

THE CHRISTMAS DREAM

ACT 1

Jackie comes in and sits on couch.

Sue runs in excited and does a bounce-sit on the couch or a nearby chair.

Jackie, I'm so excited! Tomorrow is Christmas Eve! We'll eat good food. We'll look at the presents! Mom will play Christmas music all day, the cousins will come over, and I get to stay up till the midnight service at church—and the candles and music and looking up at the stars! And then we go to bed and wake up and it's Christmas!! bounces again and then jumps up and runs out yelling "Mom, Mom, tomorrow's Christmas Eve!!"

Mom, coming in, smiling and looking back where Sue has gone running down the hall. "So it is....Jackie, I'm going to make a Wal-Mart run. You are in charge. Matt needs to head for bed by 10:00. Sue needs to be in bed by 9:30 since she's going to be up for the midnight service tomorrow night for the first time. It's so cute how excited she is. Makes me happy.

Jackie Yeah, it's pretty sweet.

Mom Remember how wondrous you used to think it was—staying up past midnight on Christmas Eve?

J Yeah, I do. (smiles)

Mom Now that you're a college girl, though, you and Midnight have been spending a lot of time together.

J Yeah. I'm still really sleep deprived from finals week. Maybe Sue should be the one putting *me* to bed—*early*.

Mom Maybe so. In case you're asleep when I get back, "good night." Dad will be home later, but it may be after all of you are in bed. Get some rest. Bye.

J OK. Bye!

Mom exits. Jackie picks up a magazine, starts to read, gets sleepy, leans back, and falls asleep.

M and S enter.

S Jackie, wanna watch *Rudolph* with us?

M Hey, she's already asleep. Maybe we should be baby-sitting her.

S laughs. Well, let's not wake her up. (whispers loudly) Rudolph says "hi and bye"! they tiptoe back out

A player trots in with a poster that says Time Passes...pauses so audience can read it...trots on through. If this person could do ballet or other graceful dance moves, all the better.

Another runs through with a poster that says Now all the family is asleep. Pauses like the previous player did and then trots on through. Ditto about the moves

A player with a large poster saying DREAM walks across stage accompanied by two or more children doing ballet moves and with dream music of some sort in the background, perhaps one of the players could be carrying a stick with streamers flowing from it, etc.

Matt enters with book in hand, followed by S with a note. M gently shakes Jackson's shoulder and both say M and S "Jackie, wake up."

Jackie stirs, sleepy "Oh, I'm SO sleepy.

M "Jackie, wake up. Listen. First, (he gestures) we were gonna wake you up anyway to see if you wanted to actually get in your bed. Second, something weird just happened.

Jackie "Something weird happened?"

M Yeah. We heard a knock at the door, but when we looked, nobody was there. But this book was there on the porch. (hands it to J)

J *Famous Men and Women of the Past*

M It has to have come from someone who knows you're a history buff.

S And there was a note with it, addressed to YOU. (hands her the note)

J "Jackie Miller, would you like to interview someone? Turn to any name you choose. See what happens.' OK. This IS getting really weird. A mysterious book with a note that makes it sound like it's a MAGIC book. Is this a dream?

M Well, if it were, would you want to turn down the adventure—even in a dream?

J (Smiling) "No, no I wouldn't....

S Who will you look up first?.

J Well, let's see if George Washington is in this book. He's still my hero."

GW enters with BA

M I can't believe it.

S (grabbing M's arm) There he IS!

Jackie rushes over and shakes Washington's hand fervently "General Washington, Mr. President. I can't begin to tell you how honored I am to meet you!..."

GW Benedict, who is this peasant?

BA I've no idea, sire.

Jackie General Washington, I....

GW Look young lady, what's the matter with you? Maybe you've been in the wilderness for a long time? Have you been living in Ken-tuck-y for the past 10 years? I'm not *General* Washington anymore. I'm King George the 1st of the United American Kingdom.

Jackie King?! Wait, at the end of the war, many men wanted to make you king, but you said NO. You said *No man has died that I should be king*.

BA I think you must be ill, son. Where did you get an idea like that? Of course he didn't say no. Only a fool would've done that.

