

THE BEST CHRISTMAS STORY EVER

A one act play

By Tracy Wells

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CHARACTERS

(1 F, 2-5 M, 11-18+ any gender)

AVERY	Movie exec looking for the next big hit; any gender
JULES	Avery's assistant; any gender
MR./MRS. GOLDMAN	Avery's boss; any gender
SAM SCRATCHY	Toilet paper company owner; any gender
CHILLY	Magical snowman; any gender
RUDY	Bright nosed reindeer; any gender
CHUMMY	Human who thinks he's an elf; any gender
GROUCH	Green grump who hates Christmas; any gender
BROCCOLI	A poorly named shelf sitting scout elf; any gender
SANTA	Gift delivering man; male
ELVES (3+)	Any number of Santa's helpers; any gender
CHARLIE BLUE	Down on his luck kid; any gender
LEWIS/LOUSIE	Charlie's blanket toting friend; any gender
DEVIN	A child left behind; any gender
NUTCRACKER	Nut loving solider; any gender
CLARENCE/CLARA	An angel; any gender
GEORGE BARLEY	Man who's hit hard times; male
EBENEZER SCROOGE	Cantankerous old man; male
JACOB MARLEY	A prophetic ghost; male
ROBBIE	Pink bunny suit wearing kid; any gender
JACK MCCLANE	White tank top wearing beat up NY cop, male
SALLY	A businesswoman; female

JAMES

A small town bookstore owner; male

AUTHOR'S NOTE ON CASTING

This play offers a ton of flexibility with the ability to add Christmas characters or remove them. It also works well for an all ages show, by having your youngest performers play elves or other small, minor roles. If there are any roles that don't work for your performance group, either due to having a smaller cast, or if you think your community would not like them, feel free to remove or change them. If any lines are crucial to the story, feel free to reassign them as needed. This play was written to be able to flow seamlessly with the removal or addition of characters. Suggestions for additional Christmas characters are: Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, Jack Frost, Cindy Who-Loo, Jack Skeleton, Christmas Train Conductor, Gingerbread, Drummer Boy, Sugar Plum Fairy, Candy Cane, Christmas Tree, Toys, Additional Reindeer

SETTING

Interior of a film executive office at Christmas time.

TIME

Modern Day.

COSTUMES

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

SET

The set consists of an office interior. A desk and chair are present. A phone, laptop, and bowl of nuts are on the desk. A small chair is near the desk or there can also be a seating area with a couple of chairs and a small coffee table. There are fictional holiday movie posters decorating the walls. The office is decorated for Christmas, with a small tree and presents.

PROPS

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| -Laptop | -Wrapped Gifts |
| -Phone | -Basket of Toilet Paper Rolls |
| -Bowl of Nuts | -Blanket |
| -Notebook x2 | -Briefcase |
| -Pens x2 | -Books x2 |

RUNTIME

Approximately 45-50 minutes.

THE BEST CHRISTMAS STORY EVER

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

AVERY

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

JULES

Will do.

AVERY

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

JULES

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

AVERY

The donkeys?

JULES

No, the Thompsons.

AVERY

Occupational hazard?

JULES

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

AVERY

Just do your best.

JULES

Got it. That should be it for your afternoon, then.

(closes the scheduling book or laptop)

AVERY

Thanks, Jules.

JULES

(stands)

Is there anything else I can do for you right now?

AVERY

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

JULES

(excitedly)

Ooh! What's it gonna be this time? An exciting adventure in a wintery wonderland? A classic romance in a hilltop resort? Or a meaningful family comedy with heart?

AVERY

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

JULES

(disappointed)

Oh.

AVERY

What?

JULES

It's just...

AVERY

Say, it, Jules.

JULES

Isn't that a little...formulaic?

AVERY

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

JULES

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

AVERY

(dismissively)

Yeah, well, people love 'em.

JULES

I guess so.

(looking at the posters)

But hasn't the world had enough movies about magical snowmen and precocious children and elves and Santa?

AVERY

Can you ever have too much Santa?

JULES

Yes. Yes, you can.

AVERY

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

JULES

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

AVERY

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

JULES

Peace? Hope? Love?

AVERY

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

JULES

Hey, what do I know? I'm not a creative director like you.

(shrugs)

I'm just you're assistant.

(starts to exit)

AVERY

(calling after her)

You know I appreciate you, Jules!

JULES

Right back at you, Avery.

(exits)

AVERY

(as she types)

Speaking of product placement, how am I going to get Kibblemaster Dog Food into the big climactic moment between Santa and the elves? Maybe the elves switch it out for the reindeer's magic corn?

(shakes her head)

No, that's won't work. (Or maybe Mrs. Claus could accidentally feed it to Santa before he heads out to deliver presents? That's it!

