

MR POPPY We can still fix it!

MR MADDENS Don't speak to me!

(They both watch her go, full of shame and sickness. CRACKER leaves the stage.)

SCENE TEN

Paul's confession – School Hall

The CHILDREN filter into the hall, singing as they sit on the floor facing upstage. PAUL and MR POPPY look on sadly.

Music No. 26: DEAR FATHER CHRISTMAS – REPRISE

CHILDREN

DEAR FATHER CHRISTMAS, MAKE OUR WISH COME TRUE
 DEAR FATHER CHRISTMAS, SEND YOUR SPIRIT THROUGH
 THERE ARE CHILDREN IN THE WORLD
 WHO NEED YOU WAY MORE THAN WE DO
 BUT FATHER CHRISTMAS, WE STILL BELIEVE IN YOU
 DEAR FATHER CHRISTMAS, MAKE OUR WISH COME TRUE.

Music No. 26a: SAD SCHOOL

(PAUL addresses the CHILDREN. He is deeply uncomfortable.)

PAUL

As you know I've been away for a couple of days in America – and during that time, something has changed regarding our Nativity. I'm afraid I let you believe that Hollywood were coming to see our show – but they're not, and if I'm really honest – they never were.

(The CHILDREN drop their heads or glance at each other. MR POPPY can't meet their eyes.)

And I'm afraid that we're not allowed to do the show anymore, so there will be no Nativity this year.

LUCY

Can't we do the show anyway? We don't care about Hollywood.

PAUL

I'm sorry, no – Mrs Bevan has cancelled the show, and . . .

ALFIE

Please, please – can we still do the show?

PAUL

Look – I told a lie – and I let that lie grow, and I shouldn't have done and that's why Mrs Bevan has cancelled the show, and that's why I won't be coming back next term – and worse than losing my job and losing my security is the fact that I'm not going to get to see any of you again . . . and that's a very hurtful thing for me. Neither me or Mr Poppy are going to be allowed to teach here anymore and . . . we've lost you . . .

(PAUL begins to fight back tears, as do the CHILDREN. One by one, the CHILDREN begin to turn their backs on him as they sniff and cry with bitter disappointment.)

I'm really sorry – for everything – all of it . . . come on back to class now . . .

(The CHILDREN, quietly crying, make their way out of the hall and exit – extremely hurt and upset. The melancholy trills of "Dear Father Christmas" underscore the moment.)

PAUL turns to MR POPPY, who is also visibly upset and fighting back tears.)

I hope you're happy with yourself, Mr Poppy.

(MR POPPY looks shocked.)

Well, this is all your fault.

MR POPPY

How can you blame me?

PAUL

You're childish. You're irresponsible. You've come here to St. Bernadette's and you've walked into my classroom thinking you can be friends with the children rather than a responsible adult, and you can't. You just can't do that, okay?! Any idiot can just walk into a room and say, "Who wants to ride on a death slide?", "Who wants to ride on a real life camel?" Some of the things that you come out with are utterly ridiculous. You know what? For five

minutes there I actually began to think, "maybe there is something good about this man, maybe we could be friends", but do you know what? We're never going to be friends, Desmond, because to be someone's friend you have to earn their respect and their trust. I don't respect or trust you at all. I'm absolutely terrified of you. Scared of what you might say or do next. I've never met anyone like you, ever before. I never want to see you again.

SCENE ELEVEN

Mr Poppy says goodbye

Music No. 26b: SAD POPPY

MR MADDENS *leaves*. MR POPPY *cries*. *He is absolutely devastated – sobbing inconsolably. One of the CHILDREN tentatively makes his way onto the stage and comforts MR POPPY. The CHILD is crying too – visibly upset.*

LAYLA

I don't want you to go, Mr Poppy

MR POPPY

I don't want to go, either . . . I don't want to lose you guys.

LAYLA

Please don't leave us – you're my best friend.

MR POPPY

Mrs Bevan says I can't stay . . .

LAYLA

(Sobbing.) But I love you, Mr Poppy . . .

MR POPPY

I love you too, buddy . . . I'll still be your friend. Do you wanna know something? . . . When I was your age . . . what are you, like 24, 25? I never really had many friends. You know, when you lot all play in the playground and stuff, like all together . . . I was super jealous of that. And then I came here, and I met all of you lot and . . . I think that you're all brilliant, all of you. I'm really sorry that I let you down. Will you tell everyone else that? I promise you I won't forget you . . . Pinky promise.

LAYLA

Best friend forever?

(They hug.)

Music No. 27: MY VERY LAST DAY AT SCHOOL

MR POPPY

I'VE GOT NO NO LUNCHBOX IN MY HAND
 I'VE GOT NO NO BUTTERFLIES IN MY TUMMY
 COS I HAVE JUST BEEN BANNED
 CAN'T EVEN TO GO HOME AND SEE MY MUMMY
 IT'S MY VERY LAST DAY
 MY VERY LAST DAY AT (SCHOOL)

(MR POPPY *tries but can't get the words out . . .*)

SCENE TWELVE**"Herod! – The Rock Opera" – Oakmoor**

Lightning strikes and thunder claps. We follow PAUL as he makes his way around the stage into the Oakmoor Herod Show. The OAKMOOR PARENTS and CRITIC are watching the show. Dry ice is flowing onto the stage.

The large Championship Cup is tracking downstage, blowing smoke and fire like a giant goblet / chalice of fire, as incense burns around the stage and loud chimes strike ominously by SMALL CHILDREN banging on huge Chinese-style gongs.

GORDON SHAKESPEARE rushes on dressed as Herod in the full throes of his performance in "Herod! – The Rock Opera". The CHILDREN act as his minion soldiers – with flame-lights and swords and shields and cloaks – a Biblical / Harry Potter-style rock opera mash up.

Music No. 28: HEROD! – THE ROCK OPERA

OAKMOOR

HUH! HUH! HUH!

HUH, HUH, HUH!

