

Michael McLean's
THE FORGOTTEN CAROLS
Adapted
by
Scott McLean

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The Forgotten Carols

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Cast:

Constance.....
John.....
Dr. Halifax.....
Sarah.....
Lillian, Policewoman, Jail Clerk, Meggan.....
Man in Uniform, Tree Vendor, Cabby, Homeless Man, Uncle Ted, Jerry,
Marty.....
Choir.....

On Stage:

The Rutherford House: A large Christmas tree, a baby grand piano, an old radio, wingback chairs, an ottoman, a reading lamp, a small desk, a coat rack, and a telephone.

Lillian Chamberlain's Home: a reading chair, end table, lamp and a telephone.

A park bench, a street lamp, and an old tin garbage can.

Floating Set Pieces:

A sign that reads, "Tree Sale."

A Christmas tree for the hospital waiting room.

St. John's Hospital (waiting room): a chair, magazine rack, and a counter.

A baby's hospital crib.

A hospital bed with a standing IV drip.

A black chair rigged with a steering wheel. The Cabby sets this piece in front of the park bench.

SFX=Sound Effects:

Bustling City Sounds, Hospital Sounds (Intercom Pages, People Walking in Hallways), Doorbell, Telephone, Car Horn, Car Door (Opening/Closing/Slamming), Car Driving (Pulling Out/Speeding Up/Slowing Down), Ambulance Siren, Radio Playing Christmas Music, Baby (Fussing/Screaming/Calming Down/Chuckling), Loud Knocks/Police Siren, Big Door/Office Door (Opening/Shutting/Slamming).

Setting:

December 1972

Authors Note:

Every exchange between Lillian, Constance, and Uncle Ted is a flashback. They speak facing the audience. The actor, who plays multiple male characters (Man in Uniform), wears air force blues throughout the play. He uses dialects and costume accessories to play other characters. Lillian wears a simple dark dress. She also uses costume accessories and dialects to play other characters. This story is set in December 1972 because Constance was born in the early 1940's. Constance, Dr. Halifax, Lillian, and the Man in Uniform, shouldn't be younger than early to mid thirties. If older actors are cast, the date of the Grantsville Chronicle Article should be adjusted accordingly (two years behind the chosen setting). The audience should believe Sarah and John are at least thirty years older than the rest of the cast. Ideally, there are two places on stage where characters can appear and disappear behind a specially lit scrim. Lillian's home claims one spot. Uncle Ted claims the other, as does John when he recites his letter to Connie Lou and dances with Sarah.

One Act:

Scene 1	John, Passerbys, Tree Vendor "John Buys a Tree"
Scene 2	Constance, Dr. Halifax "It's a Very Important Job"
Scene 3	John, Constance "Getting to Know You/Let Him In"
Scene 4	Lillian, Constance "Constance Goes to Westover"
Scene 5	Cabby, Constance "Car Talk"
Scene 6	Policewoman, Constance, Homeless Man, Lillian "Homeless"
Scene 7	John, Constance "He Was Here/Handel's Dream"
Scene 8	Constance, Dr. Halifax, Sarah "In Maternity/Sarah's Lullaby"
Scene 9	Constance, John "The Music Box"
Scene 10	Cabby, Constance "Peace on Earth"
Scene 11	Lillian, Constance "Drugs and Joy to the World"
Scene 12	Uncle Ted, Constance "Death and Eulogy"

INTERMISSION

Scene 13	Constance, Dr. Halifax "Inappropriate Notes"
Scene 14	John, Constance "Fathers and Three Kings"
Scene 15	Policewoman, Constance, John, Marty "Was It All a Lie"
Scene 16	Constance "Constance Takes the Tree Down"
Scene 17	Constance, Jail Clerk, Jerry, John "Bailed Out Christmas Gifts"
Scene 18	Dr. Halifax, Constance "Berkley and Connie Lou"
Scene 19	Constance, Meggan "Baby Names"
Scene 20	Constance, Lillian, Man in Uniform, Sarah, John "All I Ever Wanted"

Scene 1 A spot light rises on a homeless man (John) seated on a park bench with grocery cart in tow (filled with blankets, aluminum cans, and a suitcase). Bustling sounds of the city are heard (SFX City Sounds), but they dissipate as John plays the opening phrase of the intro music on his flute. A passerby (Dr. Halifax) puts a dollar in John's pail. John takes the money from his pail to a Christmas tree vendor, who helps him load a tree onto his cart. He exits as the intro music comes to a close.

John

Merry Christmas!

Tree Vendor

Anyone looking for a tree? Trees for sale.

John

Say, you got any trees left there?

Tree Vendor

Oh yeah!

John

Thank you, Merry Christmas!

Little Girl

Mommy, I want to get a tree.

Mother

Not now honey, we're on the way to visit grandpa at the hospital.

John

Excuse me; did you say you are on the way to St. John's Hospital? Would you bring them a little Christmas cheer for me? Thank you!

Scene 2 Saint John's Hospital. (SFX Hospital Sounds). Choir members are decorating the waiting room. Enter Constance.

Constance

Wait, wait!!! No decorating, please!

Enter Dr. Halifax with a box of decorations.

Dr. Halifax

I told them they could set up for the program tonight.

Constance

Where have you been?

Dr. Halifax

I had to get some decorations.

Constance

Did you get my message?

Dr. Halifax

Yes, I did, but I want you...

Constance

You said he's—

Dr. Halifax

--to do the job.

Constance

Doesn't it say he has some psychological problems?

Dr. Halifax

Some dementia.

Constance

(To Choir) Don't use a stapler!
We have masking tape. (To Halifax)
Didn't you ask Nurse Petty?

Dr. Halifax

I did.

Constance

No you didn't.

Dr. Halifax

No, I didn't. But she's in maternity,
I wouldn't dare ask you to work in there.

Constance

You might as well have.

Dr. Halifax

Well, I need someone I can trust.

Constance

Then check him into a care center.

Dr. Halifax

He doesn't need to be checked in, he needs to be checked on.

Constance

I'm sure you can find someone else—

Dr. Halifax

They just want to make sure he takes his medication, and takes a nap.

Constance

You can send an orderly for that.

Dr. Halifax

But I want to send you.

Constance

Why? (To Choir) That snowflake's crooked.

Dr. Halifax

What? (She fixes snowflake) Did you read the part where they said they'd make a five thousand dollar donation?

Constance

That's why you should talk to someone who has a car.

Dr. Halifax

I did.

Constance

No you didn't.

Dr. Halifax

No, I didn't. But I'll call a cab.

Constance

I'm sure you can find someone with a car.

Dr. Halifax

Cab drivers have cars.

Constance

Why waste the money?

Dr. Halifax

I just want you to slow down for a few days.

Constance

I don't need a vacation.

Dr. Halifax

This is not a vacation.

Constance

Yes it is.

Dr. Halifax

Yes, it is. But it's not a Christmas vacation,
this is a vacation from Christmas.

Constance

I've never complained about working over the holidays.

Dr. Halifax

I know. And you're still working. You've
just been going non-stop for so long, I don't
want to see you take another thousand shifts!

Constance

You're understaffed.

Dr. Halifax

The hospital needs the money.

Constance

Then send an orderly.

Dr. Halifax

I would, but we got a letter that specifically
asked for our best nurse.

Constance

You'd have to replace me in the ICU.

Dr. Halifax

It's less than a week, and you'll be right
back to your crazy life!

Constance

It's more work for you.

Dr. Halifax

Let me worry about that for once! I swear,
if you were fired, you'd come back and
volunteer full time.

Constance

See the mud they've tracked in?

Dr. Halifax

I'll make you some of my famous egg salad
sandwiches!

Constance

I don't eat egg salad.

Dr. Halifax

Well, you've never tried my egg salad.

Constance

No. But no thank you.

We hear a pitch pipe, but the choir can't find the pitch.

Dr. Halifax

Do you want be to beg?

He starts to get down on one knee.

Constance

No!

A choir member says, "Let's try again."

