

A Backstage Christmas

BY ELLEN DEAN PRICE

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance):

Calderon (Cal) Myles	(M, 35-50)	Dynamic, vivacious. Actor in <i>Bob Cratchit's Toy Shoppe</i>
Gail Collins	(F, 30-50)	Star-struck stage mom
Owen Collins	(M, 9-14)	Reluctant auditionee. Gail's son.
Rosemary Kraft	(F, 55+)	Director of Entertainment, Silver Ridge Park. Sardonic, cynical.
Megyn	(F, 16+)	Stage Manager. Always precise and one step ahead.
Elise Garland	(F, 30-45)	Young widow. Warm, but cautious. Dedicated to her business.
Lori Phillips	(F, 35-50)	Elise's sister. Fun, but blunt and direct. All about Christmas.
Bruce Phillips	(M, 35-50)	Lori's husband. Lori and Bruce own Phillips Graphics. A jock.
Grandma Barb	(F, 60+)	Elise and Lori's mom. Warm, caring. Always offering food.
Noah Garland	(M, 9-14)	Elise's stage hungry son. Eager, wide eyed.
Paige Phillips	(F, 9-14)	Sporty, tough. Lori and Bruce's daughter
Jake Phillips	(M, 9-15)	Ice hockey obsessed, known to break a rule or two. Lori & Bruce's son.
Tiffany	(F, 30-50)	Olive's diligent stage mom.
Doug	(M, 50+)	Veteran actor. Plays Scrooge in show.
Sharon	(F, 50+)	Another veteran actor. Plays Scrooge's wife in show.
Warren	(M, 35-50)	Another actor. Cal's understudy.
Vanessa	(F, teens-35)	Another actor in the show.
Olive	(F, 9-14)	Child actor plays "Tim's" sister. Competent, all business.
Soprano	(F, 15+)	Member of the Silver Ridge Dickensian Trio
Alto	(F, 15+)	Member of the Silver Ridge Dickensian Trio
Baritone	(M, 15+)	Member of the Silver Ridge Dickensian Trio

Optional Ensemble: Actors, Performers, Carolers (can be doubled with other named characters).

Note: For scene change music, the carolers and/or Dickensian Trio can sing a verse of a Christmas carol to keep the holiday theme.

Silver Ridge, Southern NH
Present Day

Suggested Doubling for Ten actors (if desired).

Rosemary/Barbara
Lori/Tiffany/Megyn
Owen/Jake
Paige/Olive
Bruce/Warren/Doug/Baritone
Sharon/Alto/Gail
Vanessa/Soprano

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ACT 1 SCENE 1

An audition room at the performing arts center at Silver Ridge Amusement Park. CAL and ROSEMARY sit at a table with MEGYN standing by. OWEN is auditioning for "Bob Cratchit's Toy Shoppe" with his mother GAIL at his side.

OWEN: *(singing poorly and unenthusiastically)* Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la—

ROSEMARY: *(raising her hand)* We should probably stop here.

CAL: *(softening Rosemary's response)* We've seen all we need for today. GAIL: *(eagerly)* Give it one more try, Owen.

OWEN: I'm tired.

GAIL: Don't you want to share the stage with... *(gazing at Cal)*... a celebrity?

OWEN: He's not famous.

CAL: I agree with that, buddy.

GAIL: Don't be so modest. *(to Owen)* Cal was Willy Wonka in Boston last year. He got his start here, right in Silver Ridge. I was there, the first year of Bob Cratchit's Toy Shoppe.

OWEN: If you like it so much, why don't you audition?

CAL: Thanks for coming, Mrs. Collins. But he doesn't seem interested.

ROSEMARY: *(an aside)* Or talented.

GAIL: Oh give him another chance!

OWEN: I don't wanna.

GAIL: *(to Owen)* One more time.

ROSEMARY: He doesn't wanna.

GAIL: *(giving up, to Owen)* Oh come on then. *(to Cal)* It was wonderful to meet you in person.

CAL: Lovely to meet you both.