(as she types)

And Santa could find it surprisingly delicious. It could open up a whole new market for Kibblemaster!

(AVERY types furiously as GOLDMAN enters, upset, followed by JULES, who looks worried.)

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

(stands, shocked)

Mr. Goldman! Sir, I thought we were going over pitches next week?

(to JULES, annoyed)

Jules, you didn't tell me I had a meeting scheduled with Mr. Goldman today.

JULES

That's because you don't.

(AVERY and GOLDMAN turn to JULES angrily. JULES starts backing away toward the exit.)

I think I hear the phone ringing.

(makes ringing noise)

Briiirrgg, briinggg! Yep. There it is. The phone. I'd better go see who it is.

(exits quickly)

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

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

GOLDMAN

So is your pitch ready or not?

AVERY

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

GOLDMAN

I can't wait until next week! I need your idea now and it'd better be good.

AVERY

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

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

No. What is it?

GOLDMAN

(distraught)

Goldman Films is on the brink of ruin! The board is getting ready to vote on a shutdown if we don't deliver a holiday movie that tops the box office.

(slapping both hands down on the desk)

Tell me you've got that movie!

AVERY

(nervously)

I...I don't know. Maybe. I've been working on a few different ideas

GOLDMAN

Let's hear what you've got.

AVERY

Oh, okay. Let's see...How about this one?

(reads from laptop)

It's Christmas time in the big city and Sally is a high powered marketing executive who only cares about making money and advancing her career. That is until her company forces her to take a leave of absence and she meets small town bookstore owner named James, who reminds her what Christmas, and love are all about.

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

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

GOLDMAN

Boring. What else have you got?

AVERY

(with increased panic)

Alright, how about a stop motion style animated comedy about a magical snowman who touches the lives of a small town on Christmas Eve?

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

(fully panicked now)

Fine. How about Santa and his elves and a Christmas tree and snow?

GOLDMAN

What about them?

AVERY

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

GOLDMAN

Not good enough!

AVERY

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

GOLDMAN

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

(JULES enters followed by SAM SCRATCHY, who is holding several basket filled with toilet paper rolls.)

JULES

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

GOLDMAN

(crosses to SAM, holding out his hand, jovially)

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

SAM

(shaking GOLDMAN'S hand)

What can I say? I'm on a roll!

(SAM holds up a roll of toilet paper and laughs heartily at his own joke, as does GOLDMAN. JULES rolls her eyes and looks at AVERY, who doesn't laugh at first but joins in when GOLDMAN looks at her pointedly.

GOLDMAN

That's hilarious.

AVERY

Good one, Mr. Scratchy.

SAM

Yeah? You liked that one? Then you're gonna love this one.

(leans over to elbow Jules)

Why do toilet paper rolls have trust issues?

JULES

(bored, monotone)

I don't know. Why do they?

SAM

Because they're always getting ripped off!

(SAM laughs heartily, slapping JULES on the arm. GOLDMAN and AVERY join in on the laughter as JULES tries to get away from the slaps.)

JULES

(rubbing her arm)

Ow!

SAM

Well if you liked that one—

GOLDMAN

(interrupting)

Actually I'd love to know what brings you down to Goldman Films today, Sam.

SAM

(suddenly solemn)

I'm gonna give it to you straight... I'm hearing rumors your studio is soon to be wiped clean out of the film industry.

GOLDMAN

(dismissively)

Oh, you know how those online news outlets are. You can't believe anything you hear on the internet.

SAM

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

AVERY

You can't do that!

GOLDMAN

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

SAM

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

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

Yes, Sir. Of course.

GOLDMAN

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

AVERY

(unconvincingly)

Yep. It's going to be the best Christmas story ever.

SAM

Great. Because if it's not this whole studio's going *right down the drain!*

(SAM laughs hysterically with GOLDMAN and shoves the basket at AVERY aggressively. As AVERY takes the basket, she stumbles into JULES, bumping their heads together.)

GOLDMAN

Good one, Sam.

(teers SAM toward the exit then turns back with a grimace)

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

AVERY

Yes, Mr. Goldman.

(SAM and GOLDMAN exit as AVERY and JULES rub their heads.)

JULES

Avery, are you okay?

AVERY

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

Jules helps Avery up.

JULES

I'm okay.

AVERY

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

(AVERY sits at her desk as JULES crosses to exit)

JULES

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

AVERY

Thanks, Jules.

(JULES exits. AVERY rubs her head and turns to her laptop.)

AVERY

How am I going to come up with the best Christmas story ever in one night?

(picks up a roll of toilet paper)

And it has to feature Scratchy's toilet paper too?

(shakes her head)

This is impossible!