Dr. Halifax

Then what else can I do?

Constance

You can find someone else.

The choir still can't seem to find the pitch.

Dr. Halifax

What if the taxi picks you up here, and you still work in the mornings?

Constance

Would it bring me back here when I'm done?

Dr. Halifax

No, it'll take you back to your house! You're done by five. You're not working nights!
End of story!

The choir sings, "O little town of Bethlehem..."

Dr. Halifax (CONT'D)

I'll double your Christmas bonus.

The choir butchers, "how still we see thee lie, above the deep and..."

Constance

Will there be caroling?

Dr. Halifax

Uhh... I don't think so.

Constance

Alright, I'll do it.

Scene 3 Doorbell rings immediately (SFX Doorbell). Rutherford home. John is on all fours beneath the piano to plug in the Christmas tree lights.

John

Come on in. The door's open. (More Doorbell)
It's unlocked, just come right on in. Hi, you must be the nurse from the hospital. It's the shoes. The shoes give you away every time.

Constance

I'm here for a Mr. Christian—

John

Oh no, please, no mister, I'm just John.

Constance

Okay, John.

John

Most of my friends call me, Uncle John.

Constance

John.

John

Or John. I like, John. That'll do! I'm pleased to meet you. Thanks for coming over the holiday. May I take your—

Constance hangs her coat on a coat rack.

Constance

It's my job.

John

Well, it's very kind of you. What's your name?

Constance

I'm Nurse Chamberlain.

John

Nurse Chamberlain? What intuitive parents. Do you have a brother named, Fireman?

Constance

No.

John

Oh. So is there anything you'd like me to call you?

Constance

You can call me Nurse Chamberlain.

John

I promise I won't forget your profession, but I'd like to remember your name—

Constance

My name is Constance.

John

Constance! Constance? You have a middle name, don't you?

Constance

Louise.

John

Louise. I like that name, Louise. I knew a cat once...meanest cat in the world, chased off my neighbor's pit bull one time, scratched his nose. And he was always getting into things, making a mess. I named him Constantine. Not a thing like you though, he never wanted to be my friend. Anyway. Make yourself at home, and I'll go get the—Oh! I got it! I'm gonna call you, Connie Lou!

Constance

My name is Constance.

John

I betcha all your friends call you, Connie-Lou. I just love that name—that's someone I want to know.

Constance

Well, my name is NOT Connie, John.

John

You want to be called Connie *John*?

Constance

No. I said my name is—

John

Connie *Lou* is better.

Constance

I'm not a—

John

Do you want some hot chocolate?

Constance

I want you to call me, Constance. Can we do that, please?

John

Sure. Whenever *we* call you anything, that's what *we'll* do...we...all of us here will do that.

Constance
Thank you.

John
But I'm gonna call you, Connie Lou.

Constance
John—

John
I'll go to make the chocolate!

Constance
I think we better fill out your chart first.

John
“A drink that'll sure quench your *hot* thirst?”

Constance (loudly)
I need to know your medical history.
Will you please sit here, and answer a few
questions for me?

John
No need to shout. I'll tell you anything you're
ready to hear.

Constance
Thank you.

John
I live to serve, Connie Lou.

Constance
Constance. How are you feeling today?

John
Better since you came.

Constance
How long have you been taking your medication?

John
I don't know.

Constance

You don't know. How do you feel after
you take it?

John

It makes me sleepy.

Constance

Nauseous?

John

Dopey.

Constance

A little out of it? Do you have any allergies?

John

I get Sneezy.

Constance

Okay.

John

Happy, Grumpy, Bashful—

Constance

This isn't funny, John.

John

Well, you're the doc, Doc!

Constance

That's an old joke.

John

And I'm an old man.

Constance

How old are you?

John

I stopped counting.

Constance

What's your date of birth?

John
Springtime.

Constance
I have to fill out this chart.

John
I know. I'm trying to help.

Constance
When were you born?

John
I think it was over nineteen hundred years ago!

Pause.

Constance
Have you taken your medication today?

John
No.

Constance
I think it's time you did.

John
I think it's time we decorate!

Constance
Decorate?

John
Are you ready, Connie Lou? Christmas has officially begun. (John opens the ornament case and impersonates magical wind chimes.) Can you feel it? This one goes on the tree first.

Constance
No, John, I don't really like to decorate.

John
It's funny you say that, because I don't really like to take my medication. (They make a trade, medication for ornament.) Go on, Connie Lou, don't be shy.

Constance

Where would you like me to place it?

John

Right in the *heart* of the tree.

Constance

Here?

John

The *heart* of the tree. The HEART of the tree.
You are a nurse aren't you? Well done. Now we
get to sing.

Constance

You're going to sing now?

John

No, *we* are going to sing. We're going to sing
our carols together.

Constance

I don't sing, John.

John

Sure you do. You just need permission...
permission granted, Connie-Lou. What's
your carol?

Constance

I don't really know too many carols.

John

Sure you do, what's your carol?

Constance

My carol?

John

Sure.

Constance

Do you mean like "Joy to the World" or "Oh
come oh come...ye...people"?

John

I've always liked that one, but I want to hear you sing *your* carol.

Constance

I don't have a carol.

John

Of course you do. Everyone has a carol. The carol that goes with this ornament was written by a very dear friend of mine. Geedohn. Geedohn Bin-Mooshay. Have you heard of him?

Constance

Who?

John

Well, you may have read about him in this little book, it's called the New Testament. He was the Innkeeper, who turned Joseph and Mary away.

Constance

The Innkeeper?

John

Oh, you know him?

Constance

From Bethlehem?

John

That's right.

Constance

No, I don't.

John

Oh. Well, he was a real nice fella. Just got a little too busy, though, like most of us do sometimes. But he taught me a phrase I'll never forget. (He strikes a chord on the piano) "Tenlo-lehe-kanes." Tenlo-lehe-kanes. Sing with me. Tenlo-lehe-kanes. Translation? "Let him in." Let him in. (John sings The Innkeeper) I am a man forgotten. No one recalls my name. Thousands of years will fail to fully erase my shame. But I turned a profit nicely that

day, that I turned the couple away...I turned them away. (End John)
(Inn Keeper sings)I didn't sleep that evening, though
I'd sold out my place. Somehow I felt uneasy, something about her
face. Why do I wish that I'd let them stay? I don't think they could
have paid. Or could they have paid? Restless I left
my bedroom. I walked the streets all night. Lost in
the world I lived in, and found by a heavenly light.
Staring at one bright star in the sky, I heard a baby cry.
And I knew where that cry had come from. Cause I
told them where they could go. But I didn't think I
could face them. And so I walked slowly home.
Missing my chance to share in their joy, I never saw
the boy. He never would condemn me. I did that all on
my own. He offered his forgiveness. And ever since then
I've known, he lets us choose each hour of each day if
we'll let him in to stay. Let Him in. Let Him in. Let the
hope & the joy begin. Let Him in, let Him in. Let
the peace on earth begin. And whether it be in your
world today, or a crowded Bethlehem inn, find a way.
Make Him room. Let Him in. Let Him in. Let Him in.
Let Him in. (Music Ends)

John

I think I'm ready for my nap now.

Scene 4 SFX horn honking

John

Sounds like your cab. Should I help you to the door?

Constance

No, I'll see myself out.

John

Will I see you tomorrow?

Constance

Yes I'll be here.

Horn honks again. Lights rise on Lillian. Lillian speaks to Constance as though she were right in front of her, and as if Constance were thirteen years old.

Lillian

Constance, Constance, Constance, your taxi's waiting.

Constance

I know, I just—

Lillian

Have you packed everything?

Constance

I think so.

Taxi driver honks his horn.

Lillian

Hurry, Constance.

Constance

Okay. Okay. I just—

Lillian

What—what is it?

Constance

I don't want to go.

Lillian

This is not the time for this conversation.

Constance

I know—I know. I just don't want to leave you alone.

Lillian

Do you know what I had to do to get you accepted?
It's a miracle they let you in...

