! Can't resist my fresh pastries, right, Kent?

KENT: Uh, hah, no, not really, especially those chocolate-on-chocolate donuts you make. I should resist, but I usually don't.

MABEL: Oh! I'll have some ready in an hour. *(she winks)* Come by, won't you?

KENT: Uh, oh yes, sure thing. Right after I clear these sidewalks. The mayor wants the park looking nice for the Sprinkle.

MABEL: Toodle-oo! See you then! And Lou – stop by for some buns. You could use a little more meat on the bone! *(She playfully whacks him and heads offstage.)*

KENT: Good luck, Lou – both with your case and your buns.

LOU: Yes, yes, uh, thank you very much! I have to meet with the judge. *(looks at watch)* Oh gosh, oh no, I'm late! I'm late! *(rushes offstage)*

KENT: *(looks back to the audience after a pause)* Ok, so...maybe not ALL of us are sane.

(BARB enters, dressed in an overcoat, flinging a purse about.)

BARB: Where'd he go?

KENT: Who?

BARB: Lou!

KENT: Lou who?

BARB: Did you swallow an owl? Lou, the lawyer!

KENT: Oh, yes. Lou. He said he had a.... big case about a small pig. I think.

BARB: Yes, MY case about MY pig. Georgina. She's a sweet little thing, Georgie, my sweet little bacon-flavored tart.

KENT: Is she? He made her sound something mighty fierce.

BARB: Oh, it's Peggy again, she's making a big deal about it.

KENT: Peggy, Lou's wife?

BARB: Yes, yes – my potbellied pig happened to jump on her when she knocked on my door to sell me some woven pastries. Georgie was just saying hello!

KENT: That sounds like a simple misunderstanding.

BARB: Oh, it would be, except Peggy was holding a tray with a sample of the blueberry pastries on it and it ended up flipping onto her white dress and then onto the ground, and Georgina...well, she has a fondness for berries – and sweets – and people.

KENT: As pigs do.

BARB: So, she dives into the pile of pastries splattered all over the front steps and makes an *unholy* mess but...

KENT: Peggy did?

BARB: No, GEORGINA!

KENT: Gotcha.

BARB: And her dress was already ruined, with blueberry filling running down the white linen, and she was jumping all around yelling and grunting.

KENT: The pig?

BARB: PEGGY, the woman! Keep up.

KENT: Oh, sorry.

BARB: And then, because the steps were so slippery with blueberry sauce and frosting, Peggy slipped and fell.

KENT: Oh no! Is she ok?

BARB: ...and Georgina saw an opportunity to dive into the blueberry that was still on Peggy's dress and ... well, you can probably imagine the rest.

KENT: A bit of a disaster.

BARB: Anyway, I'm trying to get Peggy to let it go, but Lou is all gung-ho with charges and paperwork and a trial...!

KENT: Over her bruised ego, no doubt.

BARB: Assault with a pig! Who ever heard of it?

KENT: Uh HUH.

BARB: So...

KENT: So....

BARB: So...which way did he go?

KENT: Who?

BARB: LOU!!

KENT: *(points)*

BARB: Thanks! LOU!!! *(heads offstage as KENT makes a face – she runs smack into SERAPHINE and IRIS)*

BARB: Argh! Move! *(she barges past them offstage)*

IRIS: What's with Blabby Barb today?

SERAPHINE: I have NO idea. Hi Kent!

KENT: Hey, Seraphine! How's my little snow angel doing today?

SERAPHINE: Cold! You would think snow this pretty could be a lot warmer.

KENT: *(laughs)* Then they'd be the white sands of Alabama, you'd be building sandcastles instead of snowmen, and Santa would have to learn how to fit his jolly butt into a jetski. Right, Miss Iris?

IRIS: *(laughing back)* True, true. And we all know reindeer aren't very water resistant!

SERAPHINE: They are, just for a *very* short period of time.

IRIS: What's up with Barb today?

KENT: Oh, it's a case of a pig. And Lou. And blueberries. You don't want to know.

IRIS: I can only imagine. Christmas brings out the best in us all, doesn't it?

(ELSIE comes marching into the town square, full of business, with ROZ hot on her heels. ELSIE is wearing a modest outfit, but ROZ is in full workout gear.)

ROZ: Elsie, c'mon Elsie! You know you have to work on your form!

ELSIE *(spinning around)*: You know darn well that I hate to sweat, Roz! Why do you think I'm a librarian for the love of Pete?

ROZ: Well, I don't rightly know, I guess. I figured you were just a bookworm and realized you get paid to be one.

ELSIE: Ugh! *(trying to hold it together, sweetly)* Roz, I really appreciate you trying to look out for my health, but I really can't....

ROZ: Oh, come on! We can do jumping jacks together! *(she demonstrates right there in the park)*

KENT *(to ELSIE)*: Roz on your tail again about coming in for a fitness class?

ELSIE: Yes! She doesn't get it that not everyone wants to be a gym rat. I wasn't built to grunt.

KENT: Yeah, she tried to get me to come in, too, but then I said I do enough pulling of my own weight around here, I'm getting my workout already!

ROZ: Oh, oh! I know! A yoga class for your toddler reading time!

ELSIE: Toddlers can't do yoga!

ROZ: How do you know? Have they even tried? I'll ask June!

ELSIE: Argh, you're impossible. *(she heads off quickly)*

ROZ: Speed-walking! I love it! *(she heads off after her, speedwalking)*

(KENT, SERAPHINE, and IRIS watch them leave)

IRIS: You know, I'd pay good money to watch a toddler yoga class. That's gotta be entertaining.

SERAPHINE: Not really a holiday sort of activity, I guess, but ok.

KENT: Speaking of – isn't it about time for your class to pull out the holly and the jolly and get to decking the halls?

SERAPHINE: Oh, yeah, the Twinkle Sprinkle! I think we're talking about it in class today, but I'll have to see what Ms. Daferty has on her agenda – besides studying for an algebra test.

IRIS: Uh, ALGEBRA. My worst subject! They're still looking for my X, haven't found him yet, and I don't know Y!

KENT: Hah! Well, you two get moving along or you're going to be late – like usual.

IRIS: Ok, ok....just because we like to stop and smell the flowers from time to time. Not that there ARE any flowers right now...*(starts to walk toward SL)*

SERAPHINE *(hanging back)*: Kent, have you set up the trees with the anchors for the lighting like I asked?

KENT: Yup, sure did! It's all ready as well as some of the electrical drops you asked for, although I do have to wonder if you're powering Christmas lights or a rock concert, Seraphine.

SERAPHINE: Hey, you can never have too many Christmas lights!

KENT: The power company is going to have something to say about that!

(SERAPHINE laughs and she and IRIS exit)

KENT: *(turning back to the audience)* You can never be too careful with electricity – or, it seems, your pigs.

You know, folks... this year, in Marble Brook, something's a bit... *off*. Now, I don't mean pigs crashing pastry parties, but let's just say there's a bit of trouble brewing. The kind that you can't see at first. It starts small, like a little crack in the ice, but if you don't pay attention, it spreads.

See, in Marble Brook, Christmas is more than a holiday. It's a feeling, a...spirit that takes hold of every street, every shop window, every smile. But this year... something's gone wrong. There's a shadow creeping in, and if we're not careful, all the joy, the color, and the light... it might just fade away.

Now, don't get too worried just yet. This isn't the kind of story where the bad stuff wins, no sir. But it *is* the kind of story where things have to get a little dark before the light can shine its brightest. And who knows... maybe it'll take more than a few twinkling lights and candy canes to set things right this time. Maybe it'll take a bit of magic. Maybe even a little help from some folks who believe in the *real* spirit of the season.

So, keep your eyes open, and pay attention to the little things. A lot of little things.

(At this, GODMOTHER and the SPIRITS, who are all placed in and around the audience, stand up and turn on their individual lights, standing there, smiles on their faces.)

You never know who—or *what*—might be watching, waiting to lend a hand when things get rough.

(He walks slowly offstage. SPIRIT LIGHTS OUT, STAGE LIGHTS OUT)

SCENE 2: Mathematical Tinsel

Int - Ms. Dafferty's Classroom

(It is a typical American classroom with various desks, tables, and other furniture, and various decorations in the typical schoolroom vibe. MS DAFFERTY is at the front of the classroom while the chairs are filled by the STUDENTS)

MS DAFFERTY: ...and that is how you calculate the difference of “f” of “x” over negative “y” squared...

MARA: I swear, if she says the word, “exponent” one more time, I’m going to fold my head into an origami swan.

DOLAN: I know it’s supposed to make sense, but my head feels full of cotton and tree sap.

SIMON: This all makes sense if you just did the reading, you know.

SERAPHINE: You guys! SSHHHHHH!

MS DAFFERTY: SERAPHINE! Please don’t talk when I’m teaching.

SERAPHINE: But I was just...

MS DAFFERTY: Actually, don’t talk when I’m *not* teaching.

SERAPHINE: Yeah, but I...

MS DAFFERTY: Generally speaking, don’t talk. You do enough of it already.

SERAPHINE: *(frustrated noises)*

IRIS: Ms. Dafferty, I think she’s just really excited about what’s coming next. *(SERAPHINE nods enthusiastically.)*

MS DAFFERTY: Geography? *(SERAPHINE shakes her head vigorously.)*

IRIS: No! Christmas!