(AVERY puts her head down. Moments later CHILLY enters.)

CHILLY

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

AVERY

(looks up quickly, startled)

Ah! Who are you? And where'd you come from?

CHILLY

My name's Chilly. Chilly the Snowman. I think I started out as some magic Christmas snow, or maybe it was an enchanted scarf or a magician's hat or—

(remembers)

Oh! I almost forgot!

(tips his hat and does jazz hands)

Happy birthday!

AVERY

It's not my birthday.

CHILLY

(confused)

Really? Hmm. Must've gotten my snowflakes crossed.

AVERY

(stands and crosses to CHILLY, with a smirk)

I see what's going on here. You're one of those singing telegram guys, right? Someone sent you here as a prank? I bet it was Jules.

(calling offstage)

Jules, would you come in here please?

CHILLY

Singing telegram? I don't think so. Trust me, you don't want to hear me sing.

(points to his throat)

The old pipes are frozen solid.

(JULES enters.)

JULES

Yes, Aver—

(stops)

Whoa! There's a giant snowman in your office!

CHILLY

A giant talking snowman.

(tips his hat)

Name's Chilly.

JULES

Nice to meet you, Chilly.

AVERY

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

CHILLY

Nope.

AVERY

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

JULES

I didn't hire him.

CHILLY

I'm telling you, I couldn't carry a tune if it were right here in my hat. But if you insist, I'll give it a shot. Let me just warm up first...

(leans in, with a wink)

but not too warm, if you catch my...drift. Ha!

(points to himself)

Snow.

AVERY

Got it.

(CHILLY does some elaborate and hilarious vocal warmups during the next few lines.)

CHILLY

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

JULES

I'm telling you, I have never seen this snowman before in my life.

(thinks)

Unless you count those holiday specials from when we were kids.

AVERY

So that's what this must be then! Goldman hired him to inspire me...get the old creative juices flowing. Classy move, Goldman.

(sits in chair, and puts her hands together, ready)

Alright, Chilly, let's get this snow on the road.

CHILLY

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

AVERY

I'm ready. Let me have it.

CHILLY

Okay. But don't say I didn't warn you.

(sings loud and horribly*)

La, la, la, laaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

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

JULES

Make it stop! Make it stop!

AVERY

Chilly, that's enough.

CHILLY

I tried to tell you.

AVERY

So you're really not a singing telegram?

CHILLY

Nope.

AVERY

Then why are you here?

CHILLY

To bring you some Christmas magic!

AVERY

I guess I could use some magic if I'm going to find the best Christmas story ever in one night.

(RUDY enters.)

RUDY

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

JULES

Hey, it's—

RUDY

Rudy the Bright Nosed Reindeer! Yep, that's me.

(holds out a hoof)

High hoof!

JULES

(unsure)

Oh...ah...okay.

(JULES makes a fist and high hoofs RUDY.)

RUDY

Alright, fill me in. Where are we at with this story?

AVERY

We haven't started yet.

RUDY

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

AVERY

No, but—

RUDY

(interrupting)

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

AVERY

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

RUDY

You don't know the direction you need to go in...not with all that fog! That's why my nose was so important—you'll see.

(clears her throat)

So there I was, in the North Pole stables, six hands deep in a brutal game of Rummy with Vixen and Comet when one of the elves came running in and said—

(CHUMMY enters, excitedly.)

CHUMMY

I like Christmas! Christmas is my favorite!

RUDY

No, that wasn't it.

AVERY

Who is this guy?

CHUMMY

I'm Chummy the Elf.

(leans over with his head in his hands)

What's your favorite color?

JULES

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

CHUMMY

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

AVERY

(stands)

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

(GROUCH enters.)

GROUCH

All the noise, noise, noise!

(in familiar rhyme)

I really can't take it. I simply will not. The shouting, the laughing, without any thought, to those who are working all day and all night,

AVERY

(quickly interjecting)

Yes!

GROUCH

To get Christmas cancelled!

AVERY

(continuing rhyme)

No, that isn't right.

CHILLY

Cutting Christmas? That's cold!

CHUMMY

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

GROUCH

I'm the Grouch, not a grump, though my temper's the worst. I'm here to toss Christmas.

(picks up a gift)

This gift will go first.

JULES

No, not that one! It's special.

(grabs the gift and places it back under the tree)

CHUMMY

(reading the gift tag)

To Avery, the best boss ever. From your faithful assistant Jules.

(with a huge smile)

Goodie goodie gumdrops! You got a gift for your mom.

JULES

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

AVERY

We're almost the same age!

CHUMMY

You mean not everyone works for their parents?

AVERY

No!

(to Jules)

Is this guy for real?