MR SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE GREAT KING HEROD
 LEADER OF THE LAND
 REMEMBER MY WISH IS YOUR EV'RY COMMAND
 THIS NEW KING OF THE JEWS WE MUST DESTROY!
 GO OUT AND KILL EV'RY NEW BORN BABY BOY
 GO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(GORDON SHAKESPEARE *is spinning around the stage. The CHILDREN scream as they transform from BRUTAL SOLDIERS to DESPERATE MOTHERS trying to protect their newborn babies.*)

OAKMOOR GIRLS 1 Where's my baby?

OAKMOOR GIRLS 2 Where's my baby?

OAKMOOR GIRLS 3 Where's my baby?

OAKMOOR
ONE
TWO
THIRTY
FORTY
FIFTY
SIXTY
SEVENTY
EIGHTY!!

GORDON
HUNT THEM DOWN 'TIL THEY ARE DEAD
SLAY THEM 'TIL THE RIVERS RUN RED!
I AM KING HEROD!!

(The CRITIC and PAUL MADDENS are both watching the action on stage with a mixture of horror and awe. The CHILDREN are slicing the heads off baby dolls and throwing them into the audience, complete with blood-spurting ribbons. One of the decapitated babies hits the CRITIC in the face – he is in raptures. The CRITIC holds up his hands.)

CRITIC

ENCHANTÉ! FIVE STARS!

Music No. 28a: HEROD – PLAYOFF

SCENE THIRTEEN
"Suddenly"

The PRODUCER's office in Hollywood.

PRODUCER Jennifer, can you please move my 2pm appointment to 4pm and then book me a massage at 6? Oh, and please can you reschedule my flight until Tuesday . . .

JENNIFER Sorry, could I please have a moment, Mr Parker?

PRODUCER Jennifer, you're not on vacation. Don't tell me you're still thinking about that crazy guy who came into my office the other day . . .

JENNIFER I'm actually busy, Mr Parker. Please, just give me a minute.

(We go into an aside, as Jennifer and Paul think of each other . . .)

Music No. 29: SUDDENLY

JENNIFER
WHO DO I SEE
WHEN THE STARS ALL FADE OUT?
AND WHO DO I SEE
WHEN I CAN'T GET PAID OUT?
AND WHO DO I SEE
WHEN MY FUTURE'S LAID OUT?
I SEE YOU, SEE YOU, SEE YOU

(We see PAUL . . .)

PAUL
WHERE DO I GO
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE NEAR ME?
WHERE DO I GO
WHEN THE WORLD CAN'T HEAR ME?
WHERE DO I GO
WHEN LIFE GETS WEARY?
I GO TO YOU, TO YOU, TO YOU

(Suddenly the CHILD VERSIONS of themselves (CHILD PAUL and CHILD JENNIFER) rush onto the stage in a choreographed dance sequence. PAUL and JENNIFER watch themselves as children, romantically and

lyrically connecting through dance as the whole set becomes a night sky full of stars.)

BOTH
 SUDDENLY YOU, SUDDENLY ME
 FALLING IN LOVE ACROSS A SEA
 AND NOW I KNOW
 LETTING YOU GO
 HAS BEEN KILLING ME INSIDE

SUDDENLY WE SUDDENLY SEE
 WHO WE ARE TRULY MEANT TO BE
 REPLAY THE SCENES
 REBUILD OUR DREAMS
 NOW EVERYTHING INSIDE
 HAS DIED

SCENE FOURTEEN

Paul makes amends – Mr Poppy in school

MR POPPY	Ouch!!!!
PAUL	Mr Poppy, is that you?
MR POPPY	No.
PAUL	I've come to apologise.
MR POPPY	Go away. I don't want to talk to you. I live in a box now.

Music No. 29a: APOLOGISING TO POPPY

PAUL Fine, well I'll just talk anyway. Last night I went to see the most pretentious, arrogant, over the top, stupid production of "King Herod – the Rock Opera" that the world has ever seen, and . . . it's kind of got me thinking. It got me thinking that maybe I've been the idiot here – trying to keep up with that man. Blaming you for everything when it was all my fault. You have been the most inspirational thing that has ever happened to these kids, and – and to me. I said some things to you that were unforgivable – and that

were mean. And you were right all along – you said I was scared – I denied it You said I was in love with Jennifer – well I am in love with her – and I miss her so much – and it got me thinking that we need to do this Nativity. Not for us, not for Hollywood, but for them – for those kids – who love us – trusted us – believe in us – even when I didn't believe in them. So, what do you say? . . .

(MR POPPY climbs back into the box and reveals CRACKER.)

PAUL What are you doing with my dog?

(MR POPPY talks to CRACKER . . .)

MR POPPY What do you think? Eh? Look at me when I'm talking to you!

(PAUL grabs CRACKER off of MR POPPY while he climbs out. MR POPPY then takes CRACKER back off of him and starts to leave . . .)

PAUL Desmond!!!

MR POPPY Well what are you waiting for? We've got a show to do!

Music No. 29b: OUR SCHOOL NATIVITY – REPRISE

PAUL You're gonna do it?

MR POPPY We're doing it – we're doing the show! Kids . . . come on!

(One by one, MR POPPY lifts each of the CHILDREN out of the box. They then each run around MR MADDENS, high-fiving as they go. Celebratory song leads us into the Cathedral scene.)

POPPY, MADDENS, BERNADETTES

AND IF WE GET THE CHANCE, WE'RE REALLY GONNA SHINE
WE'LL MAKE UP OUR OWN DANCE AND SHOW THEM WE'RE DIVINE
WE'RE GONNA BE THE STARS, NOT USELESS ANY MORE
WE'RE GONNA LEAVE THEM WANTING MORE
LEAVE THEM WANTING MORE
OF OUR SCHOOL NATIVITY!

(Everyone gasps in awe as they trace the height of the 'imaginary' spire out front of the stage (as if in the auditorium). They create a vocal aria of awe in reaction to it.)