MS DAFFERTY: *(smiling a bit)* Yes, well...perhaps it is getting a little late in the day to continue with the deep math subjects. Rome wasn't graphed in a day.

(ALL STUDENTS cheer and put away their books and things.)

MS DAFFERTY: So, let's move on, shall we? I am happy to announce the start of this year's charitable decorating extravaganza, otherwise known as, "The Twinkle Sprinkle"!

SERAPHINE: WOOHOO! *(suddenly she claps her hands to her mouth and looks apologetic. SILAS from the back corner emits an audible groan.)*

SIMON: Ah, shoot, I was hoping it was the math bee.

DOLAN: Oh Simon, let's not encourage her!

MS DAFFERTY: As you know, each year this class takes on the task of decorating the town's central park for Christmas with lights, garland, bows, and all sorts of other decorations in preparation for the holiday season, and then we put out donation buckets to collect change for the homeless!

IRIS: And candy!

MS DAFFERTY: Yes, Iris, we also hang candy canes and other holiday treats so children and people all over can enjoy some sweetness as they gaze upon the fun decorations.

(SILAS emits a second, louder groan from the back.)

MS DAFFERTY: Ok, so let's start to get planning the decorations and who will be responsible for what!

SILAS: Or...you could not.

(Seraphine turns around and gives him the stink eye.)

MS DAFFERTY: Silas – you know this is a tradition. Everyone enjoys it.

SILAS: Oh yeah, there's nothing like wasting time hanging shiny stuff outside as a public service to the community.

DOLAN: Silas, what's your problem today?

SILAS: *My* problem? What is *my* problem? This entire *event* is my problem.

HEIDI: Why, because you have to do *work*?

SILAS: As much as I love hanging gaudy decorations in the park in the freezing cold, Heidi, I'd rather not.

IRIS: Partypooper.

SILAS: The only one who thinks this is a party is you, Iris. Frankly, it's a massive waste of resources.

MS DAFFERTY: Silas, this is a charitable event. We're doing it to raise money AND bring holiday cheer.

SILAS: *(standing up)* It's an explosion of plastic, wire, and glitter, and frankly, it's a plague on the good retinas of Marble Brook who didn't ask for the invasion.

MS DAFFERTY: Your complaints are noted, *sir*, but sit down, we haven't even started yet.

SILAS: Fine! *(he slumps down into his chair)* I just don't understand why we all have to suffer.

MS DAFFERTY: ...as I was saying, we will be planning everything starting tomorrow right after the test, so please make sure you dig through your closets tonight and find boxes of decorations, lights, and other Christmas-appropriate things.

DOLAN: That means you have to leave the bag of coal at home, Silas.

(SILAS makes a face at him.)

IRIS: Dolan, you're not helping.

DOLAN: Yeah, well, neither is he.

SIMON: Dolan has a point!

HEIDI: Ok, hush. Save it for his stocking.

SILAS: *(sing-song teasing)* I can't wait to see the both of you in matching Santa hats!

SIMON: You first, Silas!

(Classroom bell rings.)

MS DAFFERTY: *(as all the kids start to get up to leave)* Ok, kids! See you all tomorrow for a day of decorating and algebra testing!

(STUDENTS all simultaneously groan and say things like, “bye Ms. Dafferty!”, etc. as they walk out.)

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NOELLE: The Spirit of Joy

When laughter is bright, and hearts feel light,
I bring the cheer, like sunshine's delight.
I am Noelle, the joy you feel,
A spark for dark, a warmth that's real.

In songs you sing, in games you play,
I dance in life in every way
For Christmas joy, from dawn til night,
I'm here to give your spirit flight.

(NOTE: For each SPIRIT introductory poem, they will come front and center stage in between scenes and recite their poem. They should have their light lit during this. GODMOTHER will lead them on/off and ensure they are ok with their presentation as this is geared towards smaller children.)

SCENE 3: Perky Ponderings

Int - Brewed Awakening

(Interior of Brewed Awakening, a hip coffee shop in downtown Marble Brook. TRENT is the barista behind the bar. Seraphine and IRIS are sitting at a table nursing cups of coffee.)

TRENT: *(yelling)* Amanda!? Large white mocha, quad shot, almond milk, extra hot!

IRIS: So, what's his problem!?

SERAPHINE: Oh, you know, he's just moody. You know Silas, he's always 'dark and mysterious'.

IRIS: I don't think this is just being dark and moody, something really struck a nerve there when Ms. Dafferty started talking about the Twinkle Sprinkle. It's like someone slapped him across the face.

TRENT: *(yelling)* Bobby!? Medium dark roast in a large cup with extra steamed half and half all the way to the top, 7 pumps of syrup, extra whip!

SERAPHINE: I just don't get it. It's not like we're asking him to play Santa or something, he just has to show up and do a bit of decorating, and it's NOT Algebra. I mean, anything is better than that, right?

IRIS: Right! At least, that's what I think, but math makes my entire body hurt.

SERAPHINE: Fortunately, there's a solution to that – CAPPUCINO! Hey Trent!

TRENT: Yeah?

SERAPHINE: More joe, please? My cup runneth empty.

TRENT: That's your 3rd double shot for today, aren't you levitating already?

SERAPHINE: Trent, when I want your opinion about my caffeine levels, I'll order it from the online menu.

TRENT: Yeah, yeah, yeah, coming right up.

(He goes to work on another cappuccino and Seraphine turns back towards IRIS. Just then, MARA enters the coffee shop with HEIDI.)

MARA: *(seeing SERAPHINE)* Oh hi, Seraphine! Iris! How's it going with you two?

IRIS: Oh, you know, just catching up on the gossip of the day as well as some liquid encouragement.

MARA: I get that! Too much math.

HEIDI: Too many essays! I'm losing precious time with my houseplants. *(yelling over to him)* HEY TRENT! Venti green tea frappuccino, nonfat, six matcha!

TRENT: What? Are you serious? I'll have to use a shovel to get that into the cup!

HEIDI: *(feigning concern)* Oh, no.....there goes my tip.....

TRENT: Ok, ok. Sheesh.

SERAPHINE: Oh yes, uh, far too much of all of that. But it will all be good now, we'll be spending most of our time on the Twinkle Sprinkle! *(She and IRIS whoop together.)*

TRENT: Nicole!? Iced triple espresso, two pumps mocha, and an apple jolly rancher! *(muttering)* Are you even serious....

MARA: Uh, yeah. About that? What's with Silas?

SERAPHINE: I don't KNOW, that was really weird, wasn't it?

HEIDI: Well, maybe he's had a really bad day. It wasn't very sunny out today. You know, seasonal depression and all that.

SERAPHINE: *(nodding)* Yeah, that could be it, or the weight of his mascara. Maybe we can cheer him up a bit tomorrow. Someone should throw a pair of reindeer antlers on his head!

(TRENT comes and drops a cappuccino in front of SERAPHINE.)

TRENT: Hot caramel cap, double-shot – you want that on your tab?

SERAPHINE: Thanks, Trentie! *(he leaves back to the bar, shaking his head)*

MARA: Do you think we're...overdoing it...just a bit? I mean, the Sprinkle. Decking ALL of the halls so much. Going a little overboard?

SERAPHINE: NO! Not at all. I mean, I don't think so, but I love this time of year! It makes me so happy inside! What do you think, Heidi?

HEIDI: *(shrugging)* I mean, I like the holidays and all, but I guess sometimes it's not for everyone? I mean, we should be open to all cultures and beliefs, right?

SERAPHINE: Oh, sure, but that's why we include everyone from the class in it! It has to be everyone, or it just doesn't feel the same.

MARA: Ok, I was just...thinking about it and wondering if we came on a bit strong to Silas. Maybe he's just not all that jolly.

IRIS: He's just a sourpuss when it comes to things like this. He loves to rain on any available parade. He'll come around.

SERAPHINE: It doesn't matter what you come from, we can all get the holiday spirit!

MARA: Hmmm, maybe.

(TRENT appears in front of Heidi with a cup.)

TRENT: Here you go, Heidi. A hot cup of green leaf chewable smoothie. I didn't give you a straw because why bother? Eight-fifty, please.

HEIDI: EIGHT-FIFTY!? Trent MacDonald, shame on you for exploiting me like that!

TRENT: *(hands up in defense)* Hey, hey, it's not me. Mr. Vance sets the prices.

HEIDI: Can't you give me a little discount for ...uh...good behavior! Yeah! It's that time of year, you know. If Santa can....

TRENT: *(shaking his head and backing away)* Heck, no. The last time I gave a discount they made me mop the floor with a *paintbrush*.

HEIDI: Ok, how about a tab? Seraphine has one.

TRENT: Nope, she sweet-talked that one out of the boss, too. I dunno how, he *never* does that for anyone else. (*SERAPHINE beams.*) I need cold, hard cash. Or Venmo.

HEIDI: Pffft, whatever. Ok, here's your eight-fifty. And fifty cents on top of it just because we don't want you to have to do manual labor for your supper. I hope these drinks come with a free side of pearls.

TRENT: (*heavy on the sarcasm*) Thanks; as always, your business is appreciated. (*he walks back to the coffee bar*)

SERAPHINE: Well, foof. He could have at least given you a two-fer.

HEIDI: Oh, you know Trent; he's so worried about his boss he can't think of anything else, let alone doing something nice. He should drink more herbal tea!