JULES

He can't be. None of them can. They're just characters from Christmas movies.

AVERY

Yet, here they are.

JULES

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

CHUMMY
(waving his hand excitedly)

Ooh! Pick me! Pick me!

JULES
Seriously?

RUDY
This elf's not very bright, is he?

CHUMMY
Please! Pinch me! It sounds like so much fun.

JULES
If you say so.

(CHUMMY rolls up his sleeve and holds out his arm. JULES pinches him. He jumps, then laughs. As this is happening, BROCCOLI enters and perches somewhere, off to the side.)

CHUMMY
Whoa, that was painful! Do it again.

JULES
Pinch you? No.

CHUMMY
Pleeeeeease?

JULES
I'm not going to pinch you, Chummy.

CHUMMY
Fine. I'll just pinch myself, then. Pinch.

(pinches himself)

Ow! Pinch.

(pinches himself)

Ow! Pinch.

(pinches himself)

Ow!

JULES

Alright, we get it.

(to AVERY)

This guy's real. I guess.

BROCCOLI

I saw that.

(ALL jump and maybe scream.)

CHILLY

I think I just snowflaked myself.

AVERY

Where did you come from?

BROCCOLI

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

CHUMMY

He's a scout elf! That's my dream job.

GROUCH

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

CHUMMY

You got that right!

JULES

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

BROCCOLI

Trust me, I've seen you, Jules. And I'm reporting everything back to Santa.

(pulls out a notepad and pen and jots down a few notes)

AVERY

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

BROCCOLI

I do.

AVERY

Then what is it?

BROCCOLI

I'm not saying.

RUDY

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

BROCCOLI

Nope.

CHILLY

Is it something fancy like Sparkles or Twinkle?

BROCCOLI

No.

GROUCH

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

BROCCOLI

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

CHUMMY

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

JULES

Chummy, stop.

(to BROCCOLI)

What is it?

BROCCOLI

(sighs)

It's Broccoli.

AVERY

(chuckling)

Broccoli? Really?

BROCCOLI

Yep. That's what my family named me.

RUDY

Wow. And I thought Neon Nose was bad!

BROCCOLI

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

JULES

(laughing)

Broccoli. That's hilarious!

BROCCOLI

(writing a note on his pad)

Keep it up, Jules, and you're gonna end up on Santa's naughty list.

(SANTA enters with ELVES, who run around, grab the toilet paper rolls, throw them, make mischief, etc.)

SANTA

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

CHUMMY

Excitedly! It's Santa Claus! I know him!

ELVES

We know him! We know him!

(AVERY crosses to SANTA and starts pulling him to the exit.)

AVERY

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

SANTA

But I'm Santa!

ELVES

Santa! Santa!

AVERY

Sorry, Santa, but you've got to go. And the rest of you too. I have work to do! Jules, please help me out here.

(JULES crosses to exit and starts swinging her arm, directing all Christmas CHARACTERS to exit offstage. AVERY crosses to her desk and sits.)

JULES

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

SANTA

The North Pole!

JULES

—but you can't stay here. Let's go!

(All except AVERY and JULES start to exit.)

CHILLY

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

RUDY

We're filled with bright ideas!

JULES

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

GROUCH

You heard the lady. Get out of here, scram! She doesn't like Christmas. She's a grouch like I am!

AVERY

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

CHUMMY

(as he exits)

Ooh! Maybe we could decorate your office. We can make paper snowflakes and hang candy canes, and paint ornaments and hang lights and...

JULES

(takes toilet paper rolls from exiting ELVES)

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

(Once all Christmas CHARACTERS have exited, JULES crosses to AVERY and puts the toilet paper on her desk or in the basket.)

JULES

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

AVERY

Thanks, Jules. I just need a little quiet.

(JULES exits. AVERY leans back in her chair and puts her hands behind her head.)

And peace.

(CHARLIE BLUE enters, dejected.)

CHARLIE

Tell me about it.

(sits and puts his head in his hands)

AVERY

(exasperated)

Not again!

(LEWIS enters, dragging a blanket.)

LEWIS

Now, Charlie Blue, how many times have I told you that if you're looking for peace you should look within?

CHARLIE

I know, Lewis. And I appreciate your help. I just don't know what's wrong with me. Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year but I just can't seem to find the Christmas spirit!

AVERY

(stands and crosses to CHARLIE)

I hear you. Charlie, is it?

CHARLIE

Yep. Charlie Blue.

LEWIS

Which is a fitting name because he's constantly consumed with ennui.

CHARLIE

Ennui?

LEWIS

You know...listlessness. Joylessness...Melancholy.

CHARLIE

My dog Sloopy's a Border Collie, not a Melancholy.