ALL

LOOK AT THE SPIRE

IT RISES SO HIGH

LOOK AT THE SPIRE

IT RISES SO HIGH!!

Music No. 30a: BACKSTAGE

SCENE SIXTEEN

Backstage before "Nazareth" – On stage Mrs Bevan's speech

Suddenly a series of clothes / costume rails are wheeled downstage, as the PARENTS disperse and we find ourselves backstage at the Cathedral ruins. CHILDREN are getting into costume – PAUL is helping them get ready. The backstage nerves are palpable.

CHILD 1 Mr Maddens. I'm really nervous, I can't go on.

PAUL I know, but don't be nervous – go and get your costume on. Good girl.

CHILD 2 Mr Maddens?

PAUL Yes?

CHILD 2 I don't want to be just a building. I want a proper part like everybody else.

PAUL You're playing the part of Nazareth in a song called "Nazareth". Now, please, will everybody just calm down!

CHILD 3 I'm nervous, I've forgotten everything. I don't want to do it.

PAUL I don't want to do it either!

(MRS BEVAN can be seen dashing down the aisles of the auditorium towards the stage, followed by the LORD MAYOR – they make a swift exit off stage.)

MR POPPY enters backstage, dressed as a NAZARENE, complete with makeup beard, which he is painting onto the children.)

CHILD 4 Do I really need this beard?

MR POPPY Everybody used to wear a beard in Nazareth – even the women.

PAUL No – not the women.

CHILD 5 I need a wee!

MR POPPY Okay, everybody listen up. Big bit of advice, and I had to learn this the hard way. Can everybody make sure you've done a poo and a wee, because there won't be a chance when we get the show going – so if you need one, follow me.

CHILD 5 It's too late!

(There is a mass exodus as MR POPPY and SEVERAL CHILDREN rush off towards the exit. MRS BEVAN rushes on stage – extremely agitated.)

MRS BEVAN I just got a call saying this is going ahead – there is no show. There will be no show this evening. I have cancelled this performance! You are sacked – you know you are sacked!

PAUL Exactly! You've already sacked me, so what are you going to do?

(MR POPPY suddenly arrives back in the dressing room.)

MRS BEVAN And as for you, Desmond – I have told you I never want to see you . . .

(The LORD MAYOR suddenly enters and hurries over and grabs MRS BEVAN, ushering her away from confrontation.)

LORD MAYOR Thank you – thank you both of you – this is so exciting! The cathedral looks amazing!

(He kisses MRS BEVAN spontaneously. She is shocked.)

MRS BEVAN What the . . . ?

LORD MAYOR This is going to be absolutely marvellous – well done, young man, well done.

(The LORD MAYOR shakes hands with PAUL, as MRS BEVAN looks on, aghast.)

MRS BEVAN No – this is not happening.

LORD MAYOR Come on, Patricia – this is going to be sensational. Come and meet your public.

(The LORD MAYOR drags MRS BEVAN off stage and then back on through a different entrance. She is suddenly aware of the audience (our audience becoming the cathedral audience). A follow spot hits her and the LORD MAYOR, rendering her momentarily stunned. The LORD MAYOR holds a microphone and addresses the audience to a fanfare of music and applause.)

Ladies and gentlemen, mums and dads, I just want to take a minute to introduce you to a very special woman – the Head Teacher of St. Bernadette's School, who has worked so hard over the years and been instrumental in pulling all of this together – an unsung hero if you like – a woman of many special qualities – beautiful – enthusiastic – diligent – loyal – Mrs B – better known to you as Mrs Bevan!

(MRS BEVAN is shaking her head – she does not want to speak. The LORD MAYOR beckons her insistently and everyone applauds, so she reluctantly takes the mic and addresses the audience. As she speaks, the music (Nazareth theme) is melancholy and emotional.)

MRS BEVAN Hello – thank you – thank you very much, it's very kind of you . . . Well . . . truth be told, this will be my last nativity play, so it's a bit special, really. I've decided to retire from St Bernadette's. It's all been becoming a bit much for me in my old age, and – well – I suppose this is one way to go out with a bang. We're used to having the school hall, so this is . . . well . . . and the mums and

dads who've been before to see our nativity play know that, you know, things can go a little bit wrong with the little ones so don't expect too mu . . .

Music No. 30b: MRS BEVAN'S SPEECH

No, sorry I didn't mean that. Naughty Mrs Bevan. No one ever expects enough of the children at St. Bernadette's. Everyone expects them to go down the drain . . . and I'm going to change that. That's what I said seventeen years ago, and tonight it stands a chance of coming true. I've not seen it. I don't know what's going to happen, but all I know is that each and every one of these children is amazing . . . and wonderful and a little pocket of stardust. Hope you enjoy it.

LORD MAYOR

Ladies and gentlemen . . . I give you "The Nativity!"

SCENE SEVENTEEN
Showtime – "Nazareth"

On stage: NAZARETH performance is in full swing. The stage is lit for night as the costume rails spin round revealing the town of Nazareth. Some CHILDREN are also wearing bits of Nazareth as their costume, with other CHILDREN dressed in traditional Nazarene costumes. The whole effect is of an epic biblical town, nestled into a hillside – with little fairy lights festooned all around. It looks magical and joyful and celebratory. The choreography is also light and joyful, with lots of energy and 'wedding-style' celebration at its heart. Confetti is thrown during the performance.

Music No. 31: NAZARETH

ST. BERNADETTE'S KIDS
THINGS ARE REALLY COOL IN NAZARETH.
OUR CITY IS FULL OF JOY
COS THIS IS WHERE GIRL MEETS BOY
BARELY HAD A SCHOOL IN NAZARETH
THERE THEY JOIN HAND IN HAND
THIS IS NO ONE-NIGHT STAND
THE WEDDING IS BEING PLANNED HERE IN NAZARETH

MISS RYE

Louder – big voices!

(CHILDREN and OTHER CAST bring on more scenery to start forming more of the city of Nazareth – more wedding guests to lend to the celebratory feel.)