GW And this is the Lord Arnold, High Chamberlain and First Counselor to the King

J The Lord Arnold? Sir, that is, Lord Arnold...you don't happen to be Benedict Arnold, do you?

BA Of course I am.

Jackie George Washington and Benedict Arnold—buddies?

GW Well, yes. In fact, I don't know what I would've done without him. This fragile, new country needed a strong leader, and I came to see that what it needed was not NO king but the RIGHT king. Freedom was a great cause to fight for—it really motivates the common soldier. But now that the war is done, we don't need that freedom concept anymore.

J, M, and S What?!!

Jackie This is ridiculous! It can't be!

S No, no, no!

Matt You're supposed to be GOOD!

J Yeah. Didn't pray for your men at Valley Forge and suffer with them for the sake of freedom?

BA Pray? To what? To whom? Zeus? Ares? Thor? Don't tell me you believe in any of that sort of drivel.

J I mean to God, the one God, God Almighty.

BA Perhaps, Sire, he's talking about the god of the Jews?

GW Are you saying I look like a Jew?

J No, but there wouldn't be anything wrong with it if I did. it's just that...Are you SURE you're George Washington?

BA Ah, it's as we thought, Sire. She's mad.

GW You know, it was the suffering at Valley Forge that brought me to my senses. One night I thought, "Why should I be walking around in the snow freezing and wet when I could be sitting at home in front of a nice fire?" It was then that I crafted my plan to become King if I could. If I was going to have to freeze in the winter and fry in the summer, then there'd better be something REALLY good in it for ME in the end—to make it worthwhile, you know.

BA And then he remembered me and what a smart man I'd proven myself to be. He secretly contacted me, and we began strategizing to get him proclaimed king at the end of the war.

J But what about the men who lost their lives at Bunker Hill? What about Nathan Hale? They gave up their lives for freedom, not your selfish ambition. You betrayed them!

GW Oh, whatEVER!

BA Say, look over there.

J and M and S turn and look while behind them GW and BA pirouette off the stage.

J and M and S look back.

S They're gone

M What kind of book IS this?!

J Maybe we misunderstood something or *used* the book wrong. Let's try someone else from Early America.
I know. Johnny Appleseed.

S claps hands Oh, I love him!

J He's great. And he never would've been tempted by power. Alright (turns book pages), let's interview Johnny Appleseed.

Squealing children run across stage chased by Johnny Appleseed.

Johnny (speaks with crazy old man voice) "Come back, kiddies. Johnny Appleseed'll give you a "Pretty." Oh, hello there, young lady (to S). I've got a "Pretty" for you. Come closer and I'll give it to you.

S You want to give me a blue pebble?

Johnny. Yeah. I give you a Pretty, and you tell me where your family's apple trees are.

S Where my family's apple trees are?

Johnny Yeah. I wanna cut 'em down.

J What?!

M Don't you mean plant apple trees? You go around *planting* apple trees.

Johnny. No. I mean chop 'em down.

J Wait, wait. Is your name John Chapman?

Johnny Yes, that's right.

J Well, the name is right....But you're supposed to help people. You walk around the frontier planting apple trees for the pioneers.

Johnny Nope. Nope. I chop 'em down.

M Why on earth do you *do* that?

Johnny I don't know. I just can't help myself. Hee hee. That's what I love about the frontier—you can get away with anything!

S No, no, no!

J This is all wrong!

Johnny Hey, what's that over there?

J and M and S Where?

Johnny pirouettes off.

J This is really disturbing. Let's try someone else. How about Louis Pasteur? He's the one who proved the germ theory was true and found the cure for rabies. Other doctors and scientists felt threatened by his ideas and persecuted him, but he kept right on. OK. Pasteur, Louis.

Pasteur walks on followed by woman and boy....Look, I'm sorry, madam, but I can't help you.

Madame Meister Oh monsieur, please. My son has been bitten by a rabid dog. He will die of rabies—a miserable death. I heard that you think you have a cure for rabies. Please!

Joseph Meister (the boy) Joseph kneels and grabs Pasteur's legs and begs dramatically Please, Monsieur! Please, please, please!

P No.

J crosses to P. Monsieur. Why will you not help them?! You are their only hope.

P Because they can't pay the fee.

M What?!

J Oh no!

S No! no! no!