Constance

But---

Lillian

Please don't argue with me today. I don't have the energy. *It's pointless!*

Constance

Is it worse than yesterday?

Lillian

Don't worry...come here. Listen to me. Are you listening?

Constance

Yes.

Lillian

I'll be fine. There's nothing I can't fix. I just need time. But you...I want *you* to focus on *school*. This is one of the greatest schools in the country. It's a huge opportunity. Just work hard, okay?

Constance

Okay.

Lillian

Okay. Now hurry, go catch your cab.

Constance

Okay...I'll miss you—

Taxi driver honks his horn again.

Lillian

Constance, don't make me ask you again!

Constance

Okay.

Scene 5 Lights up on The Cabby.

The Cabby

It's the right address, but no lady.
Dinah, blow your horn.

SFX Horn honking. Constance enters.

The Cabby (cont'd)

That's right, Dinah baby. Oh, here she comes.
Doesn't look too happy. Don't worry, I'll be a perfect gentleman. Hello there—

As Constance approaches the cab, the Cabby gets out and opens a door for her. SFX accompany car doors opening and shutting.

Constance

I told the dispatcher, NO HONKING. My patient is resting.

The Cabby

Oh, I'm very sorry, we'll know better next time—(Constance slams door) She's gonna pay exact change. (He settles in front.) Where can I take ya?

Constance

1456 Lincoln, please.

The Cabby

You want me to take the "E" Street route or Beckstrand Avenue?

Constance

I'm sorry, what did you ask?

The Cabby

"E" Street or Beckstrand?

Constance

Oh, either is fine—Beckstrand, please.

The Cabby

Beckstrand it is. You look like you got a lot on your mind.

Constance

Do I?

The Cabby

Yeah, it's like I could take you home through Panguitch and you wouldn't notice. But don't worry about it. Dinah's watching me. She'd never let me get away with that.

Constance

Is Dinah your dispatcher's name?

The Cabby

No, Dinah's my cab's name.

Constance

Your car?

The Cabby

Yeah, it's a pretty name. I remember the day we first met. I turned the key and she said, "Hello! My name is Dinah, what's yours?" And I says, "Very pleased to meet you, Dinah!" And then we have a pleasant conversation. She's really fun to talk to, especially when the passengers get tired of talking to me.

Constance

Just as long as "Dinah" never really talks back?

The Cabby

Only enough to keep me from going crazy?

Constance

I hope you're not serious.

The Cabby

Why's that?

Constance

Because...it's a car.

The Cabby

Well that may be, but if somethin' you care about's tryin' to tell you somthin' important, you'd be crazy not to listen.

Constance

Must be this part of town.

The Cabby

What's that?

Constance

Never mind.

The Cabby

Rest easy, Miss. I'm no different than any other cabby in this town.

Constance

All the drivers talk to their cars?

The Cabby

Oh yeah. My father still tells me about this old guy he used to work with. Says he told stories like you wouldn't believe. And one day he names his cab, Sarah. Now Sarah was his old lady's name, but he *really* loved her. And let me tell you, that cab ran forever. That's why my father's always saying, "You give it a new name, you give it a new life. Just name it with love." He'd say. "Always love." (SFX Ambulance siren/police lights are flashing) Look at this mess.

Constance

Let me out, let me out at the corner please?

The Cabby

Up here?

Constance

Yes, thank you.

The Cabby

What, are you going to try to help?

Constance

There might be something I can do.

The Cabby

Let me give you some change.

Constance

Keep it.

The Cabby

Do you want me to wait for you?

Constance

No. I'll get a bus.

Constance slams the cab door (SFX car door slamming) and races to the scene of the accident.

Scene 6 Enter Policewoman. Cue homeless intro music.

Policewoman

Can I help you, Miss?

Constance

I'm an ICU nurse at St. John's.

Policewoman

Right, so where do you think you're going?

Constance

To see if I can help.

Policewoman

Not today, Lady. The paramedics have it under control. There's a lot of glass and metal around. But there's nothing here for you to fix. Okay, it's very dangerous. I need you to stay right here.

Constance

But there might be something—

Policewoman

Are you going to test me? I wouldn't test me today. I need you to stay right here. You understand me?

Constance

But they might—

Policewoman

Do you understand me?!

Constance

Yes.

Policewoman exits. Homeless men (including John) use a garbage can as a fireplace with a Christmas tree painted on it.

Homeless Man

Excuse me, Miss...Miss?

Constance

I don't have any change.

Homeless Man

No, I was just wondering if you'd like to
come warm your hands by the fire?

Constance

Oh...no, thank you.

Homeless Man

Merry Christmas, ma'am. (He sings Homeless)

Homeless, Homeless, Like the Christ child was. Homeless,
Homeless, but there is hope because He came down to
earth to lead us, and He vowed He'd never leave us,
homeless, homeless, for in His love there is a home.
Homeless, homeless, was His humble birth. Homeless,
homeless, and still He changed the earth. Nothing
kept his heart from giving, though most of His life
was living, homeless, homeless, He showed, it's
how we live, not where. And when His homeless days on
earth were done, He went home to where we all came from.

Lillian picks up the telephone. The homeless music underscores.

Lillian

I'm glad you got there safe.

Constance

Yeah. It's fine, Mom. How are you?

Lillian

I'm fine. Are you going to work hard for me, Constance?

Constance

Yes.

Lillian

Listen to your teachers, and you push yourself.
Don't slack off.

Constance

I won't. I promise.

Lillian

Okay. Good-Night.

Constance

Good-Night. Hey, mom?

Lillian

Yeah?

Constance

My birthday's on a Saturday this year,
so maybe I could come home that weekend
if my grades are good enough?

Lillian

There won't be a home to come home to.

Constance

What?

Lillian

I sold the house two weeks ago. I have to move
everything out by the end of the month.

Constance

How are you moving?—

Lillian

I'll send you a birthday gift, okay?

Constance

Oh, you don't have to—

Lillian

No, I'll fix it! I'll fix it. It'll be great. You just
can't come home right now, okay? We'll have
to wait until Christmas.

Constance

Christmas?

Lillian

Listen, I'll give you a call later this week, all right?

Constance

All right.

Lillian

Study hard for me.

Constance

Okay.

Lillian

Good-Night, Constance.

Lillian hangs up.

Constance

Good-Night, Mom.

Light change. Homeless man sings the final refrain.

Homeless Man

He came down to earth to lead us. And He
vowed He'd never leave us, homeless, homeless,
for in His love there is a home.

Black out.

Scene 7 John plays his flute. Lights up. John is dressed in ancient shepherds robes. He guides Constance closer to the tree, using only his flute as the Pied Piper of Hamblin. John directs Constance to the ornament case. She opens it as John tells her via flute to take an ornament from the case. It's the wrong one, and John blows a shrill note. She tries another....Wrong again! Finally, she pulls out an ornament that looks like the flute John is playing. Then John directs her to place the ornament on the tree. She puts it too close to the other ornament, and John acts like he's having a heart attack.

Constance

What's wrong, John? Can you breathe? Are
you in pain? Can you speak?

She checks his eyes and pulse.

John

Not so close—

Constance

Not so close?

John

Not so close to the other ornament, Connie Lou,
it's a REALLY BIG TREE!

Constance places the flute ornament farther away from the Innkeeper ornament.

Constance

Happy?

John

Grumpy. That's better. You know, I made this ornament.
Made it after meeting Binyamin, of course everyone
used to call him "Yeshnuni." Great kid. He was
one of the shepherds that was there that first Christmas.

Cue Music.

Constance

One of the shepherds who saw the angels?

John

No, he didn't see any angels.

Constance

No?