MARA: Say, speaking of bosses, have you gotten your shopping money for Christmas yet, Seraphine?

SERAPHINE: Oh, not yet, but probably soon?

IRIS: Ugh, I've been trying to budget for presents all year and it's taken a ton of effort!

SERAPHINE: Because you had to cut down on the donuts?

IRIS: Because I had to cut down on the donuts!

MARA: Aww, well, maybe I'll get you a dozen for Christmas! I think Maggie has some seasonal ones.

IRIS: Ooooh, with cinnamon, please!

SERAPHINE: But really, I can't wait to start shopping but first – decorations! Gotta get them all up and going.

MARA: Hey, anything to get out of math for a few days!

IRIS: All right, I have to get going, I have a report due tomorrow and if I don't get to it, by the time this coffee wears off, I'm gonna crash into my pillow before I write a single word.

(*SERAPHINE and IRIS get up, grab their stuff, and make their way out of the coffee shop.*)

HEIDI: Hey – do you think they’re a bit weird?

MARA: How so? I mean, yes, but....

HEIDI: They’re just SO darn excited about this Christmas stuff, don’t you think?

MARA: Well, yeah. But I like Christmas, too. Especially the presents!

HEIDI: Yeah, that’s true. I’m just not quite so obsessed.

MARA (*shrugs*): Ah, well, like I said – more time with tinsel, less time with algebra.

HEIDI: I can cheers to that! (*They cheers glasses.*)

TRENT: (*yelling, exasperated*) A large triple-white chocolate extra-creamy mocha for....Spartacus? Really? If more than one of you stands up, I swear I’m going to dump this!

EIRA: The Spirit of Winter

Eira's my name, with snow in my stride,
I walk where the world is crisp and wide.
I bring the chill, the frost's cool grace,
With beauty and cold I fill the space.

In the hush of the snow, in the crackle of ice,
The winter's cold can be more than nice.
For Christmas is more than the warmth of fire,
In ice and snow we let hearts aspire.

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SCENE 4: A Draining Examination

Int - Ms. Dafferty's Classroom

(The next day. The students are all taking a test, clearly the air is tense. A timer goes off.)

MS DAFFERTY: AAAAAAAND TIME! That's it! Pencils down, please!

HEIDI: ARGH! I need a massage! Or hot yoga!

MARA: My brain! My precious brain!

IRIS: Seriously, does it count for more points if I'm only sentient pudding afterwards?

(MS DAFFERTY heads around the classroom, picking up tests as she goes.)

SIMON: You know, if you had studied the guide last night on Google Docs, this wouldn't have been quite so painful.

IRIS: That's easy enough for you to say, the numbers don't swim in front of your eyes like so many hungry sharks.

SIMON: Hey, I struggled with question 7!

MARA: But did you get it?

SIMON: Well...yeah. But it took me a minute!

(MARA makes a raspberry sound.)

DOLAN: I tried to study and then my pillow attacked me!

MS DAFFERTY: All right, as you all know, today is the start of our efforts towards the Twinkle Sprinkle! We'll be working on the plan today as well as starting to unpack the lights and garland and other decorations.

IRIS: And does that mean we get to forget about algebra for a while?

MS DAFFERTY: Oh, goodness no. I mean, after all, how you wrap lights around a Christmas tree in an increasingly-wider spiral can be described using an exponential formula.

SERAPHINE: Shut it, Iris! You'll get her on a tangent and we'll never get to the fun stuff!

(JUNE walks into the class doorway.)

MS DAFFERTY: On the subject of tangents, actually...

HEIDI: Oh, Nooooooooooooo.....

MS DAFFERTY: June Miller from Little Wonders daycare is here! She wants to know what you want her kids to make this year.

JUNE: Hi kids! Thanks for having me here again this year!

ALL STUDENTS *(in monotone)*: Hello Miss June!

JUNE: *(laughing)* Oh, I do love hearing that, even if your voices are a lot deeper than when you used to do that in preschool!

MS DAFFERTY: You said you had some ideas this year for us?

JUNE: Oh, oh yes! I do have some ideas. As you know, my daycare kids always work on crafts for your Twinkle Sprinkle so you have some real homemade decorations to put up along with the other ones!

SIMON *(under his breath)*: Yet again proving that there's nothing that can't be made with sufficient amounts of glue, construction paper, and glitter.

JUNE: I was thinking maybe this year we would make little Christmas trees with bedazzling jewels! How does that sound?

SERAPHINE: OH! Uh, yeah.....

DOLAN: Oh, that'd be....really something, Miss June!

JUNE: Dolan! I knew I could count on you to be excited!

MARA: Rhinestones do bring out the true joy of Christmas!

JUNE: Mara! That's my girl. Does it fit your theme?

IRIS: S-Sure does, Miss June!

JUNE: Well, this is just wonderful! We'll get started right away!

MS DAFFERTY: All right, then! Thanks for stopping by, June! *(starts moving her out the door)*

JUNE: See ya kiddos! Mwah! *(she exits)*

SILAS: Oh good, she's gone. Did she take the sugar packets with her?

MS DAFFERTY: Oooooooooooooook. I'm sure that will be just....fantastic. What were we doing?

HEIDI: Who's up for digging into the store room with me and finding last year's lights that are almost certainly tangled?

(A collective cheer arises over the class except for SILAS who again groans and puts his head down onto his desk.)

DOLAN: What's your problem, man?

SILAS: All of you! All of this!

DOLAN: What do you mean? We haven't even asked you to do anything yet. All you've done so far this season is groan and moan and act like someone's pulling your teeth out one-by-one.

SILAS: I really cannot stand another minute of this constant talk about sprinkling my twinkling all over the town.

IRIS: Come on, Silas; it's not that bad, you're just making it out to be.

SILAS: This entire season is full of eye-wrenching decorations, a billion tiny lights, flashy paper-wrapped boxes of junk purchased for an ungrateful audience, and songs that make your ears bleed. It truly is the worst time of the year.

IRIS: But there's cookies!

HEIDI: And there's sweaters, and hot cocoa, and cinnamon candles, and the holy orange!

(Everyone stops to look at her.)

HEIDI: What? My family has a holy orange. It's a thing.

SIMON: Ok, I don't have the brain for this right now.

SILAS: I'm pretty sure my head is currently wrapped in a sweater made out of cockleburrs. On fire.

SERAPHINE: You'll feel better once you get out of testing mode and into tinsel mode!

SILAS: Don't push it, Seraphine.

MS DAFFERTY: Hey! Silas, be nice. It's just a bit of decorating, nothing so serious.

SILAS: I don't see why for a week out of the year we have to freeze our fingers off just to show off the town for a few nights.

HEIDI: Well, I love the tradition. It's all so perfect, like a cup of hot, chai tea. Mmmm. Tea.

MARA: *(Suddenly standing up and looking thoughtful.)* You know, Silas – I think you might actually have a bit of a point. Why do we go all out every year?

(There's a pause. The students are clearly surprised by MARA, who normally doesn't side with SILAS. Her shirt is bright, standing out in the sea of holiday colors around her.)

MS DAFFERTY: Mara, what do you mean?

MARA: Welllllll... What's the point of wasting all this energy just to hang up a bunch of lights and decorations that'll come down in a couple of weeks? It's... I don't know. Kinda silly, right?

SILAS: Exactly my point!

IRIS: C'mon, Mara, Silas is just tiring.

MARA: Is he? Or is he the only one speaking some sense around here?

(She turns to SILAS and lifts her hand for a high-five. He grins, clearly pleased to have backup, and they slap hands. But as soon as they do, something odd happens: MARA's shirt, once a vibrant color, starts to dull, the color draining out of it until it turns a lifeless gray. The whole class gasps. This effect could be handled with a tear-away shirt, complementary lighting, or similar. See technical section.)

HEIDI: Uh... Mara? Your shirt... it... changed color!

MARA *(glancing down at her shirt, completely unfazed):* Huh. Weird.

SIMON *(pointing, shocked):* It was colored like five seconds ago!

MS DAFFERTY: Mara, are you alright? You didn't feel anything?

MARA: Nope. And honestly, I kinda like it better this way. Easier on the eyes.

SILAS *(laughing, amused):* And just think of how much easier it'll be to do laundry now!

(Some students laugh awkwardly, unsure if it's funny or unsettling. MS DAFFERTY watches the exchange closely, concern starting to cloud her expression.)

MS DAFFERTY: Let's... take it one step at a time. We'll still need everyone's help to make this year's Twinkle Sprinkle the best it can be.

SILAS *(leaning back, arms crossed, smug):* Yeah... good luck with that you can count us out. Right, Mara?

(MARA crosses her arms and sits back by SILAS and the room falls into a strange, uneasy silence, the festive energy from before now feeling dimmed. MS DAFFERTY clears her throat, trying to regain the spirit.)

MS DAFFERTY: Fine, you all can just....uh, sit there and think about ideas.

The rest of you, let's get to work. We've got a lot to plan, and I know you'll all bring your best ideas... even if some of us are a little more *enthusiastic* than others.

(She smiles encouragingly, but as the students begin to discuss decorations and plans, the strange incident with MARA lingers in the air.)

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HOLLY: The Spirit of Tradition

I am Holly, where old meets new,
In customs and practice, I see time through.
I guard all carols, each tale you've told,
The spirit of Christmas that never grows old.