J But surely you can make an exception for them. He's a child, for goodness sake.

P Look, it has taken me hundreds of hours of tedious work to develop this anti-rabies serum. And during those hours the only thing that kept me going was thinking about how much money I would make. I'm not sharing my secrets about this serum, and I'm only going to use it on people who can pay me handsomely.

J This can't be happening.

M This is the worst book ever!

S I don't like these bedtime stories

P Now, unless you have money in *your* pockets, you've used too much of my time and attention. Say, what's that?

J, M, S look while P, Mdme Meister, and Joseph pirouette off.

J Well, Pasteur wasn't the only person who made break-throughs in medicine. How about Joseph Lister?

S Who?

Jackie You know, the man who came up with the idea of antiseptics He proved that sanitizing wounds and surgical instruments and washing hands prevented infection. You know, Joseph Lister.

M As in Listerine?

J Exactly. (turning book) Lister, Joseph

Lister enters, scrubbing / sanitizing surgical tools.

Jack Excuse me sir, are you Dr. Joseph Lister?

JL Why, yes. Would you like to schedule a surgery with me?

Jack Actually we're here to interview you.
We're so honored to meet you.

JL Oh. Well, thank you. Well, what would you like to know?

J Well, what first gave you the idea that a chemical put on wounds and surgical instruments and even on your hands could protect a patient from infection?

JL Who told you I did those things?

J Don't you?

JL Well, yes, but it's a secret. Please keep your voice down, and please, whatever you do, don't tell the other doctors here about that. [two doctors stroll through, wearing red-stained coats if possible, waving and saying "Hello, Lister!" and blowing nose and sneezing on their hands.] Hi, guys! Please, please, don't tell them.

J They don't know?

JL No, and I intend to keep it that way. I only use my sanitary techniques on my family members and closest friends, and they are sworn to secrecy.

M I don't understand. Wouldn't you want to share your discovery?

J Think how many lives you could save!

JL Yes, but it would make most other doctors turn on me. You must surely know that whenever something new is discovered, the experts hate it They feel threatened. It makes them look bad. They would not want to think that they had been spreading disease with their bloody coats and unwashed hands. Doctors take pride in wearing blood stained lab coats. It makes them look like "real" doctors. They don't want people to think that their unsanitary practices are killing people. They would hate me, persecute me, make fun of me. And I just don't want my reputation damaged. My pride means a lot to me.

J You care more for your pride and career than the well-being of your patients?

JL Well, of course. Who wouldn't?

S No! no! no! We're supposed to help and love EVERYONE—not just our family and best friends.

JL Look little girl. I don't know what you're talking about, but that's a very silly notion. Nobody thinks that. Hmm...Say, look over there.

J and M and S look while JL pirouettes offstage.

J I'm so disillusioned.

M Me too.

S This is confusing.

AL walks on "Four score and seven years ago..."

J distracted and irritated "What are you doing here? We haven't looked you up yet."

AL Oh. Excuse me.

J There's got to be someone who will for sure be good. I know, I'll try Florence Nightingale.

F enters, along with Bodyguard (Rogers)

Rogers (as if she's just given him an instruction) Yes ma'am

J approaches. Miss Nightingale? It's truly an honor to meet you.

F I'm told you would like to interview me? Carry on then.

J Miss Nightingale, I know you served tirelessly as a nurse in the Crimean War. What would you say was your most memorable day during that war?

F Well, I'd of course say that it was the day my Great Idea came to me.

M Your Great Idea?

F (smiling in wonder at the memory) Yes. I had just stepped out of the army hospital for a breath of fresh air. I knew I had to get back to work, and I didn't want to go. Then it hit me: why should I or anyone else work in such a disgusting place? Wouldn't it be better to single out the men who were in the worst shape...and.. eliminate them? Then we could spend our time caring only for the ones who had a good chance of recovering and being useful soldiers again. There would be a lot fewer men left in hospital—which would save the army a lot of money and would make my work far easier and less stinky.

J, M, and S What?!!!

J You've got to be kidding me! You can't mean this!?

F (still lost in her happy state of wonder) It was brilliant. The government thought so too.

S They did?

F Yes, silly. It saved them a lot of money. That's why they made me a Baroness.