John

No, he fell asleep and missed the whole thing.
That's why we called him "Yeshnuni"
Probably should have called him Yesh-snoozy
Years later, he told me all about it. (John sings
The Shepherd Song)

The flock was more than peaceful.
The night was dark and deep.
The stillness wrapped around me,
I drifted off to sleep.
And when my friends awoke me,
Oh what a tale they had to tell.
They said the angels told them about a new-born king
They had a star to guide them
They heard the heavens sing
They said that when they found Him,
They knew they'd never be the same
Somehow I did believe them
Though everything I knew said I should not believe them
This story can't be true
But there was something magic in the air
That made me feel as if I had been there
I asked a thousand questions

Their answers startled me.
The more I heard the more I thought
I knew this could not be
And then the struggle started
My head was wrestling with my heart
Why would a God from Heaven come to the world this
way?
Why in a lowly stable would the Messiah lay?
I shook my head and asked them to tell the story one
more time.
And yes I did believe them,
Though I'd not seen a thing,
I did not go to Bethlehem or hear the angels sing
But there was something magic in the air
That made me feel as if I had been there.
I knew that as the world moves on through time,
There would be more stories just like mine
About the souls who've chosen to believe,
In something that they never got to see.
(John stands on the ottoman)
And do you think you'll join us
Though you've not seen a thing?
You were not there in Bethlehem or heard the angles sing.
But if you feel the spirit in the air,
Then just like me you'll know that He was here.
He was here.
The King of Kings and Lord of Lord's was here
He was here.
He was here.
And He will come again, cause He was here. He was here.
He was here.

Music fades. There is a long pause. Constance tries to ease him down the ottoman.

Constance

Easy does it, John. There you go. Would you
like to try some egg salad sandwiches?

John

I was looking at those. Don't mind if I do.

Constance

This is an interesting robe, John. Where did you
get it?

John

Who made these?

Constance

Dr. Halifax

John

That's a good sandwich. What were you asking?

Constance

Your robe. Where did you get your robe?

John

Oh, yes! This was his, actually. It belonged to my friend Binyamin. And when I sing his ornament and hang his carol (John makes a strike-that-reverse-it sign.) I wear *his robe* to honor him.

Constance is writing down notes of her discussion which John can't quite see.

Constance

When did you first get to know him?

John

Around 42 A.D.

John picks up a pen from the ornament case along with some paper.

Constance

So what's become of him?

John

He's dead Connie.

Constance

Of course. But what about you?

John

I'm not.

Constance

So, you've been alive all these years. Don't you think that's a little unusual?

John

A little? I think it's incredible. You know anyone else who's been around as long as I have? In fact, how long have you known about these sandwiches?

Constance

I don't eat egg salad.

John begins writing this down on his little note pad, as if he's just discovered something noteworthy about his nurse.

Constance

How have you been alive so long?

John

I can't tell you that.

Constance

You can't tell me because you don't want to tell me, or because you don't know yourself?

John

You're not ready....I can't tell you.

John finishes his note, folds it up and places it in his pocket and then stands up.

Constance

What are you running away from, John?

John

I'm not running away from anything.

Constance

You're running away from the question!

John

No, I'm not.

Constance

Then what made you stand up just now?! (Pause)

John

I stood up just now because really old shepherds clothes ITCH!!!

As John crosses to exit, he flips the robe tails her way. He turns on a radio before he exits, and the station plays Christmas music.

John

Make yourself comfortable.

John exits. Constance tries to relax. She tries a sandwich, and is surprised by how good it is.

Constance

That's good. That's *really* good!

Hearing John cough she stops herself, and stuffs the rest of the sandwich in her mouth as John re-enters.

John

Connie Lou, it looks like there might be time to hang one more ornament before you go.

He holds out the pen by a big of ribbon.

Constance

That looks more like an old pen than an ornament. What is it?

John

It's more like an old pen than an ornament Connie Lou. But now it's time to put it on the tree.

John crosses to the tree, and Constance collapses at the piano.

Constance

Stop! Stop!

John

What's happening—what's happening—are you fainting?!

Constance

Nnnnnn—na—na

John

What is it?

Constance

Nnnnot—nnnot so—

John

I don't understand.

Constance

Not so close to the other ornaments, John, it's a
REALLY BIG TREE!!!!

Constance "bursts into laughter." A little burst. Big burst. Both John and
Connie Lou are laughing now.

John

I think I see a few goobers in your nose there Connie Lou.
Yeah... it's the bubble kind. Now, Connie Lou, I want to
tell you about this pen.

Constance

Okay, John. Sorry to interrupt.

John

Oh, no, I had it coming, that was good. I got
this pen from a man with your same sense of humor.
Genius. And what a story teller! He told me this story one
time, oh it was years ago. We got to talking about
inspiration—where it comes from, why it comes and
things like this. And then he spoke of a time when he
was completely uninspired, no direction whatsoever...
just lost. And then, he had this dream.

The music from the radio becomes the music that underscores Handel's
Dream (the sound quality increases).

John (cont'd)

"In my dream," he told me, "I was a very young
angel in a very heavenly place, when a trumpet was
sounded and an announcement made. All the
angels in Heaven were invited to audition for the choir
that would announce the Holy birth. There was such
an excitement and sense of anticipation in the air
that it nearly caused my little angel heart to burst.
When my moment arrived, I stood before the musical
tribunal and I sang...and I sang...and I sang.
(Constance Snorts) And no one interrupted or
snickered at me because this was Heaven. But I
knew immediately that I wouldn't be invited to join
the choir for one obvious reason, I couldn't sing.
I felt it, but I couldn't get that feeling to come out of

my voice. The Grand Chorus Master smiled and nodded to his chief assistant to show me out. 'This isn't fair,' I pleaded. 'If you knew what was in my heart, you'd let me sing.' I ran back toward the Chorus Master and begged him to give me another chance. And as I did, music began to fill the room. And I recognized it, for it was the music coming directly from my own innocent tender heart."

A Choir sings the Alleluias from Handel's Dream.

John (cont'd)

"All the other angels stood motionless and amazed as they heard the sound. And when my carol to my King was over, the Grand Chorus Master stood. 'Oh little one,' he said. 'You have so much to give, and your time will come...your time will come.' Then I can't sing with the choir? I looked for him to change his mind, but he only shook his head and smiled. 'You have a different voice,' he said, 'but it will be heard. Centuries from now it will be heard. More orchestras and choirs than you can now imagine will be giving the music of your heart a voice that will echo through time.'"

The choir sings the Hallelujah Chorus. John leads an imaginary choir with the pen. He gives the pen to Constance and encourages her to lead the choir to the finale.

Constance

It was HANDEL? You're telling me that this pen belonged to—

John

George Frederic Handel.

Constance

This pen? Handel's pen.

John

That pen. For Unto Us A Child Is Born...And the government shall be upon his sho....and a whole bunch of stuff that's really hard to sing. But he wrote it with that pen!

Constance

THIS PEN?

John

That's right. It's the one he used to write his Messiah.

Constance

Oh my...I don't believe it.

John

You *won't* believe it, there's a difference.

Constance

It's just a story, John.

John

No, you made up your mind a long time ago that something like this could never happen, so you've chosen not to believe it.

Constance

I choose not to believe it because it isn't true.

John

Well, you may not understand it but that doesn't mean it can't be true.

Constance

It just isn't possible, John!

John

Yes it is.

Constance

No it's not!

John

Yes it is?

Constance

No it's not!

John

Yes it is!!

Constance

This is pointless.

John

You watch! Someday you'll talk to your kids like this.

Constance

I'll never have children!!

Pause. Horn honks. She gathers her things to leave.

John

Oh, Connie Lou, I'm sorry.

Constance

My taxi's here, I better get going.

John

I should know better than to treat my friends that way. I was only trying to—I—I wish you didn't have to go like this. I just wanted to— Wait—wait. Please, wait. I—I...forgive me. Please forgive me.

John takes the note from his pocket. He gives it to Constance. Connie Lou exits. John goes to his music box.

John (cont'd)

Oh, Sarah. What am I doing? I'm falling apart. You think I'll ever learn to...I keep making such a mess. I'm lost without you.

Scene 8 St. John's Hospital. SFX Hospital Sounds. Dr. Halifax is securing the Christmas tree.

Constance

That tree will cover the floor in pine needles.