In every tradition, in each family's ways,
I'm the thread that weaves through all holidays.
For Christmas is history, passed down from the heart,
And I'm here to keep that magic a part.

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SCENE 5: Auntie Em

Int - Seraphine's Room

(Later that evening, Seraphine is on her bed, attempting to study. There's a knock at the door.)

SERAPHINE: Yeah?

MARY ROSE: Hey, Sera. How goes the studying?

SERAPHINE: Poorly. I've only read this passage about the Civil War ten times and still have no idea what happened. Antietam? Anti-em? Aunt Tam? Blama-blam? I'm lost.

MARY ROSE: Why's that? Something on your mind?

SERAPHINE: Yeah....kinda. Something that happened at school today.

MARY ROSE *(sitting on side of bed)*: Ok, spill.

SERAPHINE: It's the Twinkle Sprinkle and everything...or, I guess, the *lack* of it.

MARY ROSE: Oh yeah, that's starting up soon, isn't it. That's your favorite!

SERAPHINE: I mean, everyone's supposed to be excited about the holidays and decorating and having fun and....but Silas, and now Mara...it's like they are doing all they can to ruin it for everyone else.

MARY ROSE: Silas? You mean the boy that always dresses as if he was trying out for the part of a ninja or joining a motorcycle gang?

SERAPHINE: That's the one. Normally he's just quiet and sits in the back but, this year – he's so against the Twinkle Sprinkle it's bringing everyone down.

MARY ROSE: What's with Mara? She's usually all about the holidays, isn't she?

SERAPHINE: Yeah, she used to be. She even agreed with him today. And Mom, her shirt...it turned gray, right in front of everyone! It was pink, and then it just...faded. Like everything about her went dull.

MARY ROSE: That's odd – Mara loves Christmas just as much as you, doesn't she?

SERAPHINE: (*nodding*) She used to, at least. She'd always be the first one to help hang up decorations. I mean, I remember when we were kids, and she'd come over to help us put up the tree. We'd be up half the night just untangling lights!

MARY ROSE: Oh, I remember. You and her and Iris would sit on the living room floor, sipping peppermint cocoa and arguing over where the angel should go. You were always determined it should be on the very top, even though you couldn't reach it.

SERAPHINE: Yeah, and Dad would lift me up to put it on every year. I swear, it was the highlight of my Christmas, that and the gingerbread house competitions that we'd have every year.

MARY ROSE: You cheated! You and your dad would load up the house with way too much frosting.

SERAPHINE: It was part of the strategy! A stucco house is always more stable. (*grins*)

MARY ROSE: Sure, Sera. Let's call it strategy. But you know, those little traditions—hanging ornaments, baking cookies—they're the reason you love Christmas so much, right? It's not just about the lights and presents. It's the memories, the feeling of family.

SERAPHINE: That's exactly it. Christmas always felt so magical because of those little things. And now, I just want to spread that same feeling to everyone else. But it feels like Silas and Mara don't even want to try.

MARY ROSE: Well, sweetie, not everyone grew up with the same traditions we did. Sometimes, people have their reasons for not feeling the same way about the holidays. But that doesn't mean you should stop spreading that joy. It's who you are.

SERAPHINE: I know, I just thought if I could keep up the spirit, I could help everyone else feel it, too. Remind them how this time of the year *can* feel.

MARY ROSE: And that's exactly what you should do, keep on being your happy self. Sometimes we have to be the examples of what we want in life, even if that takes longer to manifest in everyone else.

SERAPHINE: Thanks, Mom; I'll keep on trying.

MARY ROSE: That's my girl! Now, don't let those Grinches get you down. You've got more than enough sparkle for all of Marble Brook. How about a hot chocolate break? With extra marshmallows?

SERAPHINE: *(smiling)* Yeah. Yeah, that sounds good.

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PAX: The Spirit of Peace

I am Pax, in silence I stand,
A calming presence, a gentle hand.
I bring you peace, a gift of the season,
A time to reflect, to breathe, to reason.

When conflict stirs, when voices rise,
I quiet the storm beneath the skies.
For Christmas is calm, a moment to cease,
And I offer the gift of pure, simple peace.

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SCENE 6: Hog Wild

Ext - City Park, Daytime, the next day

(KENT is once again in the City Park, this time he is working on the wiring for one of the light poles. IRIS and HEIDI come walking in, carrying some boxes. They set them down, heavily.)

HEIDI: Ooof! That was heavy. That's gonna throw my chakras completely out of whack.

IRIS: *(trying not to roll her eyes)* Uh, yeah. Well, thanks for the help.

KENT: Hey, girls! What's in the boxes?

IRIS: Garland.

HEIDI: *Lead* garland.

KENT: *(ignoring her)* And...what am I supposed to do with this?

IRIS: Apparently, hang on to it. Seraphine said to drop it off at the park so it will be here for later when folks start decorating.

KENT: Oh, ok. Uh, I'll have to find someplace to put it where it won't be buried by whatever snowstorm whips up around these parts.

(Suddenly PEGGY storms on stage, clearly agitated, with BARB trailing behind her. IRIS and HEIDI are agape as KENT looks on in amusement.)

PEGGY: I mean, it's completely ridiculous, Barb! I can't believe I had to explain myself in court over this. It was a pig! Attacking me!

BARB: Peggy, it wasn't like that, Georgina was just being friendly...

PEGGY: Friendly?! That pig *lunged* at me, with *teeth*, and if you think for one second that I'm going to just let it go, you've got another thing coming!

KENT: Afternoon, ladies. Everything alright?

PEGGY: No, Kent, this pig is a *menace*.

(ROZ enters the stage in full workout gear, jogging in place.)

BARB: It was one tray, Peggy. And it wasn't Georgina's fault you were holding it so close to your dress.

KENT: I see, I see. So, this is the famous case Lou has been working on all day? The big... *pig trial*?

BARB: Yes. The "big" trial. Over my sweet Georgie saying hello in her own special way.

PEGGY: It wasn't "hello," it was a full-body *tackle*, and she ate half the tray before I could even react, let alone the dress that now looks like an eggplant exploded!

ROZ (*interjecting*): Wait, tackling? Did you say tackling? I'm up for some of that!

BARB: The pig, Roz. The pig.

ROZ: You bet! Let's toss around the pigskin and tackle!

BARB: Isn't there a road or trail around here you ought to be pounding with those sneakers?

ROZ: Oh, yeah! Always, always! 5-minute mile, baby! (*she takes off like a shot*)

BARB: She makes me tired just talking to her.

PEGGY: Well, at least she didn't make you BLUE!

(Before BARB can respond, LOU rushes in, looking harried, with papers sticking out of his briefcase. He stops when he sees the group, immediately looking exasperated.)

LOU: Oh no... not again. Ladies, please. We have a process. We'll handle this in court tomorrow, like civilized people. Please don't taint the witnesses.

PEGGY: I've tried being civil, Lou. And every time I do, she just... brushes it off.

BARB: I do not! (*she storms offstage*)

LOU: Oh for the love of....BARB!! *(he rushes after her)*

(PEGGY shakes her head and heads offstage in the opposite direction. The girls watch after them.)

IRIS: A pig?

KENT: Uh, yeah. Barb's, apparently. Her name is Georgina.

HEIDI: Sounds like a pig deal.

IRIS: Did someone get swine-dled?

HEIDI: Time to pig it up a notch.

IRIS: You're bacon me crazy.

HEIDI: Snout-standing!

KENT: Ok, ok, no need to go whole hog. What were we talking about?

HEIDI: Bacon.

IRIS: No, garland!

HEIDI: Full of fiber but not nearly as tasty.

IRIS: Kent, if you could watch after this until we come to decorate, we'd appreciate it.

KENT: Got it, I'll find some place to stash it until the class arrives.

HEIDI: You know, Kent, maybe we could make the park a bit more eco-friendly this season. I was thinking – solar lighting?

KENT: Solar-powered lighting? In winter? In Marble Brook?

IRIS: Yeah, I'm not sure the sun agrees with you on that one, Heidi. It sets at like 2pm.

HEIDI: Well, a girl can dream, right?

IRIS: Uh huh, keep on dreaming. C'mon, Heidi!

HEIDI: Oh don't be pig-headed.

IRIS: STOP.

(They exit.)

(MABEL enters with a tray of donuts.)

MABEL: Oh, Kent! I have your donuts for you!

KENT: Get back from me, woman! I only ate a half dozen yesterday!

MABEL: But these are chocolate-cherry! I need you to sample these before I make some for the Twinkle Sprinkle!

KENT: Oh, look at the time – gotta go! *(he heads offstage in a hurry)*

MABEL: Kent, come back! They're calling you!!! *(she runs after him)*

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GALEN: The Spirit of Giving

I am Galen, with hands open wide,
In giving I find all my greatest pride.
Not only in gifts wrapped up with care,
But in kindness and love and all we can share.

The spirit of giving comes straight from the heart,
A reminder that all can play a big part
In giving, at Christmas, in large and small things,
And throughout all the seasons for joy that it brings.

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SCENE 7: Broadening Discontentment

Int. Ms. Dafferty's Classroom, Later that Day

(The bell rings and in files SERAPHINE, IRIS, DOLAN, colorful and happy. MS DAFFERTY is already at the front of the room.)