J But what about the soldiers...your men...?

F Yes, it has made me rather unpopular among soldiers and their families. That IS a drawback. But with my bodyguard Rogers at my side, I'm not really worried. Now, Rogers, I want you to be particularly vigilant today. I've got a terrible headache. If anyone knocks on the gate today, have him or her shot.

R Yes, ma'am. And if I shoot someone today, might you save a piece of that raspberry cake for me?

F Of course, dear. Wait. On second thought, if someone knocks who is healthy, just fire a round over his head. If any especially sick person knocks—someone who won't be any use to society—then shoot him... or her.

R Right! Bows.

J and M and S What??!!!

J I can't believe this!

S No, no, no!

F What's that over there? points J and M turn to look.

F and R pirouette offstage

S What kind of terrible book is this?

J I don't know! Give me some fiction—some NICE fiction—give me a Jane Austen novel. Yes! Jane Austen. Let's look her up. Surely we can rely on her....Austen, Jane

JA and partiers enter (with wine glasses and perhaps other partier stuff such as cards or a fiddler)

Raquelle—(to Jane) Say, you look fabulous!

Clara—And so I said, "It's a blessing...AND it's a curse!"

Matilda—It's a curse alright. That dress makes her look like a sardine! (they laugh loudly)

Miles—I love your parties, Jane!

Foster—And your wine!

Williams—And YOU, you spicy dumpling, you!

Jane—Anything for my gorgeous gentlemen!

various laughing and other business amongst all the partyers and Jane

Then JA turns and notices J,M, S and approaches them

Well, hello. I don't believe I've had the pleasure of meeting you before.

J Oh. How do you do? We're looking for Miss Jane Austen.

JA smiles broadly. Well, you've found her.

J,M, and S stand shocked, mouths open, aghast.

J finally says "you?"

JA Of course. I know why you don't recognize me. It's because my portraits (fluffs her hair) really don't do me justice. Are you the journalists I was told to expect?

J Well, yes.

JA Ask away.

J Well, uh, Alright...Um...Which of your novels is your personal favorite?

JA I'd have to say my favorite so far was *Sins and Sensuality*—now that was a steamy romance novel to beat all! Smiling with satisfaction.

J,M,S (in horror) What??!!!

J But (almost pleading), Miss Austen. You were supposed to write novels about characters whose intelligence, wisdom, and strength of character inspire us and whose intelligent conversations exercise our mind!

JA Darling, please! Trashy, sultry romance novels are easy to write and make me tons of money! I'd never be able to afford to throw parties like this if I wrote the sort of book you're talking about.

J But, but...

S No! no! no!

JA I say, look over there!

J, M, S look.

JA and her guests pirouette out.

M This is so depressing. I can't stand it.

S This can't be happening. Not EVERY good person could turn out to be bad.

M What are you going to do?

J I'm getting desperate. I'm going to try looking up the Laura Ingalls family.

Charles, Caroline, Carrie, Mary, and Laura enter.

J Mr Ingalls, Mrs. Ingalls, Laura, Mary, Carrie....please allow me to say how honored I am to meet you. Mr. Ingalls, this is a beautiful cabin. How long did it take you to build it?

CH Build it? I didn't build it. I took it.

J What?

CH Mr Edwards built it, and I took it.

M You did what?

CH I took it at gunpoint.

J From Mr. Edwards?! Why would you DO that?!

CH Well, because it's lots easier than building one myself. Heh heh heh....Well, Caroline, I'm going into town to play cards. (grouchily) And when I get back you'd BETTER have my tea ready... and try to make something fit to eat for dinner this time!! He exits.

Caroline (seated at table) puts head in hands and cries. Why did I ever get married! He's always like this.

J Mrs. Ingalls, surely Charles isn't always angry.

Caroline Oh, but he is—and lazy--and gambles away what little money we have.

Carrie—He even took my Christmas present from Plum Creek—the china dog—and SOLD it...to buy whiskey!

S Oh, no! No! no! no!

J Well (patting Caroline on the shoulder), maybe things will get better. Don't lose hope.

Caroline Don't lose hope? I don't have any hope to lose. Hope in what?

J Well, there's heaven....

Caroline Heaven? What's that?