LEWIS

Oh, Charlie Blue!

(sits and sucks his thumb)

AVERY

I think a lot of people feel like that at Christmas.

CHARLIE

Really? It's not just me?

AVERY

No! Christmas is a very busy season. There's so much to do and not enough time. People worry if their guests will enjoy the meal they have planned or if they'll like the presents they've gotten.

CHARLIE

Or if the Christmas tree you've chosen for the pageant is good enough or if they're just gonna think you're being a blockhead...again.

AVERY

Huh?

CHARLIE

Never mind. It's a whole thing.

AVERY

(crosses to her desk)

Don't get me wrong. The lights and the music and the food and the presents are great. But it can be overwhelming for some people.

CHARLIE

Sometimes I wish it would all just go away.

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

DEVIN

Ahhhhhhh!

LEWIS

This child appears to be alarmed.

DEVIN

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

AVERY

Let me guess. You must be—

DEVIN

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

AVERY

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

DEVIN

You don't know that. I might be home alone forever!

(to LEWIS)

Hey kid, do you have parents?

LEWIS

Yes, I do. And a know-it -all older sister.

DEVIN

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

AVERY

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

DEVIN

Movie?

AVERY

Don't worry about it.

DEVIN

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

AVERY

(intrigued)

Really?

DEVIN

(to CHARLIE)

What do your parents say is their favorite thing about Christmas?

CHARLIE

I don't know. I can never understand them. When they talk it just sounds like—
(makes the noise or a sound effect can be used)

DEVIN

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

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

NUTCRACKER

A mouse? Where! Is it over here? Or here?

(facing audience, perhaps with a sword held high in the air)

Show your face, Mouse King, for the Nutcracker is here to stop you. I shall have no peace in this world until you are found and captured once and for all!

AVERY

So I guess we're doing this, now.

LEWIS

Excuse me, sir, but there is no mouse.

NUTCRACKER

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

LEWIS

Quite sure. At ease, soldier.

(salutes)

NUTCRACKER

(salutes, then relaxes)

Thank you. I've been so busy chasing that Mouse King that I haven't had a moment to relax, or grab a bite to eat. I'm feeling a bit peckish.

(sees bowl of nuts and gets excited)

Ooh! Nuts!

(eats/cracks nuts wildly while others look on in amusement/horror)

AVERY

Go ahead. Help yourself.

LEWIS

He's a little exuberant, isn't he?

CHARLIE

He's cracked all the nuts.

NUTCRACKER

(looks around wildly)

More! I need more!

CHARLIE

I think the Nutcracker's cracked!

DEVIN

He's gone nuts!

(puts his hands on either side of his face)

Ahhh!

(NUTCRACKER chases DEVIN around the room. CHARLIE and LEWIS march behind NUTCRACKER. It's noisy and chaotic. SANTA enters, with ELVES following. They join in the chaos, tossing toilet paper rolls, etc. SANTA crosses to AVERY.)

SANTA

A parade! No Christmas parade is complete without Santa!

ELVES

Parade! Parade!

AVERY

(crosses to Santa and pulls him to exit)

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

SANTA

But I'm Santa!

ELVES

Santa! Santa!

AVERY

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

SANTA

Alright. C'mon Elves, let's go.

ELVES

We're going. We're going.

(SANTA and ELVES exit dejectedly.)

AVERY

(calling out)

And tell Jules I need her!

(JULES enters, carrying her notebook.)

JULES

What's going on in here?

AVERY

There's more of them!

JULES

I can see that!

AVERY

Just make them stop. Please!

(JULES rips a piece of paper out of her notebook or rolls it up into a tube shape and makes a trumpet sound in it, similar to the sound made by CHARLIE earlier. All stop and look at her.)

CHARLIE

Mom? Dad? Is that you?

DEVIN

Our parents are here?

(with excited arm motion)

Yes!

AVERY

No. Your parents aren't here.

DEVIN

Aw, man!

AVERY

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

(sits and gets ready to take notes)

DEVIN

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

LEWIS

What a miscreant!

DEVIN

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

AVERY

What was it?

DEVIN

She said it was the sense of peace that came over her when we all gathered around the tree to read our favorite Christmas story together.

AVERY

Yeah. We used to do that too. My mom would bring out the book and as my dad read we would each take turns acting out the story. I'd forgotten about that.

NUTCRACKER

I'd love to hear a story.

LEWIS

Ooh! Let me tell it!

(crosses to center)

CHARLIE

Here we go again!

LEWIS

Lights please.

(Perhaps the lights dim except for a spotlight on him. Or maybe JULES and AVERY look at one another, shrug, and turn on their phone flashlights and angle them toward LEWIS, who clears his throat, prepares himself, then looks up.)