Dr. Halifax

It's after five, Constance, what are you doing here?

Constance

I need a favor.

Dr. Halifax

You want some more egg salad?

Constance

I want to pick up a shift.

Dr. Halifax

I thought we had an agreement.

Constance

Just for tonight. I need to work, I'm a nurse
not a babysitter.

Dr. Halifax

Constance—

Constance

It's just for tonight. Please.

Dr. Halifax

Cheryl said she'd be a few hours late tonight—

Constance

I'll cover.

Dr. Halifax

You're not gonna like it.

Constance

I'll do anything.

Dr. Halifax

It's in maternity.

Constance

Oh.

Dr. Halifax

It's not a big deal, she'll be back in a few hours—

Constance

I said I'll cover.

Dr. Halifax

Okay—

Constance

Okay.

Light change. SFX Baby screams. Constance crosses toward the baby. Spot up on an old woman in ancient robes and a head dress.

Constance (cont'd)

You're not allowed in here. Please wait in the lobby.

Constance tried to usher Sarah out of the room, but the baby lets out a huge screech, and Constance takes a few steps back.

Sarah

Are you Nurse Chamberlain?

Constance

I am. Please leave now.

Sarah

I was hoping you were. My name is Sarah.

Constance

You really can't be here.

The baby screeches again. Sarah lifts the baby into her arms.

Constance (cont'd)

Don't do that. Put the baby down.

Sarah is singing a lullaby, and the baby calms down. SFX Baby calming down.

Constance (cont'd)

Please put the baby down.

The baby chuckles as Sarah gently puts the baby down. SFX Baby chuckling.

Constance (cont'd)

How did you do that?

Sarah

Oh, I've had some experience. I used to run one of the largest orphanages in all of Israel.

Constance

This is not an orphanage!

Sarah

I know. I came to help you—

Constance

Me?

Sarah

Well, the orphanage closed about 1900 years ago!

Constance

Nineteen “hundred” years ago?

Sarah

Give or take a few.

Constance

Follow me into the lobby now!

As Constance leads Sarah to the exit, the baby screams it’s head off. SFX Baby Screams. Sarah goes back to the baby, and lifts it into her arms. Cue Music. SFX Baby calming down. Sarah sings. Constance, at first resistant, surrenders to the music.

Sarah (singing)

Mary let me hold her baby, her newborn son.

Though I’d never be a mother,

I felt like one.

Mary let me hold her baby, so she could rest.

And ever since that night I held him,

my life’s been blessed.

Those like me who can’t have children still can be mothers.

Something in his eyes convinced me I could serve so

many others.

Mary let me hold her baby, and I was reborn.

A musical interlude continues.

Sarah (cont’d)

I took care of more than 600 children in that orphanage

And I loved every minute, right up to the day I died.

Constance

The day you died?

Sarah

It was a long time ago. But I love what I'm doing
on the other side.

Constance

The other side of what?

Sarah

Of the veil Connie Lou. Sometimes it can be very thin.

(Sarah finishes the song)

Something in His eyes convinced me,

I could serve so many others.

Mary let me hold her baby, so soft and warm.

Mary let me hold her baby, and I was reborn.

(Singing Ends) Here, Connie Lou, you hold him
for a while. It's time for me to go.

Sarah exits. Music ends. Constance is humming the new lullaby to the
baby. Light change. Dr. Halifax enters. He listens to her sing.

Dr. Halifax

Constance?

Constance

Dr. Halifax.

Dr. Halifax

I didn't know you could sing.

Constance

I don't. It was Sarah.

Dr. Halifax

Who?

Constance

Sarah.

Dr. Halifax

Who's Sarah?

Constance

The lady that was just here. (Pause) Was there
something you needed?

Dr. Halifax

No, no. Cheryl's here. She can take over now. I've got a taxi coming for you in a few minutes. But maybe if it's not too late we could—

Constance

I better get my things.

Constance puts the baby down, and exits the nursery with Dr. Halifax. She gathers her things.

Dr. Halifax

Was it as bad as you remember?

Constance

I don't belong in there. I'm terrible with babies.

Dr. Halifax

Looks to me like you'd be great—

Constance

Dr. Halifax?—

Dr. Halifax

With babies.

Constance

Dr. Halifax?

Dr. Halifax

Yeah?

Constance

Have you seen my clipboard? I thought I left it here.

Dr. Halifax

I haven't seen it. Would you like to have dinner with--

Constance

I left it on John's piano.

Dr. Halifax

You can pick it up tomorrow, can't you?

Constance

What if he's reading my notes? I can't wait until tomorrow. What time is it?

Dr. Halifax

It's 8:30.

Constance

That's not too late. Is the taxi out front?

Constance notices a bow of swaddling cloth on Dr. Halifax's tree.

Dr. Halifax

It should be any minute. But I was thinking we could—drive--- eat...

Constance

I'll see you tomorrow.

Dr. Halifax

See you.

Scene 9 Rutherford Home. John winds the music box, and dances with a memory. Constance enters.

Constance

I should have called.

John

That's all right. You shouldn't have to call. You should have knocked.

Constance

I'm sorry.

John

That's all right.

Constance

I just forgot my clipboard on the piano.

John

Oh, sure. It's right over here.

Constance

It's okay, I'll get it.

John

So how long were you at the door?

Constance

Not too long.

John

Not too bad a dancer, am I?

Constance

Were you dancing with someone?

John

Just a memory. I'm not hallucinating yet.

Constance

Oh, I didn't mean—

John

It's all right, Connie Lou. It's all right.
She...she was my only true love.

Constance

She was?

John

Yeah. She was...you know, I've lived long enough to have seen the great beauties of this earth, but she was the greatest. And she had these eyes! Her eyes were windows to the most stunningly beautiful soul. And she loved me. She loved me. She saw things in me I couldn't see in myself. And she had this way of bringing out my best. I have never been better than I was when I was with her. I was...I was something. And she'd just quietly go about making things work. Don't know how, she never told me. She just did it. She just did it. The only time I ever really wanted to die was when she did. But she made me promise her I'd finish my mission no matter what. And I know we'll be together again someday. So I do pretty good most of the year. But when I remember how it was when she was here...it's hard...it's just hard. Is it getting a little chilly? I think that door was left ajar...

SFX Car Horn Honking!

John (cont'd)

Sounds like your cab.

Constance

I should go. Have a nice night, John. Get some rest.

John

Okay. Okay. Thank you.

John sets a dried bundle of flowers tied with a swaddling bow on his tree. It's just like the bow on Dr. Halifax's tree. Constance motions to the taxi to wait a little longer.

Constance

John...may I have this dance?

They Dance. MUSIC BOX part 2. Music ends. Constance gives John a kiss on the cheek. She puts her coat back on, picks up her clip board and exits. Lights fade.

Scene 10 Constance and Cabby. "Joy To the World" plays on the Cabby's radio. Constance hums along.

The Cabby

Did you get what you needed?

Constance

I did. Thank you.

The Cabby

You're welcome.

Constance

When did they put that banner up?

The Cabby

What? "Peace On Earth"?

Constance

Yeah.

The Cabby

We pass by that everyday.

Scene 11 Constance is humming “Joy to the World.” And it’s as if she’s been reborn.

Constance

I miss you, Mother.

Lillian appears, liquid morphine in hand. She sips hoping to mask her discomfort.

Lillian

Constance!

Constance

Is there anything I can do to help?

Lillian

Did you finish all your homework?

Constance

I still have a little math to do.

Lillian

Double check your answers.

Constance

Okay.

Lillian

You’ve got to be ready for Westover. I won’t always be there to help you fix your mistakes. Are you even listening to me, Constance?

Constance

I’m listening.

Lillian

Alright.

Constance

I could run down to the drug store, and pick something up for you if—

Lillian

Are you speaking to me, we don’t mumble in this house, you speak up if you have something to say!

Constance

Sorry.

Lillian

What are you holding?

Constance

Well, I—I've been practicing over at the church the past few days so I wouldn't make any mistakes. And I thought I could—

Lillian

What is it, Constance?