SERAPHINE: Ok, ok, so when we get there, the very first thing we have to do is retrieve the boxes of garland, and then get that strung up between the trees and the light poles.

IRIS: Why the garland first? Why not the lights?

SERAPHINE: Because the wire on the garland is stronger than the wire on the lights, so they have to be the foundation for any spans that drape between things.

DOLAN: Yeah, but we put lights on the trees first!

SERAPHINE: Right, but we don't put garland on the trees, do we? That wouldn't make much sense – fake pine on real pine?

DOLAN: Oh, yeah, I guess not.

(At this, the door opens and in files the rest of the class, but these are all now Bland – SIMON, MARA, HEIDI, and finally, SILAS.)

SERAPHINE: Heidi? Simon? You too?

(HEIDI gives SERAPHINE a disdainful look.)

SIMON: *(Ignoring her)* Are we getting back to algebra today or are we having more of this.....festive junk?

MS DAFFERTY: Uh, well, the plan is to continue planning for how we are going to set up the park.

MARA: I don't know why we're even bothering, it's just going to be the same old tacky decorations.

HEIDI: Yeah, because what we really need is more glitter getting stuck in our hair for weeks!

DOLAN: Well, some of us *like* the glitter! Maybe we *like* being festive! Maybe you'd feel better about it if you joined in instead of just....sitting there.

SIMON: Oh, I'm helping – by keeping my sanity intact. Seriously, this is exhausting.

MS DAFFERTY: Ok, ok, let's keep it friendly, everyone. We're a team, right? We need to work together to make this happen. Let's move on to assigning specific tasks; can we find something for everyone to do?

IRIS: Ooo, ooo, can I be in charge of the lights? I found this really cool way to make them look like snowflakes!

SILAS: Oh, yes, let's blind everyone! Nothing says "holiday magic" like a sparkly little attention parade.

SERAPHINE: It's not just "stuff", it's about making everyone feel warm and bright! It's about...spreading joy!

SILAS: Spreading annoyance, more like it.

SERAPHINE: Maybe if you tried a bit harder, you'd see it's more than that. You just can't see it from that slumped-down position you occupy.

MS DAFFERTY: Let's not turn this into a debate! I know we have some different opinions here, but surely we can find a way to make this work? How about we split into different groups and start on different tasks? Maybe those that want to do decorations can start on that and others who want to do...other things...can...uhm...

SILAS: Yeah, can we make a, "No Twinkle", group?

(MARA, SIMON, and HEIDI raise their hands immediately, grinning. The rest of the class looks deflated, and MS DAFFERTY sighs, clearly frustrated.)

MS DAFFERTY (*forcing a smile*): Silas... that's not exactly what I had in mind. How about we try to focus on what we can do together?

MARA: (*forcefully*) Or maybe we don't *want to*. Why should we pretend everything's all perfect and cheery just because it's December?

(The room falls silent, tension hanging in the air. MS DAFFERTY looks from one group to the other, unsure how to bring them back together.)

MS DAFFERTY: Alright, uh...how about we take a short break? Maybe everyone can think about what they *do* want to contribute, and we'll come back with fresh ideas. Sound good?

(The colorful students nod, but the "bland" group doesn't respond, just sitting in their chairs, unmoved. MS DAFFERTY sighs softly, giving SERAPHINE a hopeful look as she heads back to her desk.)

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

SCENE 1: Coffee Convincing

Int. Brewed Awakening, After School

(SERAPHINE and IRIS are sitting in the coffee shop and both are nursing hot cocoas.)

IRIS: You know, if you keep stirring it so aggressively, it'll curdle.

SERAPHINE: What?

IRIS: Your hot cocoa. You look like a blender.

SERAPHINE: I don't get it, Iris; they're all so determined to ruin *everything* and did you hear how they spoke to Ms. Dafferty?

IRIS: I KNOW, it was so disrespectful. Like she isn't even the teacher. I guess some people just aren't into the whole...Christmas thing.

SERAPHINE: But WHY? WHY do they have to be so miserable about it? And it wasn't always this way – I mean, Silas, sure, but Simon? Mara? HEIDI!?? Heidi is the peak of optimism and all things nature and butterflies and organic wheat germ and.....

IRIS: Well, to be fair, Simon looked like he had swallowed a bug today, so maybe....

(TRENT is listening to all of this and drifts over.)

TRENT: A bit of a festive dilemma on your hands?

IRIS: Hi Trent, yeah, you could say that. The Twinkle Sprinkle is looking more like a Fizzled BLAH.

TRENT: Have you tried bribing them with cookies? I mean, that usually works for me.

SERAPHINE: *(exasperated look)* Cookies? Trent, they're not five. I don't think a sugar rush is going to solve this.

TRENT: You know, I've seen a lot of folks come through here this time of year. Some people hate Christmas, and others...well, they embrace it like it's a lifeline.

SERAPHINE: And which one are you, Trent?

TRENT: (*grins*) I guess it depends on the day. But I will say – Christmas in Marble Brook? It's hard not to feel something, even for a grump like me. Are you sure I can't convince them with a snickerdoodle?

SERAPHINE: Not even the expansive power of cinnamon can convince them.

TRENT: Hey, you'd be surprised what people will do for a good cookie, that's all I'm saying.

IRIS: I think it's a bit deeper than that.

SERAPHINE: (*interrupting*) ...and no, a *caffeine* rush is also not going to solve this, ok?

TRENT: Ok....hrm.....(*snaps his fingers*). How about *reverse psychology*? Tell them they are “too bland” to participate and they will take it as a challenge!

(*Both girls just stare at him in silence while he looks back and forth at them hopefully.*)

TRENT: Alright, alright, I get it. Not everyone is a fan of my genius. I'm just saying that some people have to be nudged...or even tricked...to get involved sometimes.

IRIS: I mean, it's not the worst idea, it's just a matter of *how*. *How* do we convince them that this isn't all a bad, terrible thing?

SERAPHINE: Do we just....leave them alone and hope they come along with it? Stop trying to pressure them into helping?

IRIS: Maybe.....maybe. Maybe they just need to wait and see what it's all about before committing.

TRENT: Hey, that's the spirit! Or at least, it's a plan in the making! And if it doesn't work, there's always cookies!

SERAPHINE: Thanks, Trent. I don't know if we can make it work, but...at least it's something.

IRIS: We'll work on it together; we'll figure it out.

TRENT: *(heading back to the counter)* And if all else fails, I'll be here with a hot pot of cocoa and an emergency stash of snickerdoodles!

(SERAPHINE and IRIS laugh, their spirits lifted a bit.)

SERAPHINE: Ok, let's get out of here and get to thinking – Twinkle Sprinkle isn't going to save itself.

LUCIA: The Spirit of Light

I am Lucia, with candles so bright,
I will guide you through the longest night.
Where darkness lingers, I bring the glow,
A beacon of hope wherever you go.

In each little flame, in stars shining high,
In daytime and nighttime lights in the sky,
Christmas is light, so pure, warm, and true,
I share that light and that brightness with you.

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SCENE 2: Frustrations

Int. Seraphine's Room, Evening

(SERAPHINE is sitting on her bed, staring at her phone, looking frustrated and deep in thought. The room is dimly lit, and she's surrounded by notebooks and bits of holiday decorations, evidence of her attempts to plan the Twinkle Sprinkle. There's a soft knock on the door, and MARY ROSE enters, a gentle smile on her face.)

MARY ROSE: Hey, sweetheart – how's everything going with the Twinkle Sprinkle?

SERAPHINE: Oh, mom! It's a complete disaster!

MARY ROSE: Oh gosh, Sera – what happened!?

SERAPHINE: It's the others – the 'bland band'. Most everyone else has joined them now, and they are awful, and they don't want to help, and they insist it's all stupid, and I've been thinking about ideas all night, and I don't know what to do! *(She is on the verge of tears.)*

MARY ROSE: Oh wow – do you have any idea what you can do?

SERAPHINE: *(shaking her head)* We just keep trying to convince them but now it's just a constant battle, back and forth, with no progress, and even Ms. Dafferty is frustrated and out of ideas. I mean, what am I supposed to do, just give up?

MARY ROSE: Well, that's not what my daughter usually says, right?

SERAPHINE: I know, but this is just so darned...infuriating.

MARY ROSE: It can be, yeah. Especially when everyone else is trying to be the sore spot in an otherwise happy day.

SERAPHINE: I mean, I know it's not everyone's favorite time of year, but...

MARY ROSE: ...BUT....you also don't know why it isn't their favorite?

SERAPHINE: Well, yeah.

MARY ROSE: Are you sure that Christmas isn't traumatic for them or something?

SERAPHINE: Like...someone died?

MARY ROSE: Well, yes, or just that they had a bad run-in with a mean-looking Santa. You know some of those old-fashioned plastic Santas were creepy as anything!

SERAPHINE: *(wide-eyed)* Ooooooh, yeah. There's some real nasty ones out there. But – I don't think anyone has mentioned trauma.

MARY ROSE: Well, you know – sometimes people won't follow because...they haven't seen something worth following.

SERAPHINE *(stops, looks at her, confused):* What do you mean?

MARY ROSE: I mean, have you tried just...leading by example? Showing them what it means to really celebrate, to share the joy, instead of just *telling* them? Maybe if they see how it works in real life, how it isn't just about the decorations and lights, they'll choose that path.