ROSEMARY: *(She points.)* Exit is that way.

Gail tries to say more to Cal, but Megyn interferes. Gail gazes back at Cal as Megyn escorts Gail and Owen out.

CAL: That's the last one. If we eliminate the kids who can't sing, and the ones who can't dance, we're left with...

ROSEMARY: The ones who can't act. Rehearsals start next week. I can't believe Jamal ditched us.

CAL: He landed a role on Broadway.

ROSEMARY: These kids didn't used to be so ambitious. The turn out has really slowed up the past few years.

CAL: Regional theaters all have a Christmas show and children's theaters have popped up everywhere..

ROSEMARY: We used to be the only thing for miles. Can't do this show without a Tiny Tim.

CAL: Not tiny any more.

ROSEMARY: A crutchless, healthy, slightly older Tim.

CAL: *(proudly)* With a Bob Cratchit, who becomes a success but loses his way. It's a brilliant piece.

ROSEMARY: Brilliant is a stretch.

CAL: An enchanting toy shop in Dickensian England. You can't beat that.

ROSEMARY: You played Hamlet in Dallas last year.

CAL: *(laughs)* A dream role for sure, but this? It's fun. And was the best Christmas gift ever.

ROSEMARY: A role at an amusement park?

CAL: First paid gig. You made me a professional, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY: Surprised you keep coming back. Nice to have a name in the lead.

CAL: I don't know if I'm a name.

ROSEMARY: You are in Silver Ridge. *(She grabs a paper).* The only other option for Tim. A video submission...
She hands the paper to him.

CAL: Noah Garland. One school play, that's it? This application is a mess.

ROSEMARY: He's green, but the video was good. I reached out but no response.

CAL: Then we're stuck.

ROSEMARY: Maybe. I think this is Bruce and Lori's nephew. You know, they own Philips Graphics.

CAL: Where we get our show merch?

ROSEMARY: *(she nods)* Lori's sister Elise moved back to town last year. I'm pretty sure this is her kid. CAL: I'll stop by Phillips Graphics. I can ask Bruce about Noah?

ROSEMARY: Let's hope this kid is ready for the stage.

Cal stands up, rubbing his knee.

ROSEMARY: You okay?

CAL: I'm fine. If Noah has base talent, we can work with the rest.

ROSEMARY: It's not Shakespeare. Hopefully Noah's mom will be easier to deal with than Mrs. Collins.

CAL: Hire the kid, you hire the family. We've had our ups and downs with that.

ROSEMARY: Let's hope for an up.

CAL: It is the season for hope.

ROSEMARY: Ever the optimist.

CAL: Not a bad way to live, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY: Let's talk after we cast a Tim.

ACT 1 SCENE 2

LORI PHILIPS' casual living room. Some Christmas decorations are up, but boxes, random Christmas decorations, lights, garland litter the stage. A couch, several chairs. BRUCE PHILIPS is standing on a step stool. ELISE GARLAND enters carrying several more boxes.

ELISE: I think these are the last of the boxes from the attic.

LORI: Thanks so much for coming to help, Elise.

ELISE: What are sisters for?

BRUCE: *(to Lori)* The decorations don't need to all be done today, Lori.

ELISE: *(subtly)* I'd be careful with that, Bruce.

LORI: *(seriously)* It's the day after Halloween.

BRUCE: So it's not urgent. They didn't decorate this early in Boston, did they Elise?

ELISE: These are fighting words.

LORI: Christmas comes early to Silver Ridge.

ELISE: *(her phone dings)* I already solved this. I need my laptop. *(to Lori)* Do you mind?

LORI: Go to it.

Elise grabs her laptop and starts working. GRANDMA BARB enters, carrying a plate of sweets.

BARB: Bruce, here's some more gingerbread. It's looking festive already!

ELISE: Lori knows how to do Christmas.

LORI: Where is Mrs. Claus? Elise is handling a work thing.

BARB: *(to Elise)* Your online marketing business is really taking off. Matt would be so proud of you.