Constance

It's just a little Christmas music. I thought it might cheer you up.

Lillian

Can you play "Joy to the World" for me?

Constance

I knew that was one of your favorites.

Constance sits, and places her clipboard on her lap as if to read music. John is seated at the piano. Constance pantomimes to the music John is playing. It's a verse of "Joy to the World." Then she plays the opening phrase of "I Cry the Day I Take the Tree Down" as an interlude into something else.

Lillian

What is that! What is that?!

Constance

What is what?

Lillian

Why are you changing it?

The music stops.

Constance

Oh, I was—I mean I thought I could—

Lillian

What? What did you think?

Constance

I—I thought I could write something to go between—

Lillian

Have you been writing music, Constance?

Constance

Not really.

Lillian

Did you know your Dad used to write songs?

Constance

He did?

Lillian

Oh, all the time. Didn't I tell you that? I'm sure I told you that.

Constance

I don't think so.

Lillian

Oh, I mean they weren't all winners, but some of those songs were really...I mean they were... they were really something. And he never had any real training...but he was so...so smart, Constance. He'd question everything. You wouldn't believe some of his questions...but then...then he'd find some answer that made sense to him...and he'd...he'd share it with me...and I mean...well, he had this one song—it was so...how'd it go?...*(Lillian scats fragments of a forgotten melody)*...Oh, I hate this! I can't remember it...so what—you taking after your Dad now?

Constance

Am I?

Lillian

Are you writing music, or aren't you?

Constance

No. Sort of—I don't know how to—

Lillian

I can't believe I—are you writing anything down.
And I mean on *paper*!?

Constance

Well—I can't write the notes—but sometimes
I can't sleep and I—I think of these melodies
at night—

Lillian

Your father never wrote anything down either!

Constance

Oh—I—

Lillian

Don't you dare do what he did to me, Constance!
Don't you dare!!!

Constance

I won't—

Lillian

He didn't leave anything, Constance!!!

Constance

I'm sorry—

Lillian

I've forgotten all of them!

Constance

Are you okay?

Lillian

I'm fine!! I'm fine!

Constance

Can I get you something?

Lillian

I don't need anything from you! I just need
that nurse!!

Constance

Can I call her?

Lillian

Where is she?

Constance

Mom?

Lillian

Where is she!?

Constance

I don't know. (Lillian screams!)
Mom!

Lillian

WHERE IS SHE!!!?

Phone rings.

Constance

Mom!

Lillian

Hello. Hello. Nurse Flemming! Oh thank goodness. Where are you? No, I can't wait...okay. Okay. I can wait five minutes. I'll be here. Thank you. Thanks. Thanks. See you in a few minutes.

Lillian hangs up. She takes a soothing t u g from her bottle. The pain begins to subside.

Lillian (cont'd)

Constance, I don't know where I'd be without that nurse. She's saving my life. You're not crying, are you? Don't cry. You're a big girl. I don't want to see you cry, okay? I just need some medicine, Constance, and that'll...that'll fix it. That'll fix it. She'll be here soon...she'll be here soon...she'll be here...she'll be here.

Lights fade as she slowly passes out.

Scene 12 Light change. Enter Uncle Ted.

Uncle Ted

Constance?

Constance

Uncle Ted, it's Wednesday. We don't get out for the break until Friday.

Uncle Ted

Constance, your mother passed away last night.

John plays music like the toll of a clock that becomes a very sedate "Joy to the World."

Constance

Oh. When? I mean, what time?

Uncle Ted

About a quarter past ten.

Lines overlap. Uncle Ted's volume softens to a whisper by the end of this section,

Uncle Ted (cont'd)

Constance, the funeral arrangements have been made—

Constance

Was she in a lot of pain when she died?

Uncle Ted

We're going to have to make a few decisions—

Constance

Was she taking something to help her?
Was there enough?

Uncle Ted

I bought two tickets for us to leave tomorrow—

Constance

Is everything in order, the funeral and everything?

Uncle Ted

We're on the 8:45 train—

Constance

Is there anyone I need to call?

Uncle Ted

They might ask you to say a few words—

Constance

Is there anything I should do?

Uncle Ted

--to say a few words.

Constance makes a small cross as if to a pulpit.

Constance

When my mother named me Constance, she had no intention of ever calling me Connie. She used to tell me that Constance was a name of substance and dignity, and Connie was...just fluff. I hope I can live my life the way she wanted me to. She wouldn't want me to cry today. So I won't. I won't do that. I can't—

END ACT ONE- INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

Scene 13 Constance crosses to Dr. Halifax in St. John's Hospital.

Constance

I can't do this anymore, Dr. Halifax! I'm not going back.

Dr. Halifax

I don't understand.

Constance

Didn't you get my messages?

Dr. Halifax

Of course I did.

Constance

So why haven't you tried to find anyone else?

Dr. Halifax

I have.

Constance

No you haven't.

Dr. Halifax

No I haven't. But I don't understand what you mean by inappropriate.

Constance

He's certifiable, Berkley! He needs a psychiatrist—

Dr. Halifax

Did you—

Constance

I'm just a nurse!

Dr. Halifax

Did you just call me Berkley?

Constance

That's your name isn't it?

Dr. Halifax

Yes. But you've never called me by my first name.

Constance

Well, you're the hospitals' administrator, and I always—

Dr. Halifax

No, no. I—I like it.

Constance

Dr. Halifax, I really shouldn't be there anymore.

Dr. Halifax

What happened?

Constance sits.

Constance

He thinks he's been alive since the time of Jesus. And every day he sings a song from someone he met two thousand years ago.

Dr. Halifax

So this is way before the Beatles?

Constance

I'm serious.

Dr. Halifax

I know. Did he try to take advantage of you in some way?

Constance

No.

Dr. Halifax

Okay.

Constance

But he is writing these little notes.

She gives Dr. Halifax the note.

Dr. Halifax

That's very little.

Dr. Halifax (cont'd)

"Dear Connie-Lou," Hey that's---

Constance

Don't ask. Just read.

Dr. Halifax

Don't ask. Just read.

Dr. Halifax (cont'd)

"I'm afraid you're stuck with me. And I hope you will learn to like me someday, because you CAN'T make me not like you. Your friend, John."
That seems pretty harmless.

Constance

What if he told you he wrote it with the same pen George Frederic Handel used to write his Messiah?

Dr. Halifax

Well, I'd say it did write something nice, didn't it?

Constance

Are you serious?

Dr. Halifax

I'm always serious.

Constance

Dr. Halifax?

Dr. Halifax

Is there something going on between you two?

Constance bursts into laughter again.

Dr. Halifax (cont'd)

You're laughing.

Constance

You're being absurd.

Dr. Halifax

You're hiding something.

Constance

I couldn't possibly—

Dr. Halifax

Are you developing special feelings for him?

She stands.

Constance

Not in the way you're suggesting!

Dr. Halifax

THEN WHAT MADE YOU STAND UP JUST NOW?

Constance

I stood up just now—

Dr. Halifax

Why?

Constance

I stood up just now because...

Dr. Halifax

Why?

Constance

Because...the taxi's waiting.

Dr. Halifax

No it's not.

Constance

No it's not.

Constance opens door. SFX Office Door Opening.

Dr. Halifax

Constance wait? (Pause) I like your laugh.

Constance

I better go.

SFX Office Door Shutting. Dr. Halifax reads the note in his hand.

Dr. Halifax

Connie Lou.

Scene 14 SFX Door Opening/Shutting. Constance crosses into the Rutherford house. John is at the piano.

John

Good morning, Connie Lou! What's wrong?
I want to thank you for your kindness last night. That was just what I needed. And I've seen some compassionate nursing. Did I ever tell you about the time I was on the fields with Florence Nightingale? Well, now doesn't seem to be the time! But I was so touched by your kindness last night, I did something I haven't done in a hundred years. I made a new ornament and I dedicate it to you.

John takes the red cross ornament from the ornament case.

Constance

What's the song that goes with it?