Ahem. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel—

(AVERY stands. The lights suddenly return to normal.)

AVERY

Thanks, Lewis, but I don't really have time for a story right now.

LEWIS

But you said you wanted—

AVERY

My assistant Jules will show you out.

JULES

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

(looks from NTCRACKER to AVERY, unsure; AVERY holds up the empty bowl of nuts, which JULES understands)

And a fresh supply of nuts that need cracking.

NUTCRACKER

Yes, ma'am!

(salutes and marches to exit)

DEVIN

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

JULES

Um, I don't think so, but I can see what I can do.

DEVIN

(with excited arm motion)

Yes!

CHARLIE

Good grief!

(JULES exits with DEVIN and CHARLIE.)

LEWIS

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

AVERY

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

LEWIS

Maybe it already has.

(clears his throat again)

An angel—

AVERY

Jules!

(JULES enters, holding a bell, which she rings.)

JULES

Lewis! Let's go!

LEWIS

(as he exits)

But the angel said to them—

(LEWIS and JULES exit. CLARENCE enters.)

CLARENCE

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

AVERY

You have got to be kidding me!

CLARENCE

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

AVERY

You're my guardian angel?

(GEORGE enters.)

GEORGE

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

CALRENCE

Now George, surely you can share me, just for today.

(crosses to AVERY)

It looks like Avery, here, could use my help.

AVERY

I don't need your help.

CLARENCE

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

AVERY

(stands, angrily)

Listen, buddy—

CLARENCE

The name's Clarence.

AVERY

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

GEORGE

But we can help you. I just know we can.

AVERY
(waving a hand, dismissively)

Bah!

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

SCROOGE
(from offstage, loudly)
Humbug!
(The sound of bells ringing is heard. Perhaps the lights change. Perhaps a fog rolls in. JACOB MARLEY enters, terrifyingly.)

AVERY
(annoyed)
What do you want?

MARLEY
(ghostly)
Much!

AVERY
(sits)
Get on with it then.
(The lights change back to normal.)

MARLEY
(confused)
Don't you want to know who I am?

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

MARLEY
Seriously?

AVERY

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

MARLEY

Well, humbug!

(SCROOGE enters.)

SCROOGE

That's my line.

AVERY

Scrooge! You're here too?

SCROOGE

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

AVERY

Why is this happening to me?

(puts her head in her hands)

SCROOGE

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

AVERY

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

GEORGE

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

AVERY

I don't think so.

(ROBBIE enters wearing a pink bunny suit.)

ROBBIE

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

AVERY

That's definitely not it! You'll shoot your eye out with one of those.

(smirks)

ROBBIE

(stomps his foot and crosses his arms)

I will not!

(CLARENCE loudly snickers, but tries to cover it up.)

What?

CLARENCE

Nothing.

(MARLEY and SCROOGE look at one another and laugh.)

ROBBIE

What are you laughing about?

MARLEY

I'm not laughing.

(points at SCROOGE)

He is!

SCROOGE

(suppressing a laugh)

Not me. I've changed my ways! I'm kind now.

(snickers)

ROBBIE

It's my bunny suit, isn't it?

(turns to GEORGE)

C'mon. I know you want to laugh too.

GEORGE

(stifling a laugh)

I happen to think it's a very nice bunny suit.

(ALL erupt into laughter, except ROBBIE, who is upset.)

ROBBIE

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

AVERY

And you're wearing the heck out of it!

(ALL laugh again. ROBBIE crosses his arms, mad.)

ROBBIE

I hope you're happy!

CLARENCE

(remembering)

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

AVERY

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

GEORGE

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

(gestures in front of AVERY, but accidentally gestures towards SCROOGE, MARLEY, and ROBBIE)

AVERY

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

MARLEY

Hey! Don't speak ill of the dead.

AVERY

And sorry, Robbie, but your Christmas Story plays on constant loop every Christmas Eve. There's only so many times I can watch your friend lick that flag pole.

ROBBIE

Trust me. I get it.

AVERY

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

(SANTA enters with ELVES, who grab toilet paper again.)

SANTA

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

ELVES

(wrapping SANTA in toilet paper)

Mouse! Mouse!

(AVERY crosses to SANTA and starts unraveling him.)

AVERY

Absolutely not!

SANTA

But that poem is a beloved tale of Santa Claus!

AVERY

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

(takes SANTA and walks him and the ELVES to the exit)

SANTA

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

ELVES

Roses! Cherries!

AVERY

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

(waves as SANTA and ELVES exit dejectedly then crosses to her desk and puts her head in her arms)

This is hopeless!

(MARLEY, SCROOGE, CLARENCE, GEORGE and ROBBIE cross to AVERY in support.)