J You know—heaven—remember your favorite hymn—(sings) “There is a happy land far, far away.”

Caroline I don't know what you're talking about (goes back to crying)

J,M,S turn their attention to Laura.

J Well, how are you, Laura?

L Not good. But what else is new? Working hard all day long just to pay Pa's gambling debts.

J Well, maybe things will get better. Maybe one day you'll even write a book (hopefully helpful, smiling)

L WRITE a book? I can't even read a book. Pa won't let us go to school, and he won't even let Ma teach us what she knows. He says education is wasted on women.

S That's terrible.

Mary gets up. “Well, it's time for me to go now.”

J Where are you going, Mary?

Mary I'm walking into town to go beg.

M What!? Beg?

Mary It's all a blind girl can do.

J No, that's not true. There are schools where they teach the blind to read with special books written in Braille. And you can be taught how to play a musical instrument and all sorts of things.

Mary (glumly) I've never heard of any of those things. But Pa wouldn't let me do it anyway. He'd say it was a waste of money.

J If you're walking to town to beg, why didn't you go with your Pa when he left a while ago?

Mary He doesn't want to be seen with me. He says it's embarrassing to have a blind child.

S I can't believe this.

M Me neither.

J I'm so, so sorry.

La So are we. Hey, what's that?

J and M turn to look, the Ingallses pirouette off the stage.

J This is terrible.

S I don't understand.

Abe Lincoln starts toward them “Fourscore and seven years ago, our...”

J I didn't call for you.

AL Oh. Really? I thought you did.

M Nope.

AL Beg pardon. (turns and exits)

J Let's try Thomas Jefferson next. It says... he was assassinated...by Washington!

M and S What?!! (M pulls clutches head and pulls hair; S puts hands over face and then stomps foot and says
S No, no, no!

J Maybe something went wrong but only affected America. What about other parts of the world?

S But don't you remember Jane Austen and Florence Nightingale?

J Oh yeah... Well...I can't give up yet...

S Maybe Mother Teresa?

J It says that she was famous for producing the first soap opera in India. Oh no, I'm not reading any more of that (slams book shut and looks around) I don't think I could bear meeting Mother Teresa the Soap Opera queen.

S I know! I know! Let's look up Joan of Arc. She's one of my favorites!

J Here goes.

Joan enters

J Mademoiselle, is your name Joan?

Joan But of course. Are you here to buy eggs.

J No. I just wanted to meet you.

Joan uh....

S Are you about to go off to help the French army and defend France?

Joan No. I would like to help my country, but, alas, what can a simple farm girl do on her own?

J But weren't you called by God to help save the French from the English?

Joan Excuse moi? Of course not. What God would that be? Besides, assuming that I did run off to try and help my people, I'd probably have to fight just to get the Dauphin to see me. And then probably I'd end up having to get my own armor and make my own flag. Then I'd probably always need to come up with my own strategies because the army's leaders' are no good> And I'd end up almost getting killed in battle to defeat the English. And then I'd probably end up getting caught by the English for doing something heroic like being last of my troops to retreat. And then they'd probably hold me for ransom and the Dauphin and other nobles I helped would probably just leave me there all alone. And then I'd probably go to trial and get burned at the stake as a witch, perhaps posthumously. I'd be pardoned; only to be accused of being a total nut-job by later generations of critics. Does that sound worth it to you? Of course, that's probably a little extreme, but even so.

J Yes, but your courage would inspire millions of people over time.

Joan Hey, I've only got one life to live. I'm playing it safe and looking out for Number One (points to self). Besides, if I went to help in the war, I would miss Cozette.

J Cozette?

Joan My cow.

MOO is heard from off stage.

S This can't be happening! No! no! no!

Joan Sorry to disappoint you, but that's the way it goes. Sacre blu! What is that?

They look, she pirouettes off

J I'm going to at least try someone else. I know! Surely someone stood up to the Nazis. I'll try Winston Churchill.

M Jackie, I just don't think we're gonna find anyone being good in this book.

J I've got to keep trying. Hey, there he is. Mr Churchill? Prime Minister?

WC Are you the reporters I was told to expect?

J. I, um, I think so.

WC Looking at Sue Aren't you a little young for a reporter?

S Well, yes, yes I am.