LORI: *(a scold)* Mom.

ELISE: It's okay, Lori. I can't believe it's two years he's been gone.

LORI: We all miss him.

BARB: We do.

LORI: *(to Bruce)* Hey, those lights go on the other side.

BRUCE: Are you sure? Last year we—

LORI: Do I need to get out my diagrams, Bruce?

BRUCE: Please don't.

ELISE: *(to Bruce)* She is the Christmas enforcer. *(looking back at her laptop)*. I need another few minutes.

BARB: *(to Elise)* I worry that you're working too hard. Have some gingerbread.

ELISE: Can't miss out on the holiday rush.

BARB: That's a sad way to look at Christmas.

ELISE: Just business.

NOAH, JAKE, and PAIGE run in, backpacks on.

ELISE: Out of school already, Noah?

BRUCE: *(sarcastically)* Time flies when you're having fun.

LORI: It's once a year, Bruce.

NOAH: It's almost Christmas, we shouldn't have school at all.

BARB: It's the beginning of November.

NOAH: Exactly.

PAIGE: *(to Lori)* Mom. I want to make one of those paper chains, so we can tear one each day before Christmas?

BARB: That's a lot of rings, Paige.

ELISE: Your mom and I made an epic one.

LORI: Started on August 15th. It wrapped completely around our bedroom.

BARB: That's when this all began I guess.

LORI: Paper chain after supper. Get outside for some fresh air.

PAIGE: The rink's not up yet.

BRUCE: I'm getting to it. Gotta replace some two by fours.

PAIGE: *(to Noah)* Jake kept crashing into them last year.

JAKE: It's ice hockey. It happens.

LORI: There are other things to do outside than play hockey.

JAKE: Are there?

NOAH: I was hoping to try out for the Christmas play, but they don't have one at school here.

ELISE: Sorry Noah, maybe there'll be one the spring.

JAKE: Well, there was that other thing.

Noah gives a "don't talk about that" look to Jake

JAKE: Didn't work out, I guess.

LORI: What other thing?

JAKE: Nothing. *(changing the subject)* There is a holiday band concert.

PAIGE: Noah doesn't know how to play an instrument.

JAKE: Neither do the kids in the school band. *(a beat)* I'm hungry.

NOAH: Grandma, did you bring any treats?

BARB: *(sarcastically)* Did Grandma bring any treats.

LORI: After something healthy, one treat for everyone.

The kids run off. Barb follows. Bruce climbs down from the step stool.

LORI: What are the odds Mom will give them something healthy first?

ELISE: Probably not good. I'll go.

LORI: I'll manage Grandma. Finish up that work.

Elise nods. Lori exits. Elise goes back to her laptop. Doorbell rings. Bruce walks to the door.

BRUCE: It may be someone from the shop.

ELISE: Why would they come here?

BRUCE: I just put a sign up in the window. It's a short walk from downtown.

ELISE: Only in Silver Ridge.

Bruce opens the door or Cal enters from off stage.

BRUCE: Hey Cal. You ordering show swag already?

CAL: Not quite yet, I just had a question.

BRUCE: Oh, sure. This is my sister-in-law Elise.

Elise looks up from her laptop briefly and acknowledges Cal

CAL: You're Noah's mom. I'm here about his audition. For Silver Ridge Park. The video you sent.

ELISE: I didn't send anything.

LORI: *(from off stage)* Bruce, can you come here a minute?

BRUCE: No rest for the weary. *(he exits)*

CAL: I'm in one of the shows for Christmas Village. We have an audition video of your son.

ELISE: Would the school have sent it? I don't know anything about the shows.

CAL: You live here and don't go to the park for Christmas?

ELISE: I've gone, we just do the rides.

CAL: The shows are good.

ELISE: So I hear.

CAL: You've heard they're good and you still don't go?

ELISE: Christmas is a busy time of year.

CAL: But you're at the park. Why not see a show?

ELISE: Just never thought about it. I don't understand why that—

NOAH: *(running in)* Mom, is it okay if I have some hot cider? *(stops in his tracks)* Wow. It's Calderon Myles!