(SERAPHINE is quiet and thinks for a moment, then eyes widen as it starts to click.)

SERAPHINE: Trent said something similar –

MARY ROSE: Trent?

SERAPHINE: Oh, the barista at the coffee shop. You know the one.

MARY ROSE: Ah, yes, nice boy, but wouldn't know an oat milk from an almond if it bit him on the shin.

SERAPHINE: He said maybe people have to be tricked – or nudged....

MARY ROSE: I don't think you win many people over by tricking them, unless it's at Halloween, but nudging....well. There can be many ways of doing that.

SERAPHINE: Up till now, we've just been... fighting them, pushing back whenever they push. But we haven't really *shown* them what they're missing...

MARY ROSE: Exactly. Maybe instead of fighting them, you show them. Show them how beautiful it can be, how much joy it brings you. Sometimes, the best way to change someone's mind is to show them the thing they're missing.

(SERAPHINE's face slowly brightens as the idea takes root, a smile spreading across her face.)

SERAPHINE *(suddenly excited)*: That's a great idea, Mom! If we can just... *show* them how wonderful it can be, maybe they'll see what we're trying to do. We'll decorate the classroom so beautifully they won't be able to help but notice...

(She jumps off the bed, grabbing her phone and frantically texting.)

MARY ROSE *(chuckling)*: I take it you've got a plan, then?

SERAPHINE: *(texting)* Yeah, I might be out late tonight, mom, if that's ok?

MARY ROSE: All for the sake of the season? I guess so.

SERAPHINE *(nodding, barely looking up from her phone)*: Yeah, I'm going to message Iris and Dolan, and we'll meet at the school tonight. Iris has a key because of the basketball team. We'll decorate the whole classroom as a surprise—no more arguing or trying to convince them. We'll just... let the decorations speak for themselves.

(She finishes her message and looks up at MARY ROSE, beaming.)

SERAPHINE: Thanks, Mom. That's exactly what we needed to do.

MARY ROSE *(standing up, giving her a gentle pat on the shoulder)*: I'm glad I could help, sweetheart. Just remember, sometimes a little bit of love and patience can do more than all the arguing in the world. Catch the flies with honey, as they say.

SERAPHINE *(grinning as she heads for the door, pulling on her coat)*: I will. Thanks, Mom! I'm going to make this the best Twinkle Sprinkle ever... and I'm going to do it *my* way.

MARY ROSE (*calling after her, playfully*): Don't forget to bring back some of that holiday cheer for me, too!

(*SERAPHINE laughs, her voice echoing back as she heads out the door.*)

SERAPHINE: I will, I promise!

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FINNIAN: The Spirit of Wonder

I'm Finnian the spirit where wonders don't cease
In each shining star, in each dream of peace
I bring awe and beauty to holiday cheer,
The newfound amazement of joy every year.

In snow globes, in tales, in a child's bright eye,
In each glowing light that bends up to the sky,
In Christmas is wonder, a world to explore,
And I'm here to open that magical door.

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SCENE 3: Late-Night Lights

Int. Ms. Dafferty's Classroom – Late at night

(SERAPHINE, IRIS, and DOLAN work quietly but with growing excitement, sneaking around the classroom as they hang decorations. Garland loops around every corner, Christmas lights are strung across the ceiling, glittery snowflakes dangle from the walls, and ornaments are hung everywhere. The room slowly transforms into a glowing, over-the-top holiday wonderland.)

SERAPHINE: I think we did it, guys. This place looks like Christmas exploded in here!

IRIS: Exploded? More like it went completely *bonkers*. I love it!

DOLAN: You sure this isn't a bit... much? I mean, there's garland on the map of the United States... and snowflakes on the science posters. Is snow a molecular compound?

SERAPHINE: Dolan, it's *Christmas*! There's no such thing as "too much." The more joy, the better!

DOLAN: *(with hesitation)* No, it's just... *(he pauses, looking around the brightly decorated room)* I guess... maybe I'm worried that it's not going to work. I mean, what if they don't change their minds? What if this... *(gestures to the decorations)*... doesn't do anything?

SERAPHINE: Don't worry, Dolan. Tomorrow, this will make everyone feel the Christmas spirit. Even Silas and Mara.

DOLAN: I guess. I just... I don't know. I don't like making people upset. And it feels like Silas is always upset.

IRIS: That's because Silas chooses to be upset. But tomorrow, maybe he'll see that not everyone feels that way. Maybe he'll realize that there's more to this than just decorations.

SERAPHINE: And if he doesn't, Dolan, it's not on you. You've put your heart into this, and that's all that matters. If he can't see that, then maybe he's the one missing out.

DOLAN: I hope you're right. I just... I want everyone to feel the way we do right now, like... this is something special.

IRIS: They will, Dolan. You'll see. And even if they don't, well... we've still made this place amazing, haven't we?

SERAPHINE: Tomorrow's going to be magical. I know it. We've created something beautiful, and that's what Christmas is all about—sharing beauty and joy, even with people who don't want it.

DOLAN: Yeah... I guess you're right. And maybe... maybe this will be enough to change their minds.

IRIS: And if it doesn't, well... we'll just add more glitter!

DOLAN: Please, no more glitter. I think we've already crossed the line into 'too much' territory. I'll never get rid of this in my clothing at this point. It's here forever!

SERAPHINE: There's no such thing as too much glitter!

(They all laugh, the tension easing. The room glows softly around them, a perfect contrast to the quiet night outside.)

IRIS: You know... this is a pretty good Twinkle. Not bad practice!

DOLAN: Yeah... let's hope so.

(They stand together for a moment, taking in the festive transformation they've made to the classroom.)

MERRICK: The Spirit of Merriment

I'm Merrick, in laughter and giggles I reign,
Where joy and merriment flow like champagne.
I bring the games, the smiles, the song,
Wherever I go, the cheer belongs.

In gatherings bright, in moments of fun,
I'm the spirit that gets the festivities done.
For Christmas is merriment, pure and true,
And I'm here to share that laughter with you.

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SCENE 4: Undeck the Halls

Int Ms. Dafferty's Classroom, The Next Day

(The classroom is revealed in all its glory, dripping with Christmas excess: lights, garlands, balls, tinsel, wreaths, snowflakes, and an explosion of red, green, gold, and silver. MS DAFFERTY enters.)

MS DAFFERTY *(looking around)*: Oh my goodness! Look at all this! This is incredible! Someone pulled an all-nighter!

(SIMON, MARA and HEIDI enter, dressed in their usual dull clothes, and they stop in their tracks, unimpressed.)

SIMON: What is this?

MARA: It looks like Christmas threw up in here.

HEIDI: Ugh, it's so... gaudy. This much tinsel should be illegal. Who thought this was a good idea??

DOLAN: Uh oh.....

(They slowly walk further into the room, clearly unamused. MARA flicks at a dangling ornament with distaste.)

MARA: Honestly, do people actually enjoy this? It's just... stuff. Who even cares?

(SILAS enters the room behind everyone else and stops, looking around in disbelief.)

SILAS: What...is...all...this...? *(An evil grin slowly crawls across his face.)*
SERAPHINE! Is this all your doing?

SERAPHINE: Y-Yes, of course. I mean, no. It's all of us – we all helped. Don't you like it?

SILAS: Like it? Why, I love it!

SERAPHINE: You do!??

SILAS: Yes! I love it so much I want to squeeze it!

(Before SERAPHINE can respond, SILAS lets out a frustrated yell and lunges at the decorations. He rips down a strand of garland violently and smashes it into a tight ball. The kids all gasp, shocked as he begins tearing apart everything they worked on. MS DAFFERTY tries to grab onto him but utterly fails to do so as he's in a rampage.)

MS DAFFERTY: Silas, that's enough! Calm down!

SILAS *(yelling as he rips down lights, throwing ornaments to the ground):* This is all just *fake!* It's just *stuff!* Decorations aren't going to make anyone feel better!

(He tears down another strand of lights, the room is in chaos, decorations falling everywhere.)

You think you can fix everything with some stupid lights?!

SERAPHINE: *(pleading)* Silas, please! We can fix it! We worked so hard on—

SILAS: *(spinning on her, eyes wild)* Fix it? Fix what, Seraphine? You think hanging up a bunch of shiny lights is going to fix everything that's wrong? It's all empty! All of this... it's pointless!

(He grabs a miniature Christmas tree, smashing it to the ground. Baubles scatter across the floor, rolling under desks as the others stand frozen in shock.)

MS DAFFERTY: *(desperate, her voice trembling)* Silas, stop this! Right now!

SILAS *(turning on her, eyes wild):* No! It's pointless! It's all just empty! You're wasting your time trying to make things look pretty when everything is still *broken* underneath!

(He turns and storms out of the classroom. Everyone is left stunned and silent. The color begins to drain from the room, the lights flicker out, and all the decorations fade to a dull, lifeless gray. SERAPHINE stands in the middle of the wreckage, staring after Silas with tears in her eyes.)

SERAPHINE *(whispering to herself, heartbroken):* It wasn't about the decorations, Silas. It was about... trying. I was only *trying*. *(she sobs)*

IVY: The Spirit of Hope

I'm Ivy and here I stand ever strong,
With hope in my heart right where it belongs.
I grow through the cracks, when life seems most bare,
Reminding that hope will always be there.