SCROOGE

If your heart is open to something new, you will find what you've been looking for.

MARLEY

And if you need the help of some friendly ghosts, let me know.

AVERY

I'm good, thanks.

ROBBIE

Never give up hope for what you really want...whether it's a story or a BB gun.

GEORGE

Just shake the dust off those old ideas and see what turns up!

AVERY

But how?

CLARENCE

I have a feeling you'll figure that out. Come along, everyone.

MARLEY

(eerily)

Remember what has passed between us!

GEORGE

Was that really necessary?

(ALL except AVERY exit.)

AVERY

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

(JULES enters.)

JULES

Um...so an angel, a ghost and a bunny just walked into the waiting room.

(thinks)

Which sounds a little like a joke...

AVERY

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

JULES

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

(exits)

AVERY

(has an idea)

Love! Maybe that's the answer. What if I've had the idea all along and just didn't realize it?

(reading from laptop)

AVERY (Cont.)

It's Christmas time in the big city and Sally is a high powered marketing executive who only cares about making money and advancing her career. That is until her company forces her to take a leave of absence and she meets small town bookstore owner James, who reminds her what Christmas, and love are all about.

(SALLY enters, dressed in business attire and holding a briefcase.)

SALLY

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

AVERY

(shocked)

Sally?

SALLY

Yeah? So what's it to you?

(JAMES enters, dressed casually and holding two books. He crosses to SALLY.)

JAMES

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

AVERY

James?

JAMES

(turns to AVERY)

I'll be right with you, ma'am.

(turns back to SALLY)

AVERY

(offended)

Ma'am?

JAMES

I hope you don't mind, Sally, but I also grabbed this book on local scenic lighthouses. I thought maybe you and I could check them out later...maybe take a picnic lunch....get to talking a little...maybe fall in love?

SALLY

A picnic lunch on Christmas Eve?

(chuckles)

Why, James, we'll freeze!

JAMES

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

AVERY

(stands)

Okay, no. Sorry. That's not going to work.

JAMES

But the blanket's really big. I'm sure it will cover both of us.

(looks back at SALLY and smiles)

AVERY

Not the blanket! Just...all of it! There are a ton of movies out there just like this one. I need to come up with something new...something important. I need to give the world something it needs.

(puts her head in her hands and sighs)

Jules was right.

(JULES enters quickly.)

JULES

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

SALLY

(points at AVERY)

That would be her....the grumpy one.

AVERY

I'm not grumpy. I'm just exhausted. I've been wracking my brain all night! I've got no ideas, even though I've been visited by characters from every Christmas movie in the world!

(JACK MCCLANE enters in action movie hero style. Maybe somersaults? Then he stands and strikes a heroic pose.)

JACK

Not every Christmas movie!

JULES

Is that....

JACK

(proudly)

Jack McClane! A cop from the mean streets of New York City trying to save my family and the citizens of New York from a group of hostile terrorists—

(winks at audience)

on Christmas Eve, baby!

JULES

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

JACK

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

(turns to SALLY and JAMES for help)

JAMES

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

SALLY

Oh, it's definitely a Christmas movie.

(crosses to JACK and smiles)

And can I just say Officer McClane, how safe I feel knowing you're patrolling the streets?

JAMES

Hey! This is supposed to be my love story!

AVERY

Love—that's right!

(to JULES)

That's what it's all about at the end of the day, isn't it?

JULES

I hope so.

AVERY

(stands, excitedly)

And hope! It's like you said before, Jules—the world doesn't need more product placement...it needs hope!

JULES

(to herself)

Wow. You give your boss a piece of your mind, but you don't think she'll actually listen!

AVERY

(crosses to JULES, excitedly)

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

JULES

It sounds like you're on to something.

AVERY

I think I might be. Are all those Christmas characters still out in the waiting room?

JULES

Unfortunately, yes. And can I just say, those elves are a nuisance!

AVERY

Bring them in.

JULES

Which ones?

AVERY

All of them! Whoever is still out there! I'm going to need their help.

JULES

If you say so.

(crosses toward exit)

JACK

What are we? Chopped liver?

AVERY

I'm going to need your help too.

JACK

(excitedly)

Yippee-ki-yi-yay!

JULES

(calling offstage)

You heard her, folks....everyone come on in!

(GROUCH enters followed by ELVES, SANTA, CHILLY, RUDY, CHUMMY, BROCCOLI, LEWIS, SCROOGE, and CLARENCE, minimally. Any number of Christmas Characters (or All) can also enter, depending on the size of your space and your casting. You can assign "Character" lines as desired.

GROUCH

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

ELVES

Santa! Santa!

SANTA

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

CHILLY

(tipping his hat and doing jazz hands)

Happy birthday!