WC Ah, well, good. Carry on. (then turning to J), but shouldn't you be saying HERR Prime Minister Churchill?

M (loudly whispering to J) I thought "Herr" was a German word.

J (loudly whispering back) It is.

WC Do you have a problem with German? You aren't some of the underground rebels are you? Our merger with the Third Reich has gone very smoothly, but now and then we do find pockets of resistance. Since you are clearly Americans, I'll be lenient and patient with you. But make sure you say nothing more against the Reich. My patience can only extend so far.

J Are you saying England is now part of the Third Reich?

WC Of course. You're not very good reporters if you didn't know that.

J I'm so sorry.

WC Don't be. Inviting Germany to make England part of the Third Reich is the greatest thing that's happened in British History since the days of William the Conqueror.

2 young men stride across and "Heil Hitler" Churchill

WC "Heil Hitler: (to the young men)

M You surrendered without a fight?

WC Of course.

J No, no. You said you'd fight the Nazis in the streets and in the fields. You said you would never give up. You said...

WC That's nonsense. Why should Britons lose their lives and have their finest buildings smashed by bombs? And, what's more, I admire what the Fuehrer is doing. We'll be part of an empire that will last a thousand years!

S No!No!No!

WC You have gone too far. Guards!

M Mr. Churchill...Look over there!

WC What is it? (and looks)

J, M, and S run to their living room stage left and cower behind furniture. WC sees they're gone, shrugs, and pirouettes off toward stage right.

M What now?

J Maybe it's only affecting the world of politics? Try a good artist or a musician.

S How about Bach or Beethoven?

J OK I'll try Bach. Bach, Johann Sebastien...That's odd. He's not in here. But I do see a Johann Christoph Bach....hmmm... he was the organist at the renowned St. Michael's Church in Augsburg, Germany You know, I think that this Christoph was one of Bach's relatives.

M Look. Here he comes.

J Well, yes, I guess we did. I wanted to ask if you were related to a Johann Sebastien Bach.

CB Johann Sebastien Bach? I haven't thought about him in years. But, yes, he was my younger brother.

J Did your brother ever become famous?

CB Like me?

J Um, well, yes.

CB No. He had talent but died before that talent was really discovered. You see, our parents died when he was 10 years old. And then I--and the rest of the relatives--sold him to a slave ship's captain.

M You did what?!

CB What else could we do? He was a financial burden to us. And—just between us-- he was SO gifted musically that his talent might've soon outshone mine and greatly diminished my career. He didn't survive long at sea anyway. Washed overboard after just 2 weeks.

S You did this to your own brother? No! no! no!

J While he was still a child?

S I don't like this book. I don't want to read any more.

CB Oh, my...What's that over there?

J, M, S look while CB pirouettes off the stage

Abe Lincoln walks on again "Fourscore and seven years ago..."

J We didn't look you up, sir. And after looking up these others, frankly, I'm afraid to look you up. I'm sorry.

AL Well, no matter. But I just wanted to say...that there's something missing from your book.(walks off)

J, M, S Something missing?

M This is the worst Christmas present book ever.

J What did you say?

M I said this is the worst Christmas present ever.

J You don't suppose...Let's look up Jesus .

S But you KNOW He was good. I don't want to look him up...just in case...

M Do we have to? I'm scared of we'll find. What if HE's bad?

J He won't be. Just look him up.

M Um, guys, how do you spell "Jesus"?

S J-E-S-U-S

M That's what I thought. But...it's so strange... He ...he's not in here.

J You're right. It goes straight from Thomas Jefferson to Al Jolson.

That's it! I think this explains everything! This book shows what people's lives would've been like if Jesus hadn't come! All the selfishness, all the shallowness...if our culture had never been shown by Him that self-sacrifice and humility are the greatest traits to be had...love for all people...the hope of heaven...all those things that shaped our culture were because of Him!

M Well, I think Jackie has learned this lesson.

S That means it's time for us to go. Hey, Jackie, look over there!

J (looks) what?

M and S pirouette off the stage to stage left, taking book with them.

J (kneels and prays fervently) Lord Jesus, Please be real Take me back to the reality where the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, where you lived and died and rose again...(stops praying) Oh, I feel so tired. But strangely at peace. I think I'll just sit here and rest a while and then figure out what to do in a few minutes. (sits, falls asleep).