ELISE: How do you know Mr. Myles?

CAL: Cal, please.

NOAH: I saw him on the website. Did you know he was the Music Man on the national tour.

CAL: Professor Harold Hill, at your service.

ELISE: How does Mr. Myles have your video?

NOAH: *(spoken in rhythm)* Oh you got trouble, right here in River City!

ELISE: You got trouble, kiddo. The video?

NOAH: Jake helped me.

CAL: *(to Noah)* Your email bounced back.

NOAH: Jake said he knew how to do it. Maybe he didn't set it up right.

ELISE: *(to Cal)* Excuse us a moment.

Cal acknowledges them and backs up a bit.

NOAH: *(to Elise)* I wanted to audition so bad when I saw the flier at school.

ELISE: You should have asked me.

NOAH: You're so busy and you would have said no.

ELISE: You can't do things behind my back.

NOAH: I didn't think I'd get it.

ELISE: No excuse. And did you really think that?

NOAH: I am pretty awesome.

ELISE: That you are. *(to Cal)* Thanks for coming down here, but I'm not sure that—

NOAH: Mom, please. Come on, Cal help a guy out.

CAL: I appreciate the initiative, Noah, but you need your mom's permission to do this.

NOAH: It's not going well.

CAL: I'll talk to her, but what mom says, goes.

ELISE: *(to Noah)* Finish your snack, get outside for a bit. Then homework.

NOAH: It's almost Christmas.

ELISE: In two months.

NOAH: There shouldn't be any homework from Halloween to Christmas. And from Christmas to Halloween.

CAL: *(to Noah)* Can I give you some acting advice?

NOAH: From you? Yeah.

CAL: Get that homework done and out of the way.

NOAH: That's not acting advice.

CAL: Want more time on stage? Can't do it if your homework isn't done.

NOAH: Well...

CAL: That's what real kid actors do.

He thinks a moment, then bolts off, exiting.

ELISE: That was effective.

CAL: I was that kid. This would be a great outlet for him.

ELISE: Or else more secret auditions?

CAL: Probably. *(a beat)* I've worked with a lot kids over the years, if the family isn't supportive it doesn't work.

ELISE: What happened to the boys from last year?

CAL: We're using one of them. The other grew out of the role.

ELISE: In a year?

CAL: Voice changed. Tim can't be a bass. Or five foot seven. Noah would be paid, rehearsals and performances.

ELISE: A ten year old with a job?

CAL: A fun job. Once performances start, it's basically one day on, one day off through New Year's Day.

ELISE: That's a lot.

CAL: The kids love it.

ELISE: I appreciate you coming down here, but I don't know. I've been a single mom since my husband passed away a few years ago.

CAL: I'm so sorry.

ELISE: I'll think about it.

CAL: Of course.

LORI: *(entering with Bruce)* Cal, good to see you! Here for an order already?

BRUCE: He was here to see Elise.

CAL: We're offering Noah a role in the show.

ELISE: *(to Lori)* He and Jake sent in an audition video.

LORI: I gotta turn off the wifi.

CAL: I'll be back for the show jackets order.

ELISE: Show jackets?

CAL: Your name on the front, show on the back. The cast orders them every year. Just let me know about Noah.

Elise nods. Cal exits.

LORI: I hear those shows are good.

ELISE: Have *you* ever been to one?

LORI: No, but that hot cocoa in the Christmas Village, it's like drinking a candy bar. What are you gonna do?

ELISE: I don't know. It's a commitment.

LORI: We can help.

BRUCE: You get drafted to play center for the Celtics? You don't turn that down.

ELISE: Silver Ridge Park is not the NBA.

BRUCE: It is around here.

LORI: We'll have to change my theme. A Santa's Workshop Christmas doesn't go.

ELISE: You already have activities planned for every day in Advent.

BRUCE: And all the decorations we've already put up.

LORI: I'll keep them for next year and we can still get all the lights up today. Too bad I already did "A Christmas Carol" Christmas.