ST. BERNADETTE'S KIDS

NAZARETH, THE PLACE TO LIVE
ALWAYS WILLING TO FORGIVE
[NAZARETH, YOUR BIG HEART SWELLS] NAZARETH WILL BRING US WELL
WE CAN HEAR THOSE WEDDING BELLS, WEDDING BELLS

SHERRICE

FEELING IN A FIX IN NAZARETH

ARCHIE

RULES ARE TO BE OBEYED

SHERRICE

ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE

SHERRICE AND ARCHIE

GOT TO GET YOUR KICKS IN NAZARETH

ALL

MAYBE YOU'LL RUN AWAY
START OUT A BRAND NEW DAY
STILL WE CANNOT BETRAY
GOOD OLD NAZARETH

(The audience applauds. PAUL and the TEACHERS are applauding proudly. We see PARENTS jumping up and down in a spotlight, jubilant with pride.)

SCENE EIGHTEEN

Backstage before "One Look" – With Ollie (naughty boy)

Backstage, MR POPPY and PAUL are pulling round the costume rails and trying to sort the CHILDREN out into their pairs. OLLIE rushes up to MR POPPY.

MR POPPY

Right, come on, go, go, go! Ollie, come on . . . next costume. You were so brilliant in that number. Arms up . . .

OLLIE Mr Poppy? I know I've been a bit naughty this term, but please can I go on as Joseph?

MR POPPY Ah mate, I think that you could've, but it's a little bit too late now.

PAUL Ollie! Come here, please – what have we said? You are not Joseph – you had your chance and you blew it. I warned you if you kept messing about in class that this was going to happen.

(OLLIE clasps his hands and begs.)

OLLIE Please, Mr Maddens – I'm really sorry for what I did. I'll never be naughty again.

(MR POPPY mirrors OLLIE and joins in the begging.)

MR POPPY Please, Mr Maddens – we'll be good – won't we?

(PAUL stares at them both and begins to relent.)

PAUL Do you know the words?

(OLLIE nods.)

PAUL Do you know where to stand?

(OLLIE nods. PAUL sighs.)

Go on – get out there – but do me proud, alright?

Music No. 32: ONE LOOK

(OLLIE hugs PAUL and legs it upstage.)

SCENE NINETEEN

On stage – "One Look" – The Mary and Joseph duets

The lights go to black – dry ice floats onto the stage, as a spotlight picks out the first couple of 'MARY AND JOSEPHS'. Festoon lights are picked out of the background, making the whole feel very magical and starry-skied.

GIRL 1
HE'S NOT MY TYPE

BOY 1
SHE'S NOT TOO BAD

BOTH
NOT THE MOST GORGEOUS I'VE EVER HAD

(SPOTLIGHT picks out another 'MARY and JOSEPH'.)

"BOY" 2 (actually SICK GIRL
I'LL GROW TO LOVE HER

GIRL 2
IT MIGHT WORK OUT

BOTH
TOO YOUNG TO KNOW WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

(SPOTLIGHT reveals third 'MARY and JOSEPH'.)

BOY 3
AND YET THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND THOSE EYES.

GIRL 3
A FIRE THAT FLICKERS, BUT NEVER DIES

(From the back, 'MARY and JOSEPH' 4 walk downstage, hand in hand.)

GIRL 4
COULD I LOVE HIM?

BOY 4 (OLLIE)
COULD SHE LOVE ME?

ALL THUS FAR
YOU CAN'T RUSH INTO WHAT IS MEANT TO BE

(Big drum roll crescendo, over which we hear MR POPPY, in his best X-Factor-Presenter voice, off stage.)

MR POPPY

AND TONIGHT – FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY – THE FIRST LIVE ON-STAGE APPEARANCE OF – PADDENS!!!

(SPOTLIGHT follows an 'invisible' floating staircase with MARY and JOSEPH (MR POPPY and PAUL – PADDENS) standing on either side dressed in Mary and Joseph costumes. The staircase fixes together behind the buildings of Nazareth as the song ends.)

ALL KIDS / MR POPPY / MR MADDENS

ONE LOOK, AND WE'RE FOREVER

ONE LOOK, AND IT'S LIKE WE'VE ALWAYS KNOWN

ONE LOOK, WE'RE BOXING CLEVER

TOGETHER, FOREVER AND ALWAYS HOME –

TOGETHER, FOREVER AND ALWAYS, ALWAYS HOME

MR POPPY

And then they KISS!

(All of the couples kiss – with comical effect. We throw focus to . . .)

SCENE TWENTY

Top of the spire

Music No. 32a: BEFORE GOOD NEWS

The PARENTS who are huddled in their own spotlight as the scene changes around them – we see them emotionally applaud the end of "One Look" – wiping tears from their eyes and sobbing onto each other's shoulders. Then one of the parents suddenly points up to the sky –

MEN

LOOK AT THE SPIRE . . .

LADIES

IT RISES SO HIGH . . .

MEN

LOOK AT THE SPIRE . . .

LADIES

IT RISES . . .

ALL

SO HIGH!!!

SCENE TWENTY-ONE
Angel Gabriel falls from spire

In that split second, the ANGEL GABRIEL drops from a great height in front of the projected spire, dangling and free falling from his wires – back projection moves incredibly fast to give us the feeling of the background rushing behind our falling GABRIEL.

The PARENTS are in their spotlight, pointing up at the spire – the PRIEST is saying his prayers, the CRITIC is frantically making notes, PARENTS cannot bear to look – everyone is screaming in horror. Then – suddenly, GABRIEL catches mid-air and hangs there . . . for a moment we think he will fall again as he drops suddenly – then he hangs again – the music begins to kick in and GABRIEL begins to feel a bit more comfortable. He sees the audience looking at him and he begins to recover – clicking his fingers in time to the music – dancing a little in the air.

GABRIEL Mum, Dad . . . I'm flying!!!