John

That one's being written by you.

Constance

I don't write songs.

John

Sure you do. It's your carol. And when you're ready to sing it, you'll see it's as beautiful as you are.

Constance

Why do you do this?

John

Do what?

Constance

Make up these stories about people writing songs in their hearts—and meeting Handel, and talking to the Innkeeper. It's not true.

John

I think I know why you don't want to believe me.

Constance

John—

John

You want to know what's wrong with people who've only lived a few *decades*? You think you already know all there is to know about everything you've ever "already" learned.

Pause.

Constance

What does that even mean?!

John

I mean there's more! There's always more, always a new way of seeing things. But that's an easy thing to forget if we keep seeing everything the same old way! I know it's been hard to believe what I've been telling you. But what if I met....what if I told you I knew a soldier once? Met him in a field hospital I was visiting during the war? (Pause) Huh?

Constance
Which war?

John
World War II.

Constance
Okay.

John
I wish you could have been there. You'd have helped him a lot more than I did. He'd gotten a little shrapnel in his leg, but it wasn't enough to send him home. And his daughter had just been born. I remember him telling me that he liked to write songs, not professionally but when he couldn't sleep at night sometimes. He played me a few of his songs, and I'm telling you, Connie Lou, they were, they were really something. So I said maybe he should write a song about how he was feeling, about being a new dad and all. You know what he said? He said he was scared. I said I bet you're not the first father to feel that way. Now, I had prepared a little Christmas program the following night, and your da...and wouldn't you know it, he comes to me and says, "I wrote a song, John, what do you think?" And I said, Jim, you've got to sing that at the Christmas program tonight. Do you want to hear what he wrote?
I think you'll want to hear this.

John sings, I WAS NOT HIS FATHER, HE WAS MINE.

John (cont'd ...singing)
He was working late one evening,
with the wood he knew so well,
when I thought I recognized him,
though at first I couldn't tell.
As I humbly begged his pardon,
a strange sadness swelled inside.
And I asked, "Aren't you the father, of the man they
crucified?"
Then the carpenter repeated what he'd said so many times.
He said, "I was not his father, He was mine."
Then he humbly went on working with his worn and
callused hands.

Though I did not ask more questions,
he knew I didn't understand.
And so he asked if I would help him,
he saw my answer in a glance
and I did the chores he asked me
and I was grateful for the chance.
And then he talked for hours of Jesus,
and how he knew he was divine.
He said, "I was not his father, He was mine."
(Soldier sings w/John)
"Oh how could one so foolish and so flawed, ever hope to
raise the son of God."
Then he spoke of the misgivings he had had a thousand
times, and how Jesus found the tender moments to let him
know he'd done just fine.
Then the carpenter recited the greatest truths he'd ever
learned,
and he testified they came from Jesus,
and then my heart within me burned.
Then we embraced as he departed,
and Joseph told me one more time,
"Tell them I was not his father.
Tell them He was mine.
No, I was not his father, He was mine."

Connie Lou takes the cradle ornament from the case, and places it on the tree.

Constance

That's a nice song, John. They're all nice songs.

John

You think I'm telling you the truth?

Constance

It doesn't matter what I think. I just came to give
you your medication, and help you take your nap.
I'm sorry.

John

What do you have to be sorry about?

Constance

Well, you're not hurting anyone. It just doesn't
make any sense to me. I wish it did.

John

That's enough.

Constance

What?

John

Well, that's a great Christmas wish.

Constance

That's really not what I meant, but that's okay.

John

Of course it wasn't what you meant in your head.
But that's the thing about hearts, they don't care
so much if it makes sense. Just look at Christmas!
Perfect example! How could anyone even pretend
to believe that story. It's telling us angels were singing
in the heavens? And a star guided wise men to a baby,
born of a *virgin*, who would grow up and save the world?
Come on! Who could believe any of that if their
wasn't something in our hearts that said, "Yes, it's true."

Music is filling the room with a haunting melody.

John (cont'd...singing)

Somewhere beneath the glitter
there comes this time of winter,
in many souls there is a cry.
They may not clearly say it,
but in their hearts they pray it
and you can see it in their eyes.
I can not find my way,
I can not find my way,
I can not find my way at all.
There are so many choices,
so many different voices.
I can not find my way at all.

(Choir Joins the Chorus-Soldier Sings)

There were three kings who followed the star of
Bethlehem.
They came from afar to praise and honor him.
The light which beckoned them to seek
the Lord of Men,
it calls to you, it calls to me.

(Choir sings Chorus)

We cannot find our way,
We cannot find our way,
We cannot find our way at all.
There are so many choices,
so many different voices,
We cannot find our way at all.

We're not alone,
we have a star and it shines today.
The love that he gave teaches how and it shows the way.
The light is clear to see if we have faith and believe.
Three Kings found the Lord and so can we.
(The Choir grows stronger. Constance joins the chorus.)
We cannot find our way, we cannot find our way at all...
And if you've lost your way, that light burns bright
today, and it will shine eternally. Three Kings found the
Lord, and so can we.
We cannot find our way, we cannot find our way at all.
Three Kings found the Lord and so can we.
(The Choir becomes even stronger. Constance has taken the star
from the ornament case. John helps her place it on the tree as the
choir sings, "Lord help us find our way.")

John/Constance/Choir

We cannot find our way. We cannot find our way
at all. Lord help us find our way, we need to
find our way. Lord help us find our way, we need to
find our way. Lord help us find our way back
home. (Music ends by being interrupted)

Scene 15 SFX Loud Knocks and Sirens. Police lights are flashing. John crosses to answer the door. Black out. Light up on Policewoman, Officer Marty, Constance, and John.

Policewoman

Has anything been stolen from you, Miss Chamberlain?

Constance

No.

Policewoman

Have you been harmed in any way?

Constance

No, I'm fine. Did someone break into the house?

Policewoman

Yeah, this guy right here, breaking and entering.

Constance

Oh, no, his—his family's on vacation, he's just been staying here—

Policewoman

The family who lives here is on vacation, but I guarantee you, they don't have anyone staying here.

Constance

But they—they sent a letter to the hospital—

Policewoman

The neighborhood watch called the Rutherfords in Paris, and the Rutherfords called us.

Constance

Oh. When? I mean—did they call just now?

Policewoman

About a quarter past two.

Constance

I can't believe this.

Policewoman

This guy is homeless. He likes to sneak into peoples houses to meet new friends.—

Lines overlap as they did with Uncle Ted. Constance speaks to John. The Policewoman speaks to Constance. Lights begin to fade of the police.

Constance

What's happening, John?—

Policewoman

We knew right away who it was.—
He did this same thing to a nurse in Grantsville a few years back.—

Constance

What are they saying, John?—

Policewoman

He sure likes nurses. Must have a thing for 'em.—

Constance

Was it all a lie?—

Policewoman

Ask him about Nurse Runion. See if he remembers her.—

Constance

Even the story of your great love? Was that a lie too?—

Policewoman

Wonder what she'd say if she knew he was singing his songs to you.—

Constance

Do you get some kind of sick pleasure playing with people like this?—

Policewoman

Is there anything you'd like to say to this guy?—

Constance

Some sick joke?—

Policewoman

What do you say to this guy?

Constance

You forged the letter to the hospital, didn't you?

John

I know what you must think. But there's a reason for all of this.

John reaches for Constance, but she recoils.

Constance

No! You're a liar! Nothing you do is real. You're worse than she was.

John

I can clear this up. It'll turn out.

John reaches again.

Constance

Don't worry about me. You're the one they're taking away.

John

But I can fix this.

Constance

Stop it. Just stop it.

John

I can fix this!

Constance

Stop it!

John reaches out to her one more time.

John

Conn—

Constance

No! Don't you touch me Mother!! You CAN'T FIX THIS!!!

(Constance breaks down)

John

Let it all out, Connie Lou. You let it out. Maybe now...maybe now, you can find your carol.

John and Connie Lou embrace. When they finally part, Connie Lou breathes deeply and calmly.