BRUCE: (*to Lori*) You never change the theme for me.

LORI: Sports is not a Christmas theme.

BRUCE: Reindeer games.

LORI: We did a Rudolf Christmas five years ago.

BRUCE: A Football Christmas. The Pats play on Christmas day.

LORI: Come on.

BRUCE: Or a Boston Red Sox Christmas.

LORI: A Yankee Christmas, maybe.

BRUCE: (*deadpan*) How dare you say that in my presence?

LORI: Old time New England, that sort of thing.

BRUCE: Red Sox next year. Red is a Christmas color.

LORI: No.

BRUCE: Some day.

LORI: Never.

BRUCE: I'll wear you down.

LORI: I don't think so.

BRUCE: Neither do I. That's one of your charming qualities.

LORI: I know. Oh, I got it. "A Backstage Christmas." I'll have tons of ideas for that.

ELISE: I guess I could bring my laptop and work while I'm there. Noah will be busy on stage, right?

LORI: Then maybe you'd have time to come to my advent events.

ELISE: I've got five brand new clients.

LORI: As you did last month. Come on, Elise. It's Christmas.

ELISE: It's November. (*calls to the other room*) Noah?

Noah runs in.

NOAH: Yeah, mom.

ELISE: How would you like an early Christmas present. You want to take the role?

NOAH: For real?

ELISE: Homework needs to be done.

NOAH: No problem.

ELISE: With no complaining.

NOAH: That seems a lot to ask.

ELISE: Minimal complaining?

NOAH: I can do that. Thanks mom! This is the best day of my entire life!

Noah runs out.

LORI: That has to feel worth it.

ELISE: That kid could use some good news.

LORI: Alright people. These Christmas lights aren't going up themselves.

BRUCE: Yes, ma'am.

LORI: Let's not do this.

ELISE: *(to Lori)* Aye aye captain.

LORI: Quit it.

BRUCE: At your command.

ELISE: We got this, boss.

LORI: Enough.

Bruce and Elise laugh. Lights dim.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

The backstage/green room area at Festival Hall, the performing arts center at Silver Ridge Amusement Park. An old pair of couches, and a white board, with the words "25 Days until Opening." Perhaps some signs with arrows towards stage entrances on opposite sides of the room. Some garland, a wreath, a Christmas tree, or other simple decorations. A few actors milling about. TIFFANY is preparing OLIVE for her first rehearsal.

MEGYN: Everyone's here but Tim.

ROSEMARY: Did they call?

MEGYN: Nope. *(looking at an app on her phone)* Noah and Elise Garland checked in at the gate at 4:43.

CAL: They should be here by now.

MEGYN: I hope they're not going to be a problem.

ROSEMARY: *(to Cal)* I'll start with the middle sequence, you have a few minutes. *(to Megyn)* Let's go.

MEGYN: *(a loud announcement)* We need everyone but Bob Cratchit on stage. We start in five.

EVERYONE: Thank you five.

Actors exit to the stage except Cal who's wordlessly discussing something with Megyn. A few stage hands and Tiffany remain. Noah and Elise are walking in the Park, towards Festival Hall (perhaps through the audience).

NOAH: It's weird to walk through the park with no one here.

ELISE: They're busy getting ready for Christmas.

NOAH: More than ten million lights. Dad would've thought this was so cool. Being here behind the scenes.

ELISE: He'd be asking a lot of questions.

NOAH: Yeah. *(a beat)* Oh look.

He runs to a piece of paper, crumples it up and starts looking for a trash can.

ELISE: Do you need to pick up every piece of trash?

NOAH: I'm a team member now, it's my responsibility. I even have my own badge. *(He holds up the badge and looks at it.)* I'm very official here.

ELISE: I see this.

Elise and Noah enter the stage area.

MEGYN: Oh good, he's here.

CAL: Hey Noah, ready to go?

MEGYN: You to need to be on stage.

NOAH: Yay!

He tosses the crumpled paper to Elise. She catches it.