OKAY PEOPLE, HEAR THE NEWS
I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO YELL ABOUT
OKAY PEOPLE, FORGET THE BLUES,
HERE'S SOMETHING TO FEEL SWELL ABOUT

ANGELS (KIDS)
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
CLICK YOUR FINGERS

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
STAMP YOUR FEET

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
ALWAYS LINGERS

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
FEEL THE BEAT

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
WAKEY, WAKEY

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
SHAKE YOUR ASS!!

(GABRIEL'S MUM and other PARENTS move along to the music from their audience position in the spotlight – relieved that all is now okay with GABRIEL. The whole scene becomes like a party in the sky – with angels and audience dancing along together. The sky is full of stars – the effect is dazzling.)

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
SHAKEY SHAKEY

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
MISS A MASS

ALL
GOOD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!

(CHILDREN dressed up as candy-colored ANGELS cartwheel and dance across the stage. As part of the routine, they perform a 'Stomp'-like rhythm section piece as the ANGEL GABRIEL sends his message to MARY. There is a feather drop, as if it is snowing angel wing feathers . . .)

GABRIEL

HEY, LITTLE SISTER HEAR THE WORD

TJ's MUM

I HEAR THAT WORD, YEAH!

GABRIEL

THERE AIN'T NO NEED FOR A BIG STORK BIRD

TJ's MUM

BIG STORK BIRD, YEAH, YEAH!

GABRIEL

TIME TO HOLLER, TIME TO DANCE

TJ's MUM

YOU AIN'T GONNA STOP ME FROM DANCIN', YEAH!

GABRIEL

YOU'RE GONNA NEED SOME BIGGER PANTS

ALL (KIDS / PARENTS)

GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL

CLICK YOUR FINGERS

ALL (KIDS / PARENTS)

GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL

STAMP YOUR FEET

ALL

GOOD NEWS!

GOOD NEWS!

(Underscore. ANGELS dance and jump around. GORDON SHAKESPEARE can be seen sneaking through the auditorium on his way into the Cathedral Ruins.)

SCENE TWENTY-TWO

Sick Girl can't go on – Backstage

During the song (it continues as if offstage) we flip backstage with PAUL and MR POPPY and the costume rails and find a SICK GIRL in a STAR costume standing near NAUGHTY BOY (OLLIE) dressed as an ANGEL.

CRYSTAL

Mr Maddens, my head is itchy. I think my wig has got nits!

PAUL

What? The wig does not have nits – its probably glitter!

LUCY

Mr Maddens – I feel really sick – I've got a tummy ache.

PAUL

What? I really need you to go on – have you tried taking deep breaths?

LUCY

Yeah.

PAUL

Have you tried . . . rubbing your tummy?

(SICK GIRL suddenly vomits all over PAUL's feet.)

PAUL

Great – okay – ugh – sorry, Ollie you're just going to have to do it.

OLLIE

What?

PAUL

Can you go on in her place, please?

OLLIE

No way.

PAUL

Why?

OLLIE

Because that's a girl's costume.

PAUL

You already look like Miley Cyrus – what's the difference? Go in there and get dressed. Thank you. Thank you.

KIDS / PARENTS / TEACHERS
WOAH! . . .

TJ's MUM (*ad lib., let rip and riff it!*)
YEAH!

ALL
GOOD NEWS!

TJ's MUM
THATS MY BABY!

ALL
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
STAMP YOUR FEET

ALL
GOOD NEWS!

TJ's MUM
THAT'S MY ANGEL!

ALL
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
FEEL THE BEAT

ALL
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
WAKEY, WAKEY!

ALL
GOOD NEWS!

GABRIEL
SHAKE YOUR ASS!

ANGELS
GOOD NEWS!

TJ's MUM
SHAKEY, SHAKEY!

ALL
MISS A MASS . . .
GOOD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!

TJ's MUM [VS]
(ad. libs al fine)

ALL *(shouted)*
GOOD NEWS!

SCENE TWENTY-THREE

End of "Good News" – Into Shakespeare storming the stage – Into helicopter

Back on stage we are hitting the climax of the "Good News" number and the audience are going wild. The ANGEL GABRIEL flies back up the spire – the projection is reversed to give us the rush and the journey back up to the top of the rafters.

Music No. 33a: BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS

(On stage, MR POPPY, now also dressed as an ANGEL floats onto the stage on a tracking podium, narrating.)

MR POPPY So, after the Angel Gabriel had given the message to Mary, via the medium of a gospel number . . . Mary and Jay-Z were told they had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted by the evil King Herod.

(GORDON SHAKESPEARE enters the stage, looking furious – like the bad fairy.)

GORDON Stop, stop, everyone.

MR POPPY Mary had to run . . .

GORDON Stop, you – shut up – stop. Stop all this mumbo jumbo.

(Music falls apart.)

That will do, that's the end – stop. I'll have that, please.

(MR SHAKESPEARE climbs onto the podium and pulls the microphone from MR POPPY.)

MR POPPY

Hey!

(MR SHAKESPEARE addresses the audience.)

GORDON

Right, my name's Gordon Shakespeare. I know that you are all here because you think that Hollywood are coming. That's the only reason you're here – to meet those people. Not to see this sub-standard chav fest . . . and it falls on me to tell you that no one is coming from Hollywood. This whole thing is a sham.

(Everyone looks at PAUL, who is caught in a light, poking his head out of the costume rail. Other little faces join him as the CHILDREN poke their heads out too to see what all the fuss is about.)

GORDON

As if Hollywood would come to Coventry. No. Look at him. This man, Mr Paul Maddens, . . .

Music No. 33b: HELICOPTER ARRIVES

. . . is a dishonest person. He LIED. He is a liar, and a disappointment. Who got so caught up in his own world of happiness, he forgot about one of his closest and most loyal friends.

PARENTS

AHH, AHH, AHH, (ETC.)

(Everyone is distracted by something as they look up to the sky. They appear to see something – bright and blinding – a light – the music is sacred and beautiful and pure. Everyone gasps in wonder.)

CHILD 1

What is it?