Lights go out as Jackie sleeps.

ACT 2

lights come back up
Rooster crows.

Jackie wakes. Looks sleepy for a minute and then suddenly jumps up. The book! The book! Hurrah! The creepy book is gone. Where's our encyclopedia? Here it is. (sits with his back to the other half of the stage).

OK, people. Please be here. Please be good.

Thomas Jefferson, you're here! You're not assassinated! Yes! George Washington...Yes! (W enters) Washington was loved by his troops, and together they braved the hardships of the winter at Valley Forge. Washington was a sincere Christian and a man of great character. This is probably why the famous painting of Washington praying for his troops in the snow at Valley Forge became such a classic. (W acts this out). ...Let's see...After the war for Independence was won, Washington was such a hero to many wanted to proclaim him to be king of America. But Washington said

W No. No man shall have died that I might be king. (then starts a line up in front of stage)

J OK, let's try another...John Chapman, whose became known more widely as Johnny Appleseed, lived in the Ohio country in its earliest frontier days. He was a gentle man who enjoyed friendship with both Native Americans and white settlers, sharing stories by the fireplace or campfire at night and planting apple trees by day in the vast wooded wilderness by day.

(while this is being said, Johnny and the children come on stage, holding hands, smiling, and skipping, then get in line behind Washington)

J Alright. Louis Pasteur One of the greatest scientists of all time...devoted Christian...tireless in his work...proved that the germ theory was correct...discovered the cure for rabies...

P comes on stage followed by woman and her son. He stops. They catch up.

Madame Meister Please, sir, please.

Pasteur But my rabies vaccines have not yet been tested. What if they harm your son instead of heal him?

Madame Meister But he's been bitten by a rabid dog. He is already doomed unless you help him.

Joseph Yes, please sir. I trust you. And I'm willing to try anything.

Pasteur Very well. I'll do my best.

Madame Meister Oh, thank you!. I do not know how to repay you.

P Don't worry about that. (kneeling to boy) Now, Philippe, I know you're scared. But hang in there. We'll do our best, and—whatever happens--God will be with us. Now, let's go attack our enemy! (Puts his hand on his shoulder and leads him w/ FW following.

Joseph Yeah! (strikes fist in palm and smiling) Kill rabies!

They go and join the line.

J I hope this means Joseph Lister is good too.

Lister enters holding a newspaper. (good naturedly amused) Ha! It's another newspaper article calling me a liar and a fool. (stands looking at it and smiling and shaking his head)

J (reading) Lister was a Christian man with an even temper a gentle nature, and a determined will. He ignored the vicious things other doctors said about him and quietly let his results speak for themselves.

Lister. (rousing himself and lowering the newspaper and calls offstage over his shoulder) Come on, men! It's time to scrub up! I'll see you in the operating room! (joins the line)

J Yaay! ... OK How about Florence Nightingale? It says that although she came from a well to do family, she abandoned that life to serve for the sick. She worked tirelessly in the hospital wards during the Crimean War, often providing proper food for the men with her own money.

Wounded soldiers (Matthews, Smith, and Thompson) enter and form a line. They are bandaged, limping, etc. Maybe a crutch for one and arm sling for another.

Matthews Come on, men! She's making her rounds in the next ward over, and She'll be here any minute.

Thompson I hope she'll be pleased. I'm not much to look at, but I'm almost walking now thanks to her!

Smith Here she comes.

All do their best to stand at attention and salute.

F enters holding a lantern looking as if she's checking on men lying in cots about knee level
Why, gentlemen. Look at you! Standing up!

Thompson All because of you, Miss Nightingale.

Smith Aye, ma'am

F Thank you. Thank you so much!

Matthews (looking after her as she has passed and muses straight ahead to the crowd) The Lady of the Lamp.

F and the men join the line.

Jackie continues reading She not only cleaned and cared for thousands of men who were too weak to rise from their beds but also held the hands of the dying and faithfully wrote the messages they asked her to send to their loved ones at home. The men loved her so much for her tireless work among them, making rounds in the hospital even late at night by the light of a lantern that they came to call her The Lady of the Lamp.

J OK OK Jane Austen...