ELISE: I'll find a trash can. Have fun.

NOAH: Thanks, mom.

CAL: Go get em.

Noah runs off.

MEGYN: *(to Elise)* You need to be earlier.

ELISE: *(looks at the time)* It's just five now.

MEGYN: Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable.

ELISE: Sorry.

Megyn is not impressed and she exits

CAL: Just a warning, being late doesn't go over well.

ELISE: We were at the park with plenty of time. Noah picked up every stray napkin along the way.

CAL: Good for him. Taking the HR training very seriously.

ELISE: Picking up trash?

CAL: You weren't at the training?

ELISE: I was, but I was working.

CAL: If anyone sees anything out of place, they take care of it. And everyone's a team member - from the ticket collectors to the CEO.

ELISE: That's how they keep the park so clean. Wish Noah'd do the same with his legos.

CAL: Call him a 'team member' and maybe he will.

ELISE: Worth a try. *(a light moment between them)* Can I work in the seats out in the theater?

CAL: In the house, you mean.

ELISE: Yeah, in the audience.

CAL: Audience are the people. The area is the house.

ELISE: A purist, I see.

CAL: Just what's it called. As a stage mom you should know that.

ELISE: I'm not a stage mom.

CAL: It's not an insult. Just a statement of fact.

ELISE: I guess. I can just sit back here on this couch.

CAL: Sure if you can concentrate.

ELISE: Why couldn't I?

CAL: The noise.

ELISE: What noise?

All at once across the stage: a TRIO enters singing in three part harmony, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"; two kids enter with ice skates over their shoulder, a parent rushes them along; a few performers carrying halos arguing about whose is whose. A few people remain and loiter.

CAL: This is the gathering place for all the shows. It's right near the cast co-op.

ELISE: Good thing I brought my noise cancelling headphones.

CAL: Prepared.

ELISE: Have to be.

CAL: You could embrace the whole experience. It's fun to see a show put together.

ELISE: I have a lot to do.

MEGYN: *(entering)* Cal, you're up.

Cal gives Megyn and Cal exit. TIFFANY, experienced stage mom, approaches Elise. The stage hands exit.

TIFFANY: I'm Olive's mom. It's our third year travelling in for the show.

ELISE: You don't live around here?

TIFFANY: My parents do, we stay with them. Olive was hoping for the Annie National Tour, but it didn't work out. Bus and truck is a grind so maybe it's just as well. She's done mostly regional stuff, a few commercials. And Noah?

ELISE: This is just for fun.

TIFFANY: You say that now. They get the bug and you're sending out audition videos every other day.

ELISE: I can see how that happens.

TIFFANY: Hopefully he can dance a little. The Tim last year had two left feet.

ELISE: Oh, I don't know.

TIFFANY: You don't know if he can dance?

ELISE: This is all new to us.

TIFFANY: *(this is not great)* Great.

ELISE: I need to get some work done.

Montage of time passing. Carolers come through. Ice Skaters. Christmas music. Cast Members DOUG, SHARON, VANESSA and WARREN enter from the 'stage' (optional: with a few other cast members)

DOUG: It was "Jolly Old *(pumping his left arm across his torso and speaking in rhythm)* St. Nicholas." *(pumping the right arm to the left)*.

SHARON: I thought it was right first.

VANESSA: It was definitely left.

They get in a line and chant the song in rhythm starting with the left arm.

SHARON: You're right. *(She practices it a few times, silently)*

WARREN: You'll get it.

VANESSA: *(to Tiffany)* So glad Olive is back this year!

DOUG: So great to see her.

SHARON: She has grown!

TIFFANY: Thankfully not too much.

SHARON: Probably her last year.

TIFFANY: She just fit in the costume.

SHARON: (to Vanessa) It's probably Vanessa's last year too, the way her career is taking off.

WARREN: She's killing it.

VANESSA: We'll see.

DOUG: (to Elise) You must be Tim's mom.

SHARON: Noah is great.

VANESSA: Very enthusiastic.

ELISE: Is he still out there?