CHILD 2

It's a star.

(The light gets closer – the noise of a chopper begins to build louder and louder – the wind blows across the audience and the stage blowing the feathers everywhere – the light of a search helicopter is blinding the audience – "Hollywood Sparkle" plays. MR POPPY realizes that it isn't a star –)

MR POPPY

No, that's not a star . . . IT'S HOLLYWOOD!!!!

(Everyone cheers. The chopper wind blows MR POPPY towards MR SHAKESPEARE and knocks him off the podium – he goes flying as the wind literally blows them all off the stage.)

SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

Helicopter lands as Hollywood arrive

The helicopter is hovering above the stage as the STUDIO BOSS, JENNIFER and the RECEPTIONIST dismount down the helicopter rope ladder, wind blowing their hair.

JENNIFER

Are you alright, Mr Parker?

PRODUCER

What the hell is this place? It doesn't even have a roof!

JENNIFER

Come on, you'll be fine.

PRODUCER

Remind me again why I'm here? It's absolutely freezing!

JENNIFER

Look, I know it's not what you're used to – but you won't be disappointed, I promise you.

PRODUCER

I'm putting a lot of trust in you, Jennifer.

(MR POPPY wolf-whistles her attention and JENNIFER grabs the PRODUCER and pulls him towards MR POPPY in the wings.)

JENNIFER

Come on, we're going to be late.

MR POPPY

Ladies and gentlemen, may I please introduce you to the Star of Bethlehem and her Sparkling Sparklers!!

(Suddenly a staircase full of CHILDREN dressed as STARS floats onto the stage in a Busby Berkeley-inspired sequence. The STAR OF BETHLEHEM is sitting on a flying moon, high above the stage – taking lead vocal.)

SCENE TWENTY-FIVE

Sparkle And Shine

The whole stage and auditorium becomes a star filled arena – all we can see is stars – lit up – as though the outside night world has taken us over. It is completely magical. The CHILDREN are dressed like stars in gold sequins and headdresses that light up spectacularly at appropriate moments. There are also extra CHILDREN with star headdresses, poking their faces through various holes in the backdrop. There is a star-chase light sequence as part of the number that is also spectacular, and the steps light up to the music. The CHILDREN also have light-up star props in their hands so that they can perform a choreographed light-up sequence during the number.

SPARKLERS (KIDS)

OOH, OOH, OOH . . .

AH, OOH, OOH, OOH . . .

STAR

Okay everybody, clap your hands! I'm a superstar and I'm coming out tonight!

I'VE HAD A LITTLE MAKEOVER AND I'M ALL DRESSED UP TONIGHT
A CHEEKY DRINK, A NAUGHTY WINK, WE'LL LOOSEN UP ALRIGHT
STAND BACK AND PUT YOUR SHADES ON, COS I'M ABOUT TO SHINE
MY BLINDING LIGHT WILL THRILL YOU COS THERE'S NO STARLIGHT LIKE MINE

(The STAR throws glitter as the SPARKLERS dance. The stage goes to black as the light-up costumes, headwear and hand-held star props choreographed in sequence dazzle for a part of the routine.)

SPARKLERS

OOH, OOH . . .

ALL

SPARKLE AND SHINE!
PLANETS GATHER ROUND
SPARKLE AND SHINE!
LET'S ALL MAKE A DAZZLING SOUND

HERE'S SOMETHING YOU WON'T BELIEVE
IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS EVE

(NAUGHTY BOY is amongst them dressed in a girl's star costume – arms folded, looking cross.)

CHILD 1 (SOLO 1)

I'VE GOT MY LIGHT WITHIN ME AND IT'S COMING OUT FOR YOU

CHILD 2 (SOLO 2)

I'M DIZZY WITH SELF CONFIDENCE – HOPE YOU CAN FEEL IT TOO

CHILD 3 (SOLO 3)

I'M LIGHTING UP THE SKIES TONIGHT

CHILD 4 (SOLO 4)

SO COME ON, JOIN THE PARTY

OLLIE (SOLO 5) *(Annoyed.)*

MAKE THE MOMENT LAST ALL NIGHT
AND KEEP THE SKIES ALL STARRY

ALL

OOH, OOH . . .

(Dance Break. Suddenly from the back of the stage appears an ADULT CAST of TEACHERS and LORD MAYOR, PARENTS, etc., dressed up in amazing circa-1930's Busby Berkeley star / planet outfits, complete with exaggerated fantasy head-dresses that light up at the appropriate moment. The effect is dazzling and hilarious as they climb the stairs and take a pose.)

PLANET 1

JUPITER!

PLANET 2

SATURN!

PLANET 3

MERCURY!

PLANET 4
NEPTUNE!

PLANET 5
MARS!

PLANET 6
VENUS!

CRITIC
URANUS!

(The PLANETS all grab their cloaks, and with one swift movement unhook them, revealing a series of dazzling glass-covered garments that dazzle in the light. This explodes into the chorus of "Sparkle And Shine", where everyone joins in – a full-on celebratory performance that should have everyone dancing in the aisles.)

ALL
OOH, OOH . . .
SPARKLE AND SHINE!
PLANETS GATHER ROUND
SPARKLE AND SHINE!
LETS ALL MAKE A DAZZLING SOUND
HERE'S SOMETHING YOU WON'T BELIEVE
IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS,
IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS EVE!

(The crowd goes wild.)

Music No. 34a: SPARKLE PLAYOFF

SCENE TWENTY-SIX
Backstage before Boyband

PAUL is with NAUGHTY BOY (OLLIE) and some of the other BOYS as they come off stage. MR POPPY suddenly rushes in.

MR POPPY Woah, woah, woah, Ollie . . . why you dressed like that!?!

OLLIE Don't ask!

MR POPPY Mate, I've got some big news for you. I don't want to freak you out, but . . . your mum and dad are here.

OLLIE They actually came?

MR POPPY I just saw them coming in together. They are right at the back, so when you do your rap, make sure you look for them, right? You give it everything you've got!