When all feels lost, when dark shadows fall,
My hope breaks through, standing so tall,
Christmas is hope, a desire for good things,
And brighter days my spirit brings.

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SCENE 5: Final Straws

Int - Silas' Bedroom

(This is a miserable place – black, white, grays, shadows, devoid of anything fun or interesting. It's a bit of a mess. It's chaos and pain in bedroom form. SILAS is laying on his bed, dressed in black, hoodie, etc. He has a pair of headphones on, but he isn't moving. He's not asleep but clearly in a funk. The door of his bedroom suddenly bursts open and Seraphine shoves her way in.)

SERAPHINE: Whoa!

SILAS: *(ripping off his headphones)* What are you doing here!? Ever heard of knocking?

SERAPHINE: What WAS that back there? You want to tell me about what just happened?

SILAS: Why. Are. You. Here.

SERAPHINE: Because I want some answers! And when she answered the door, your mom just sneered at me, "Just barge in, he'll never hear you anyway!"

SILAS: Yeah, well, maybe that's because nobody has anything interesting to say!

SERAPHINE: How would you know? You never take any time to even listen to anyone else, or care about anything in the entire world!

SILAS: How am I supposed to care about anything? It's all meaningless!

SERAPHINE: See, that's it exactly, you are so angry at everything you can't see the joy in it, even at *Christmastime*.

SILAS: *(scoffing)* Christmas! As if it means anything to me at all.

SERAPHINE: Do you even KNOW what it means to put up decorations? To hang lights? To wrap presents? To listen to Christmas music?

SILAS: Sure, it's an excuse to spend money on junk.

SERAPHINE: No! You've got it all wrong! People are trying, they're trying to find happiness, to find joy in things, to find meaning.

SILAS: Joy? You think plastic trees and string lights can fix *this*? Look around, Seraphine! A family struggling to pay rent, me barely holding on to friendships, and parents that can't stand to be in the room with me let alone love me. There's no point pretending that it's all happy and carefree with a few twinkling lights.

SERAPHINE: I didn't.....I didn't know that.....I....

SILAS: Oh, what, no 'Merry Christmas' on your lips? What's the point when it's all so... hollow? I don't have any joy left to "bring." You might as well ask me to decorate with smoke. There's nothing left, Seraphine. No joy, no happiness. So why fake it?

SERAPHINE: Maybe you don't get it. Maybe you've forgotten how to feel anything but this... *darkness*. But that doesn't mean everyone else has! That doesn't mean *I* have.

SILAS: Oh, well good for you! Congratulations on having all that sunshine to spare. Wish I could borrow some.

SERAPHINE: Then why don't you? – How about *this*!?

(She suddenly lunges at him and wraps him in a huge, crushing bear hug. Silas tries to pull away, startled.)

SILAS: What the—! Seraphine, stop! What are you—?!

SERAPHINE: *(yelling in frustration)* You need this, Silas! You *need* this!

(She screams and they collapse to the ground in a heap. The room is still for a long time. SILAS finally sits up, blinking in disbelief. His clothes are now full of color, his face brighter, cheeks flushed. He looks at himself, stunned.)

SILAS: What... what just happened?

(A smile begins to break across his face, unsure but growing. He slowly rises, looking himself over, reveling in the change. Then, as realization hits him, his expression turns to horror.)

SILAS: Seraphine? *(He rushes to her side. She lies pale, drained of all color. Her breathing is shallow, barely noticeable. Silas shakes her gently.)*

Seraphine! No... no, no, no! What have you done? Why? Why would you do this for me? I don't *deserve* this! I don't deserve you! Please... please come back...

(He holds her close, unsure of what to do, but desperate. From the shadows, ZIA steps forward, ethereal, clothed in white with a crown of snowflakes that shimmer in the dim light. She approaches silently, her presence calm but powerful. The other SPIRITS slowly appear from all sides of the stage, backstage, side stage, etc. and form a group behind ZIA, tended by the GODMOTHER as needed.)

ZIA: Silas...

SILAS *(choking on his words)*: Who... who are you?

ZIA: We are the spirits of Christmas.

NOELLE: We are behind the decorations, the lights, the laughter.

EIRA: We are what brings warmth to the cold and light to the dark.

ZIA: This is what Seraphine was trying to give to you – what she *gave* to you. From herself.

SILAS *(struggling to understand)*: But... why? Why would she—?

GALEN: Because Christmas is not about the decorations or the lights or the music or the presents.

LUCIA: It's about how we treat each other, how we give of ourselves to others.

HOLLY: The traditions and customs we follow with our friends and family!

MERRICK: How we have fun!

FINNIAN: The wonder in every child's eyes.

PAX: The peace that you feel when everything is right.

ZIA: Seraphine understood that. She gave her spirit for you because she believes in what Christmas truly means.

EIRA: The spirits of Christmas are not magic; we cannot solve all problems, we do not make the bad go away.

IVY: But what we can do is give hope – hope for better things, for ourselves, for each other...

(Zia reaches into her robes and pulls out a clear glass container. One-by-one each Spirit comes forward and places inside the container his/her shining colored orb corresponding with their individual color scheme.)

HOLLY: The Spirit of Tradition

PAX: The Spirit of Peace

GALEN: The Spirit of Giving

LUCIA: The Spirit of Light

FINNIAN: The Spirit of Wonder

MERRICK: The Spirit of Merriment

IVY: The Spirit of Hope

NOELLE: The Spirit of Joy

EIRA: The Spirit of Winter

(ZIA takes the now glowing jar and holds it as she extracts her own glowing sphere from her pocket and places it inside.)

ZIA: The Spirit of Christmas. *(She holds up the jar.)* This... is what you've been missing, Silas. All the hurt, all the pain in your life... it clouded the spirit within you. But now, only you can restore her.

(She gently places the jar in his hands. Silas stares at it, awe and fear mixing in his expression.)

SILAS (*whispers*): Only I can...

(He kneels beside SERAPHINE, slowly placing the glowing jar on her chest. The light intensifies, filling the room. Seraphine gasps, her eyes fluttering open as the color floods back into her skin. She sits up, clutching the jar, dazed. Silas immediately pulls her into a tight embrace.)

SILAS (*softly*): SERAPHINE... you're okay. You're okay...

SERAPHINE (*still in shock, but smiling as she hugs him back*): Silas?

SILAS (*with a tearful laugh*): Yeah... yeah, it's me. Thank you... for everything.

(They hold each other tightly as ZIA and the SPIRITS watch over them, their expressions serene. Quiet smiles grace their lips as the SPIRITS step back into the shadows.)

SCENE 6: Recoloring

Int. Ms. Dafferty's Classroom

(The classroom is dark and gray, the decorations are limp and dull, and the "Bland Band" — MARA, SIMON, HEIDI, and now DOLAN, IRIS, and MS DAFFERTY — sit slouched in their seats, looking bored and uninterested. The room feels heavy, devoid of the cheer it once held. SILAS and SERAPHINE quietly enter. They're both bright and full of color, a stark contrast to the dullness around them. SILAS takes a deep breath, glancing at SERAPHINE, who nods reassuringly. They step forward together.)

SILAS: Hey, everyone...

MARA: Oh great, the human Christmas light is back.

SIMON: Yeah, seriously. What do you two want? Haven't you had enough glitter for one year?

(SERAPHINE steps forward, her eyes calm but determined.)

SERAPHINE: No, we haven't. And we won't stop until this place feels like Christmas again. We're not here to argue or to fight. We're here because we want to share something with you.

HEIDI: Share what? More tinsel? Because we're good, thanks.

SILAS: No... not tinsel. Not just decorations. We want to share something bigger. Something we didn't realize until just now.

(The "Bland Band" looks at him curiously. Mara tilts her head, studying him.)

MARA: Oh really? And what's that?

SILAS *(hesitant, but gaining confidence as he speaks):* We were wrong. About all of this. About... Christmas. I thought all of this was just about lights and decorations and, well... fake cheer. But it's not. It's about finding light when everything feels dark. It's about giving... even when you don't feel like you have anything left to give.

(MARA narrows her eyes, unsure of where this is going.)

MARA: So what, you're just suddenly all... happy now? Just like that?

SERAPHINE: No, not just like that. It took a lot. But it took *seeing* something — feeling it. And that's what we want for you, too. We want you to see what you've been missing.

(SILAS moves over to one of the dull garlands, gently touching it. For a moment, nothing happens. Then, slowly, a bit of color begins to return to the garland, spreading out like a ripple, turning it bright and vibrant. The "Bland Band" watches, eyes widening slightly.)

SIMON *(sitting up, surprised):* How did you...?

SILAS *(smiling softly, still touching the garland):* It's not magic. It's just... seeing what's possible. When you let yourself hope a little bit, when you let yourself care.

(SERAPHINE picks up a small, dull ornament from the desk and cradles it in her hands. Slowly, it begins to glow, filling with color and light until it sparkles brilliantly. She turns to MARA, holding it out to her.)

SERAPHINE: We're not asking you to suddenly love Christmas or to be just like us. The problems of the entire world aren't solved. Not every issue is fixed. We're just asking you to give it a chance. To let yourself see the beauty... even if it's just for a moment.