(Jane comes in while Jackie is reading and sits at the table and takes quill in hand and pretends to write)
(After Jane enters and while Jackie reads, Raquelle, Henrietta, Clara, and Matilda enter stage right.
Miles, Foster, Williams, and Staggering Guy enter stage left. They smile and pretend to be talking quietly to each other sedately but happily. The two groups meet each other mid stage and bow to each other and walk on)

Jackie (reading the encyclopedia)

It says her novels subtly conveyed the message that that worth should be measured more by integrity than by birth or wealth. They also sparkle with keen wit and a sage knowledge of human nature. Her novels included *Northanger Abby*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Persuasion*, *Emma*...

JA ..."It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." (pauses, quietly amused)

J ...and her masterpiece *Pride and Prejudice*. Hurrah!

JA gets up, walks off to join the line, as do the others.

J O Lord, please let the Ingalls family be good again. Let's see...

Ingalls family comes in.

CH Caroline, that was a great meal. Thank you. I did always say you can beat the nation at cooking!

Caroline Well, hunger is the best sauce....But Charles, I'm so worried about you. Your boots are so old and worn out, and you'll have to walk a hundred miles to find harvest work.

CH Aw, shucks, Caroline, a hundred miles is nothing. And besides, no pesky bunch of grasshoppers is gonna beat us. Remember when Edwards walked 80 miles to Independence and back in the winter? and swam the Verdigris River to bring the girls' Christmas presents?

Mary He brought us our very own tin cups.

La And peppermint sticks AND a whole penny of our very own!

CH Go fetch the fiddle, Laura, and we'll have a few songs tonight before I go.

La Yes, Pa!

Carrie (clapping hands) Yay!

Ingalls family moves off stage to join line.

Jackie Whew! I don't know when I've been so relieved. OK How about Joan of Arc...It says here that the Maid of Orleans's bravery has inspired millions.

Joan has come on with her flag and strikes a heroic pose. says ... to sacrifice what you are and to live *without belief*, that is a fate more terrible than dying....I am not afraid!...I would rather die than to do something I know to be a sin or against God's will...Hold the cross high so I may see it through the flames! (then she joins the line)

Jackie (reading) Winston Churchill...Prime Minister of Great Britain during the second World War. Gave hope to the British people, enabling them to suffer through the terrible London bombings without losing hope. In one of his most famous radio speeches he said,

WC has come onto stage while J is reading. We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end...we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender.

WC joins the line while J looks through book

J How about Bach?

JCB (Christoph) enters (Jesus Joy of Man's Desiring plays in the background?) and pauses in center of his half of the stage to call out, Come on, little brother. I'm going to teach you everything I know. Just wait till you see the organ at St. Michael's. You know, I think you might turn out to be the one to outshine us all!

JCB then goes to join the line.

J Yaay. This is awesome! I don't even have to look to see if Jesus is back in the encyclopedia. I can tell He's there! Hurrah! Starts jumping around.

M and S come in.

S Jackie are you OK?

J OK? I'm fabulous! grabs her hands and swings her dancing around

S Shouting to be heard. Wow! You fell asleep on the couch last night and just stayed there all night. I thought you'd be sore and cranky! Glad you're not. Merry Christmas Eve day!!

J Oh, that's right! It's Christmas Eve today! This is great! (releases Sue but begins jumping up and down in excitement and then grabbing her by the shoulders and bending down to her face's level) Do you know how IMPORTANT it was that Jesus was born?!! It makes ALL THE DIFFERENCE! And that's not even counting the really big stuff like paying for our sins!

M Um, I don't even...

J I know. I know. But I had a dream last night. And you guys were in it.

Mom from offstage Time for breakfast!

J Breakfast?! I love breakfast. THIS is the best day ever. And it's only just starting. Come on, guys, I'll tell you all about it over breakfast! (runs out yelling) Woohoo!

M Uh...

S OK..

M Well, I don't know what we're yelling about, but (yells and gestures and runs out yelling) Yaaay!!

S Me neither (yells) Yaay! (and runs out)

Joy to the Word is played loudly. J, M, S, Mom, and Lincoln come out and grab hands with all the others, and all take a bow!! Music continues as audience claps and actors take another bow.