(OLLIE looks choked up.)

MR POPPY Yeah – Oh, and Mr Maddens – Cracker's freaking out.

PAUL Sorry, what?

MR POPPY I gave her a push pop – I pushed and she popped! You'll have to deal with it – I've got to go and do narration.

(MR POPPY rushes onto the stage, leaving PAUL fuming.)

SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN

The Four Kings' arrival by camel – Brightest Star Boy Band

Music No. 34b: BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS THE SEQUEL

On-stage biblical music fills the air as we see the silhouette of what looks like a camel being led by FOUR YOUNG BOYS (the FOUR KINGS). But as the back wall opens and bright blinding lights pour out onto the audience, the silhouette has lifted and we realise the camel is in fact a dog dressed as a camel – it is CRACKER!

MR POPPY continues with his narration as the FOUR KINGS enter the stage with CAMEL-CRACKER. The STAR OF BETHLEHEM is still on the moon, flying across the sky as the KINGS look at her in adoration.

MR POPPY The Four Kings saw the beautiful shining star rising from the East side. They thought she looked *(Growls.)* so, much like anybody really, really cool on Twitter, they decided to follow her.

(The KINGS arrive on stage. They rip off crowns, headdresses and cloaks – leaving on their fake beards. Underneath, they wear white 'boyband' ripped-jeans-and-waistcoat costumes and begin to dance.)

Music No. 35: SHE'S THE BRIGHTEST STAR

OLLIE (*Rapping.*)
ONE TIME
C'MON, C'MON
TWO TIMES

BOY BAND
SHINING DOWN HER LIGHT

OLLIE (*Rapping.*)
C'MON, C'MON

OLLIE / BOY BAND
PEACE TO THE STAR!

BOY BAND
SHINING DOWN HER LIGHT

SOLO BOY
WHAT A MOMENT WHEN I SAW HER FIRST
SHE STOLE MY HEART SO IT'S ABOUT TO BURST

(OLLIE'S MUM walks near the stage – we pick her out amongst the PARENTS in the audience. We see that OLLIE has noticed her and suddenly throws himself into the number with sheer gusto. OLLIE'S MUM, in the audience, waves. OLLIE, performing, smiles.)

BOY BAND
I'M THE GUY SHE TWINKLES FOR
JE T'ADORE
COS SHE'S BLINDING ME WITH OVE.
SHE'S MY SAVIOUR FROM ABOVE!
SHE'S THE BRIGHTEST STAR I'VE EVER SEEN

STAR
BRIGHTEST STAR

BOY BAND
IT'S LIKE WE'RE LIVING IN SOME KIND OF DREAM

STAR
SOME KINDA DREAM

BOY BAND
WHY DO I FEEL OVERCOME WITH HOPE AND JOY?
COS SHE'S SHINING DOWN HER LIGHT . . .
AND SHE'S GONNA BE MY GIRL AND ME HER BOY

(Some of the GIRL STARS from the previous number rush onto the stage as boy band groupies, screaming at the boys, fainting, etc. The boys play up to their roles – loving every minute of it. The music changes tone into a romantic style. PAUL makes his way through the audience and across the front of the stage, transfixed by the image of JENNIFER, who is walking towards him across the stage.)

JENNIFER Hello, Mr Maddens. *(Laughs.)*

PAUL You said you weren't coming.

JENNIFER I know.

(As they stare transfixed by each other, the music segues into the melody from "Suddenly".)

Ollie *(Rapping.)*

SHE'S MY SHINING STAR FROM ABOVE
SHE TWINKLES AND SHE SPRINKLES AND I WANT TO BE HER LOVE
I WANT TO SQUEEZE HER, PLEASE HER, SHARE A SLICE OF PIZZA
EXTRA SPICY!
SHE MAKES ME HOT UNDER THE COLLAR AND FUZZY DEEP INSIDE
I WISH I COULD LASSO HER AND TAKE HER FOR A RIDE
SHE'S TINY, SHE'S SHINY, SHE SPARKLES IN THE NIGHT
I LOVE HER AND I NEED HER TO GUIDE ME THROUGH THE NIGHT

OTHER BOYS
SHE'S THE BRIGHTEST STAR!
SHE'S THE BRIGHTEST STAR!

ALL BOY BAND
WORD!

(OLLIE strikes a pose and the performance ends – a glitter cannon explodes and ticker tape flies everywhere.)

SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT

On stage – Arrival in Bethlehem – Fuse is blown

MR POPPY enters the stage with CRACKER as the donkey. The INNKEEPER comes onto the stage and holds up a 'Bethlehem' sign. JOSEPH enters the stage.

MR POPPY Eventually, Mary and Joseph went in search of the . . . So just Joseph went in search an innkeeper what was nicer-er. He said . .

ARCHIE

You can use my stable, at least it's dry. Yeah, man. Huh.

(MARY enters the stage.)

MR POPPY Then Mary turned up and Joseph had a shave! They asked the animals if they could nestle down to pop out the baby Jesus. The donkey said 'neigh', but the other animals said it was alright. And everyone that was anyone gathered round to witness . . .

(A light picks out GORDON SHAKESPEARE, who is creeping towards the back of the stage carrying a cable. He pulls a plug from a socket. There is a loud bang and fizzing sound as all the lights go out. Children panic – screaming – it is pitch black. Even the 'Exit' signs temporarily go out.)

MR POPPY, *thinking on his feet, gets his mobile phone and lights up his face from under his chin. He addresses the CHILDREN on the stage, and the audience.)*

MR POPPY

Okay, don't panic – don't panic! If anyone has got a light – a phone or a little light from your program – just put it on now. It's okay – it's alright – it's just a blackout. And I think we might have lost the baby Jesus, so if anyone has got a baby in the audience maybe we can borrow for our last scene, that would be awesome!

Music No. 35a: CANDLES

(MR POPPY makes his way from the stage, holding up his phone light through the auditorium, looking for a baby.)