AVERY

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

CHILLY

I know. It's just so fun to say.

RUDY

Here we glow again!

CHUMMY

(laughing)

Good one, Rudy! I love reindeer. Reindeer are my favorite!

BROCCOLI

Everything is your favorite, Chummy. The entire time we were out there, you were pointing out things in the waiting room and saying they're your favorite!

CHUMMY

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

AVERY

(interrupting)

Sorry you were waiting so long.

BROCCOLI

That's alright. Waiting is my favorite.

(thinks)

Well, not my favorite actually, but it's what I'm known for.

LEWIS

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

BROCCOLI

Um...okay. Thanks, Lewis.

LEWIS

My pleasure, Broccoli.

(sucks his thumb)

SCROOGE

What are we doing here again? Is this a vision?

(looks around)

Ghost? Where are you, Ghost? What lessons are you trying to teach me?

CLARENCE

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

SCROOGE

(recoiling in fear)

Which ghost are you? Past? Future? Present? Metaverse?

CLARENCE

I'm not a ghost. I'm an angel. We met earlier. (leans in, smiling) I'm gonna get my wings!

(At this point the Christmas characters should be grouped as follows: Group 1: RUDY, GROUCH, CHILLY, BROCCOLI, LEWIS; Group 2: CHUMMY, CLARENCE, SCROOGE; Group 3: SALLY, JAMES, JACK. Group 4: SANTA and ELVES. Other holiday characters can be added to groups, except Group 4.

JULES

Alright, Avery, everyone's here.

AVERY

Great. Thank you.

(crosses to center)

Since all of you decided to appear in my office uninvited, the least you can do is help me finalize my idea.

CHARACTER

Sure thing, Avery. How can we help?

AVERY

Each of you are characters from well-known Christmas movies, right?

CHUMMY

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

BROCCOLI

(looking around)

Who's going to tell him?

CHARACTER

Not me!

CHARACTER

No way!

GROUCH

I'll happily tell him, Since it's clear none of you can.

(crosses to CHUMMY)

Chummy you're not an elf, sir, cause you are a human.

CHUMMY

I have no idea what he's talking about, but I love the way he rhymes.

(to GROUCH)

Say, you'd make a really great children's book author, Grouch. I can talk to my dad for you if you want.

AVERY

We're getting off track. As I was saying, you are all characters in well-known Christmas movies.

CHUMMY

If you say so.

AVERY

And each of your movies are different.

(crosses to Group 1)

You guys come from beloved animated Christmas classics. You show kids that Christmas is a time for magic, but also a time for peace and joy.

RUDY

And we've got music too!

AVERY

(crosses to Group 2)

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

SCROOGE

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

AVERY

(crosses to Group 3)

Your movies appeal to adults, who sometimes need a reminder to put aside their stresses in life and focus on what matters most—love, and the people in our lives.

JACK

Then you agree...my movie is a Christmas movie!

SALLY
(smiling at JACK)

Of course it is, snookums.

JAMES
Seriously?

SANTA
What about me and the elves?

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

JULES
A story about peace, hope and love.

AVERY
That's right! And while at their heart, your movies include these, I want to tell a story that unites all three.

(pacing and thinking)
Peace, hope, and love.

(thinks)
What is a story that people need to hear that is all about peace, hope and love?

JULES
Actually, I know a story just like that.
(crosses to the Christmas tree and picks up the present from earlier
then crosses to AVERY and hands it to her)
Here. This is for you. I worked really hard on it.

AVERY
You wrote this?

JULES
I did. I thought maybe people needed a reminder of what Christmas is really all about. Not the presents, or the decorations or the lights, but people coming together—

LEWIS

Looking for peace.

CLARENCE

With hope for the future

SALLY

And love in their hearts.

SANTA

The greatest gifts in the world.

AVERY

Peace, hope and love. It's perfect, Jules.

JULES

You think so?

AVERY

It's the best Christmas story ever.

JULES

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

AVERY

Nope.

JULES

(hurt)

Oh.

AVERY

(smiles and holds out the script to Jules)

But you are.

JULES

Me? But I'm just you're assistant.

AVERY

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

JULES

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

AVERY

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

(GOLDMAN laughs loudly offstage.)

And here comes Goldman now.

(turns to CHRISTMAS CHARACTERS)

You guys just be quiet and try and stay out of the way.

CHILLY

Don't worry. We'll be chill.

BROCCOLI

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

CHUMMY

I'll keep it zipped!

(zips his lips like a zipper)

CHARACTER

Don't worry, Avery.

CHARACTER

They won't know we're here. Trust me.

End of Excerpt.

To read the rest of this play, email tracywellsplaywright@gmail.com