SHARON: He was talking to Rosemary.

Olive enters, followed by Noah. He is wide eyed and looks in shock. (Any remaining cast members also enter).

ELISE: (to Noah) How'd it go?

NOAH: (still in shock) I need to write some things down.

ELISE: (to Noah, she hands him her laptop) You okay?

NOAH: Got to make some notes.

Noah sits and types up notes.. Sharon, Vanessa and Doug talk to other cast members. Cal approaches Elise.

CAL: You okay?

ELISE: It's just uh, Noah seems overwhelmed.

CAL: The pace is probably quicker than he's used to.

ELISE: Maybe this was a mistake.

CAL: He's fine, hey Noah. (Cal walks over to him) Write some notes, but you need to practice during the rehearsal.

NOAH: Isn't that what I'm doing?

CAL: When Rosemary gives you instructions, she'll move to someone else. You should practice it right then.

NOAH: Oh, I thought I had time.

CAL: Not as a pro. Practice it, review it in your head until they restart. Then you'll be ready. Finish typing. But you want to learn to think on your feet.

NOAH: I can do that.

CAL: Sure you can.

Noah turns back to the laptop. Cal heads over to Elise.

ELISE: What if he can't?

CAL: It's gonna be alright.

ELISE: I don't want him out there making a fool of himself.

CAL: These kids are sponges. He's talented. Just needs a few tools, that's all.

Megyn and Rosemary enter.

MEGYN: (a loud announcement) I need everyone's attention for cast meeting.

ROSEMARY: Thanks everyone for today. Review your lines, your blocking. (looks pointedly at Doug, Sharon, Vanessa) The choreo.

DOUG: We're working on it.

SHARON: We got it.

VANESSA: We'll fix it.

ROSEMARY: Good. (to Cal) I gotta get over to Sleigh Bells at the pavilion. Can you do the rest here?

He nods, she exits

CAL: Good day today everyone. First day with the kids, good to have them with us. (the cast cheers for them). I'll be ordering cast jackets. Just let me know your sizes on the sign up. And of course – Secret Santa.

General excitement except from Elise.

CAL: First round under one dollar, second round under ten, third under twenty. Be creative and have fun.

Cal starts handing out names from a Santa Hat. Cast members all take one, some ad lib then silent conversation.

ELISE: No thanks.

CAL: It'll be fun.

ELISE: Noah can take one.

CAL: (shaking the hat) You're a part of the crew.

NOAH: Just take one, mom. It'll be fun.

CAL: Your name is already in there.

ELISE: Just pull it out.

CAL: Someone may have already taken it.

ELISE: Fine.

CAL: I knew you wanted to.

ELISE: I just don't wanna to make you start over.

CAL: That's the Christmas Spirit.

DOUG: Guess we're back at it tomorrow.

SHARON: I've got an audition to record.

VANESSA: I'll help. You record mine?

SHARON: Sounds like a plan.

Doug, Sharon and Vanessa exit.

ELISE: They're auditioning?

CAL: Never stops. These are short gigs. You gotta keep moving and you take what you can get, wherever it is.

ELISE: So you bounce around the country.

CAL: If you're lucky.

ELISE: That's got to be hard. Don't you want to find a place to settle down?

CAL: The dream for most stage actors is New York. Would have loved it. But it doesn't happen for most of us.

ELISE: It could still happen.

CAL: Gotta be good and gotta be lucky. But I've been fortunate. I've always worked. Back in the day auditions were harder with everything in person. A lot of video submissions now. Beats a cattle call. Not perfect though.

ELISE: What is? It's probably better to record your audition until you like it.

CAL: It's also a problem. You never really like it.

ELISE: *(She smiles)* Thanks for today. Helping with Noah. *(Noah joins them.)*

CAL: Sure thing.

NOAH: Can't wait for Wednesday!

ELISE: I thought we were here tomorrow?

NOAH: That's for the other Tim.

ELISE: That's right.

NOAH: Get with the program, mom.

ELISE: Yes, Noah.

END OF EXCERPT