(BACKSTAGE – PAUL is with JENNIFER and the CHILDREN.)

PAUL Shh . . . Shh . . . now, listen. I'm going to give you all a candle and as soon as you've got one, just make your way out onto the stage, okay? Hey, everyone, this is Jennifer, who you all heard about from Hollywood. This is her.

CHILDREN Hi, Jennifer.

JENNIFER (Now lit by candles.) Hello, Hi.

STAR You're really pretty.

(JENNIFER beams.)

JENNIFER Well so are you. You're all doing such a fantastic job. Now, do we all have a candle?

(JENNIFER passes the class the candles. Candles illuminate the CHILDREN.)

Music No. 35b: THE BIRTH

The music has changed to a string arrangement of a holy aria. The aria builds into a crescendo as . . .)

SCENE TWENTY-NINE**On stage – "One Night, One Moment" – Baby Jesus is born**

On stage and in the auditorium, the lights from candles, phones and handheld twinkle star-lights fill the space. It is a magical, twinkly, emotional moment as audience and actors come together to illuminate the theatre. On stage, the FOUR KINGS bring gifts for the baby Jesus, JOSEPH and MARY at the crib. The Christmas boxes are transformed into bales of hay. MR POPPY has found a BABY (or teddy, or doll, or piglet) from the audience and is helping the audience pass it along the rows towards the stage. Eventually, MR POPPY passes (or throws) it to the CHILDREN on the stage. MARY lifts up

the BABY JESUS in the spotlight and holds him aloft. ANGELS begin to sing. MR POPPY plays guitar.

Music No. 36: ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT

KIDS

SOMETIMES LIFE IS NOT ALL IT CAN BE
AND HERE WE ARE
WONDERING JUST HOW FAR THIS ROAD CAN LEAD
AND HERE WE ARE
THEN FROM THE DARKNESS SHINES A BRIGHT BURNING STAR
AND WHO WE ARE IS CHANGING WITHIN OUR HEARTS

KIDS

ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT,
AND EVERYTHING'S CHANGED
ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT,
AND EVERYTHING'S CHANGED

ADULTS

(ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT)
(ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT)
(ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT)
(ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT)

KIDS / SOME ADULTS

TONIGHT IS SO PURE AND SO SPECIAL
WE'LL NEVER FEEL LONELY AGAIN

OTHER ADULTS

OOH . . .

(We see the PARENTS and TEACHERS swaying to the song, holding their lights in the air, feeling emotional. The CRITIC is sobbing. The STUDIO BOSS is clearly moved. We see PAUL MADDENS with his arm around JENNIFER. We see GORDON SHAKESPEARE catch PAUL's eye, as he shuffles guiltily towards the throng of parents. Even he is transformed by the mood of the piece. He wipes a tear from his eye, remembering their friendship as children.)

ALL

COS WE ARE ALL STANDING TOGETHER AS FRIENDS
OOH . . .
AND EVERYTHING'S CHANGING FOREVER

SOLO CHILD *(Make 'em laugh!)*

ONE NIGHT, ONE MOMENT . . .

(He holds the last note until he can't anymore. The CHILDREN laugh. The AUDIENCE cheer and applaud.)

SCENE THIRTY

Star lights up the stage – "Sparkle Finale" – Curtain Call Party

Children's Bows (Mr Poppy ad libs) – Company Bows (Mr Poppy ad libs).

Music No. 37: SPARKLE FINALE

Kids
 OOH, OOH, OOH . . .
 AH, OOH, OOH, OOH . . . I'VE HAD A LITTLE MAKEOVER AND I'M ALL DRESSED
 UP TONIGHT
 A CHEEKY DRINK, A NAUGHTY WINK, WE'LL LOOSEN UP ALRIGHT
 STAND UP AND PUT YOUR SHADES ON, COS I'M ABOUT TO SHINE
 MY BLINDING LIGHT WILL THRILL YOU COS THERE'S NO STARLIGHT LIKE MINE
 OOH, OOH . . .

SPARKLE AND SHINE!
 PLANETS GATHER ROUND
 SPARKLE AND SHINE!
 LET'S ALL MAKE A DAZZLING SOUND
 HERE'S SOMETHING YOU WON'T BELIEVE
 IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS EVE

I'VE GOT MY LIGHT WITHIN ME AND IT'S COMING OUT FOR YOU
 I'M DIZZY WITH SELF CONFIDENCE – HOPE YOU CAN FEEL IT TOO
 I'M LIGHTING UP THE SKIES TONIGHT, SO COME ON, JOIN THE PARTY
 MAKE THE MOMENT LAST ALL NIGHT, AND KEEP THE SKIES ALL STARRY
 OOH, OOH . . .

SPARKLE AND SHINE!
 PLANETS GATHER ROUND
 SPARKLE AND SHINE!
 LET'S ALL MAKE A DAZZLING SOUND
 HERE'S SOMETHING YOU WON'T BELIEVE
 IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS EVE

ALL
 SPARKLE AND SHINE!
 PLANETS GATHER ROUND
 SPARKLE AND SHINE!
 LET'S ALL MAKE A DAZZLING SOUND

HERE'S SOMETHING YOU WON'T BELIEVE
IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS,
IT'S THE FIRST TIME EVER CHRISTMAS EVE

(PAUL stands on stage, hugging JENNIFER and SHAKESPEARE. Confetti cannons of ticker tape explode. Everyone bows . . .)

MR POPPY

We've got a show to do!

Music No. 38: BOWS (OUR SCHOOL NATIVITY)

ALL

AND IF WE GET THE CHANCE, WE'RE REALLY GONNA SHINE
WE'LL MAKE UP OUR OWN DANCE AND SHOW THEM WE'RE DIVINE
WE'RE GONNA BE THE STARS, NOT USELESS ANY MORE
WE'RE GONNA LEAVE THEM WANTING MORE
LEAVE THEM WANTING MORE
OF OUR SCHOOL NATIVITY!

Music No. 39: EXIT MUSIC

(The End.)