John

Connie Lou?

Constance

Yeah, John?

John

Will you collect my ornaments?

Connie Lou looks to the policewoman, who gives an approving nod.

Constance
Of course.

John is ushered off stage by Marty.

Policewoman

Thanks Marty. The house looks pretty clean, Ms. Chamberlain. A couple forensic guys are on their way, and they'll look around a few minutes. If you want to collect his things, I'll make sure they give you a lift down to the station. Good-Night Nurse Chamberlain.

Scene 16 Light change. Constance finds herself alone. She starts to put everything away when a flap unfolds in the lid of the ornament case. She sees a check written out to the hospital.

Constance

Pay to the order of St. John's Hospital--\$5,000! Hope it doesn't bounce. Grantsville Chronicle December 14th, 1970: "Deck the Halls with Bows of Folly. Santa isn't the only one who sneaks into houses to leave Holiday surprises. Nurse Runion thanks old man for sharing 'forgotten' carols with her." So you do have a thing for nurses. Farm Town Flyer Dec. 16, 1964. BUTCHER CLAIMS CON MAN TAUGHT HIM FORGOTTEN CAROLS. My mistake, at least it's not always nurses. Dec. 10, 1951. Been doing this awhile.... "New York Family Claims They Had Their Own Miracle on 34th Street." Dec. 1932? "Holiday Hope Downtown." Many say *elderly out-of-towner*, gives hope to the homeless." Stars and Stripes January 5th, 1943, "Field Hospital Not Forgotten...there was an eccentric entertainer visiting a remote field hospital Christmas Eve, sharing peaceful music and stories. 'You never expect to meet a friend like John in a place like this,' say's Captain James Preston Chamberlain." James Preston Chamberlain...is that my...my father?...that's my father. (Pause)
You knew my....you knew my dad?

She finds her way to the piano, and plays the opening phrase of I Cry the Day I Take the Tree Down.

Constance (cont'd...singing)

I thought I'd seen all the lights, and sung all the songs.
I felt the holiday lasted a bit too long. I never shed
any tears when Christmas was through until I celebrated
one with you. And now I cry the day that I take the tree
down, and I want the season to last all year round.
When I'm surrounded by these memories, it's almost
like you're here with me. It's strange how things are
changed when touched by love, we treasure things we
never thought much of. I cry the day that I take the tree
down and I want the season to last all year round. And
I am dreaming of Christmases when we'll be together
again. It's strange how things are changed when
touched by love, we treasure things we never thought
much of. I cry the day that I take the tree down and I
want the season to last all year round. And I am dreaming
of Christmases when we'll be together again.

Scene 17 The HOMELESS chorus is heard. A Jail clerk is at her desk.

Constance (cont'd)

I'm here to see John Christian. I have some of his
things.

Jail Clerk

Oh, you mean the choir director. Do you hear that?
They haven't stopped singing since he left.

Constance

Where did they take him?

Jail Clerk

Somebody bailed him out an hour ago.

Constance

Who could have bailed him out?

Jail Clerk

Hey, Jerry, who bailed out the old guy?

Jerry

It was some woman—

Jail Clerk

It was some woman.

Jerry

I think her name was—

Jail Clerk

Think her name was—

Jerry

Cindy?

Jail Clerk

Cindy something—

Jerry

No, it was Sarah!

Jail Clerk

It was Sarah!

Jerry

That's it, I think.

Jail Clerk

That's got to be it.

Constance

It couldn't be, Sarah.

Jail Clerk

Why's that?

Constance

She's been dead for nineteen hundred years!!!

Jail Clerk

Hey Jerry, anybody in our padded cell?

Constance

No. I know it sounds crazy, but did he say where he was going? I just need to know where I should leave his things.

Jail Clerk

Sorry, Nurse. All he left was a note for somebody named, Connie Lou.

Constance

That's me...sort of.

John appears in a spotlight as Constance opens her letter.

John

My dearest Connie Lou. You'll never know how much knowing you has enriched my life. It's so nice to finally meet you. Thanks for all you've given me. You made me feel so beloved.

As my Christmas gift to you I want you to have my ornaments. They've been on the road so long, I think it's time they had a permanent home. And I can't think of a more perfect one than yours. They were meant for you. (Pause) Oh, And I too am dreaming of Christmases when we'll be together again. Love, John.

Constance

He heard it. He heard my song.

Jail Clerk

What'd you say?

Constance

He heard my—oh never mind. Thank you for holding this note. Merry Christmas!

Scene 18 St. John's Hospital.

Dr. Halifax

No, no, no—don't volunteer! You don't need to do that. You go home, eat something, and get some sleep, drink some Egg Nog? Then go back to sleep.

Constance

This is where I want to be.

Dr. Halifax

It's Christmas Day. I have to be here today. Everyone here has known they'd have to be here today and we've all been dreading it since April.

Constance

So give someone the day off, give two people the day off. I'll take a double shift.

Dr. Halifax

Where?

Constance

In maternity.

Dr. Halifax

Maternity? Cheryl and Kristen are working there today.

Constance

Great, I'll go let them know. I can't wait to see their faces.

Dr. Halifax

And what about you?

Constance

What about me? They need to be with their families, don't they?

Dr. Halifax

Well, yes, but what about you?

Constance

Me?

Dr. Halifax

Yes.

Constance

Well...you'll be here, won't you?

Dr. Halifax

Yeah.

Constance

Do you have any egg salad left in the fridge?

Dr. Halifax

Yeah!

Constance
All right then.

Dr. Halifax
All right then.

Constance
Merry Christmas, Berkley.

Dr. Halifax
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

Scene 19 Interlude music begins. Enter Meggan. She's on a hospital bed that has rolled on stage. Constance has a baby in her arms, and crosses to the hospital bed.

Constance
I have someone who wants to see you.

Meggan
Oh, look at her. Hi. Oh, she's beautiful.

Constance
She's perfect. 8 pounds. 5 ounces. Prettiest one born today.

Meggan
Thank you.

Constance
Have you decided on a name?

Meggan
No, nothing yet. I was hoping something about her would let me know when I saw her.

Constance
Oh.

Meggan
No. Nothing yet.

Constance
Give it a little time.

Meggan
Yeah.

Constance
If you need anything, you let me know?

Meggan
Thank you. Oh, nurse---nurse?

Constance
Yeah?

Meggan
I can barely keep my eyes open. Is that normal?

Constance
Yes, you just had a baby. I'll take her back to the nursery, you get some rest.

Meggan
Thank you.

Constance
You're welcome, Meggan.

Meggan
What's your name? I can't believe I don't even know your name.

Constance
It's okay. My name is Constance.

Meggan
Constance. That's a beautiful name.

Constance
Thanks, I like it, but all my friends call me... all my friends call me, Connie Lou. (Pause)

Meggan
Thanks, Connie Lou.

Scene 20 Constance crosses toward the nursery. The baby is fussing a little (SFX Baby Fusing/Calming Down) but calms down when Constance starts to sing “What I Need.”

Constance (singing)

All I ever wanted, all I ever dreamed of, everything
I hoped and all I ever prayed for, couldn't hold
a candle to what I've been given, I've been
given what I need. A mansion on a hill or love
like in the movies, perfect little lives where no one
has a problem. Instead of all those things I thought
I really wanted, I've been given what I need.
And even when I didn't understand, when I thought
you had no heart, thank you for rejecting my demands,
and always giving me the better part. All I ever
wanted, all I ever dreamed of, everything I hoped
and all the things I prayed for couldn't hold a candle
to what I've been given. I've been given what I need.

During the instrumental break, John and Sarah appear in spotlight. They dance. The spotlight fades as Constance sings the final refrain. Connie Lou sits rocking the baby. Lillian appears behind Constance. A Man in Uniform appears beside Lillian. She reaches to touch her daughter's hair. Connie Lou responds softly, and then she gives the baby a kiss. Lillian gives Connie Lou a gentle kiss on the head. On the final note of the outro music, lights fade to black.

Curtain call. The End.