(Mara hesitates, glancing at the others. Heidi looks torn, while Simon frowns, but it's less certain now. Slowly, Mara reaches out and takes the ornament, staring at it. The color doesn't fade, and she looks up at Silas and Seraphine, almost in disbelief.)

MARA: I... I don't get it. How can you just... change everything like this?

(Silas steps closer, looking at her earnestly.)

SILAS: Because the spirits — the spirit of joy, winter, tradition, peace, giving, light, wonder, merriment, and hope — are all wrapped up in the spirit of Christmas. They are what becomes of us when we care, when we try. And maybe...just maybe...we can make this place a little brighter if we do it together.

(MARA looks down at the ornament in her hands, her fingers gently brushing over the now vibrant surface. Slowly, she nods.)

MARA (*softly*): I... I didn't know it could feel like this.

(Heidi shifts uncomfortably in her seat, her arms still crossed but her expression softer.)

HEIDI: I don't know... I mean, it just feels... pointless.

SERAPHINE (*gently*): It's not. It's not about making everything perfect. It's about trying. About bringing a little bit of joy, even when things aren't easy. It is about the effort we make for each other. It's about spreading love, even when things seem dark. It's about *hope*.

We don't want to leave anyone out. So, will you help us? Will you give this a chance, just this once?

(There's a long pause. SIMON looks at MARA, then at HEIDI, and finally at SILAS and SERAPHINE.)

SIMON: Alright... but if we're going to do this, it can't just be... all glitter and sparkles. It has to mean something.

(SILAS smiles, relieved.)

SILAS: Exactly. And we want you to be a part of it.

(SILAS and SERAPHINE slowly pick up ornaments and make them glow and hand them to each child, turning them bright again.)

SILAS: And now, come on, we've got some plans to make!

IRIS (*jumping up excitedly*): Let's make this the best *Twinkle Sprinkle* ever!

SERAPHINE (*laughing*): Yes! Let's show the whole town what the spirit of Christmas really is!

(All the STUDENTS cheer and they hurry out the door to decorate.)

SCENE 7: Twinkle Sprinkle

Ext. City Park – The Night of the Twinkle Sprinkle

(The town square is aglow with lights, colors, and decorations laced with candy and the air is filled with the sound of Christmas music. Brewed Awakenings has a stand selling hot cocoa and cookies, MABEL has a bakery stand selling donuts and cupcakes, ROZ has a sign that says something like, “Sweatin’ Around the Christmas Tree”, and KENT is perched on a bench, enjoying the glow of the surroundings. JUNE and ELSIE should wander in during the first half of the scene. BARB enters the city park, pulling a pig on a leash.)

BARB: Come along, Georgina. There’s no flowers here to sniff.....OH! *(she catches sight of the lights and decorations)* Oh my! My goodness! Georgina! Look up! This is incredible! *(she gapes at the decorations as LOU and PEGGY enter from the opposite side)*

LOU: Now, Peggy, I told you, I’m working on the case, I just have to file another petition with the judge and....

PEGGY: Listen here, Lou, I want this done and dusted BEFORE the holidays, hear me?

LOU: Yes, yes, I understand....

PEGGY: *(she notices the decorations)* LOU! LOOK!

LOU: Oh holy night! Did the kids do all this!?

KENT: And their teacher!

(They both gape at the lights and decorations until suddenly BARB notices them across the way.)

BARB: Oh no, no no no! GEORGINA! We need to leave, now! *(she turns around to leave)*

LOU: Barb! Barb, please wait!

BARB: I don’t need to be ripped into again about how horrible my pig is! Come on, Georgina!

KENT: *(stepping forward)* Ladies, Ladies – are we still arguing over this?

PEGGY: I'm still finding stains, Kent! On white linen!

BARB: We haven't had a moment's peace in this town since Peggy went on the woven pastry warpath.

(The STUDENTS and MS DAFFERTY enter the stage on the side and see the ongoing argument, so stop and crowd around to watch.)

KENT: Ok, ok – hey, it's....it's almost Christmas, right? Seems like a good time to find a way to make peace? NOT inside a courtroom?

(LOU looks relieved to have someone step in, PEGGY and BARB both look at KENT, skeptical.)

PEGGY: And what kind of compromise do you suggest, Kent? Should I just forget about the fact that her pig nearly knocked me over and ate my entire tray?

BARB *(huffing)*: It wasn't the *entire* tray.

KENT: How about this... Peggy, Barb's already offered to cover the dry cleaning, right? And she apologized. But I think there's still some hurt feelings here that need to be addressed. So, what if Barb and Georgina—assuming Georgina can behave herself—help out at your next woven pastry sale?

(PEGGY and BARB both look surprised, but KENT keeps going, addressing PEGGY.)

KENT: You'll have a little extra help, and it might be a good way for everyone to see that Georgina isn't some...pastry-snarfing menace. She's just a pig who got a bit too excited.

BARB: I'd be happy to help, Peggy. And I promise Georgina will be on her best behavior. We'll even make her a little sign that says "Official Greeter" if it'll make you feel better.

PEGGY: And what if she... you know, *acts up* again?

KENT *(with a reassuring smile)*: Then I'll be there to make sure she doesn't. Deal?

MABEL: Oh, and Peggy? I am more than happy to make more pastries on the cheap! I'm still here to support your fundraiser!

PEGGY (*sighing, but smiling a little*): Alright, fine. If Georgina can keep her snout to herself, I guess we can call it even.

BARB (*beaming, clearly relieved*): Thank you, Peggy. And I really am sorry. I promise we'll make it up to you.

MABEL: And come on over and have a donut, on me!

KENT: Well, there you have it! Peace on Earth and good will towards...pigs.

LOU: Great, great! Consider the case closed. Can we all go enjoy the Twinkle Sprinkle now?

MS DAFFERTY: Considering how wonderfully the class brought the spirit of the season to life, I think we should enjoy every minute of it!

(The townspeople turn, see all the students and teacher, and all cheer and clap. They disperse to go to the stand to get hot cocoa and cookies, pick candy off the decorations, and generally just chatter to one another. ROZ grabs JUNE and ELSIE as they wander by her booth.)

ROZ: June! June! Have you given any thought to toddler yoga?

JUNE: Oh, hi Roz! Uhm, well, not really. That's really very sweet of you but...

ROZ: Oh, yeah, yeah! We'll run their little tails off. Lots of energy, kids! *(she starts to do some running-in-place work with little bounces)*

JUNE: ...ah hah, yeah, well...I don't think I can really get parents to sign off on the liability forms for that. Playing *Twister* is bad enough.

ROZ (*suddenly stopping*): Oh. Uh. Well. It was just an idea.

JUNE: No, I know, you're trying to help.

ROZ: And help everyone feel better, too! I mean, that's all I really want.

ELSIE: (*stops*) Wait – is that what you really want, Roz?

ROZ: Well, sure, yeah. I mean, you are all my friends and neighbors. I care about you and your health. I just want everyone to feel great, so Marble Brook stays the awesome town that it is!

ELSIE: Aw, Roz. That's really sweet.

ROZ (*shrugs*): I guess so.

ELSIE: You know what? I think I *will* come in for a class.

ROZ: REALLY!?? Oh, wow, that'd be awesome! Boxing? (*she punches*) Wrestling? (*she mimes wrestling*) Olympic weightlifting? (*she mimes lifting a huge weight*)

ELSIE: How about....just....stretching?

ROZ: Oh, oh....yes, yes....we can definitely do that. Good to start small, get the fundamentals down. Then we can hit it hard! Woohoo!

ELSIE: Ok, good, I could use some shoulder stretches after a long day of shelving books. Dictionaries make me tense.

ROZ: Great! I'll see you tomorrow then! Thanks, Elsie!

(ELSIE nods and she and JUNE walk off around the park. SILAS and SERAPHINE stand in the center of it all, watching their classmates and townspeople admiring their work and enjoying the treats. Silas looks around at the joy they've spread, his heart full.)

SILAS: This... this is what Christmas is all about, isn't it? Everyone...together and happy...

SERAPHINE: Yeah. It's about all of us giving to each other, together. Even despite our flaws. (*she giggles*) We did it, we really did it.

SILAS: No... *you* did it, Seraphine. You brought the spirit of Christmas back to all of us. Back to *me*.

SERAPHINE: It was always in you, Silas! You just forgot – for a minute. *(She smiles and they turn and mingle into the crowd enjoying treats.)*

(As they fade into the background, the GODMOTHER leading the little spirits of Christmas work their way through the crowd, entrances, city park decorations, and areas onto the center of the stage, forming a V shape and into the center EIRA, NOELLE, and ZIA step forward. ZIA is holding the jar with all the lights inside.)

EIRA:

In the glow of a candle, in the twinkle of light
In the hush of the snow on a quiet, cold night
In the warmth of a hand, in a soft, gentle smile,
In the laughter that lingers, if only a while.

NOELLE:

Christmas is more than the garlands and cheer,
Greater than gifts that we wrap each year.
It lives in each heart, in each act, in each deed,
In the love that we share, in the souls that are freed.

ZIA:

So, carry this light, let it shine, let it gleam,
Through all of your days, through all of your dreams,
For Christmas is not just a moment or day,
It's a spirit that lives in us each – always.

(The entire background cast turns around and walks forward towards the audience.)

ENTIRE CAST: Merry Christmas to All, and to all a Good Night!

Curtain.

THE END