Dedication

Darby would like to dedicate this play to Alan DeRocher and the wonderful and talented Candy Kane cast at Theatre On Main, and to Karen Davenport for being such a great friend and writing partner.

Karen would like to dedicate this play to her mother, Kathy Burnette, who was her very first blessing, and to her friends, Linda Kelly and Darby Chism, whose unwavering support through the years is the stuff of Hallmark cards.

A CANDY KANE CHRISTMAS

By DARBY CHISM and KAREN DAVENPORT

CAST OF CHARACTERS

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<td>her mother</td>
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<td>Jesús’ brother, about 10 years old</td>
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COSTUMES
At the beginning of Scene One, KITTY and WALKER wear long bathrobes. When KITTY and WALKER enter the living room in the present day, they should be dressed in normal clothing, which can be under the bathrobes.

From the middle of Scene Three to the end of the play, CANDY wears a red and white striped wig (meant to be her real hair).

In Scene Six, MIGUEL wears a hospital gown.

In Scene Seven, CANDY wears a clown suit and wig. WALKER wears a wristwatch.

SOUND EFFECTS
Doorbell, cell phone ringing.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION
A Candy Kane Christmas was first produced by Theatre On Main in Acworth, Georgia on December 6, 2008. It was directed by Alan DeRocher, and the Stage Manager was Katie Crabb. The cast was as follows:

CANDY KANE ............................Merrilee LaVilla
KITTY KANE ..............................Dana O’Bryan
WALKER KANE ........................Kirk Smith
MARY KANE .............................Mallory O’Bryan
JANE KANE .............................Breanne Fain
SARAH ..........................Ashley Cooper
LORI ............................Sarah Horowitz
CHRIS KRINGEL ........................Charles Bailer
JESÚS .................................Joel Atchison
MIGUEL ..............................Jake Smith

SETTING
The stage should be set to look like a typical family living room at Christmas. A decorated Christmas tree is UP LEFT. There should be a large couch CENTER as well as three armchairs to comfortably sit at least five. An end table is at the RIGHT end of the couch. There’s a kitchen counter STAGE RIGHT. An EXIT UP RIGHT leads upstairs. The working front door is LEFT. Other furniture, windows, wall hangings and plants can decorate the room as desired.

Scene Six takes place in a hospital room, which is suggested by a bed, played in front of the curtain.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
Scene One: Forestage (memory sequence), sixteen years in the past, played in front of the curtain; then the Kane family living room in the present, one December night.

Scene Two: Kane living room, the next afternoon.

Scene Three: Kane living room, an hour later.

Scene Four: Kane living room, one week later.

Scene Five: Kane living room, a couple of days later.

Scene Six: Hospital room, later that same day.

Scene Seven: Kane living room, December 24.

LEGEND OF THE CANDY CANE
The legend of the candy cane is shared in the play, but you may also want to print it in your program.

There once was a candy maker who decided he wanted to make a Christmas candy that would honor Jesus and symbolize the sacrifices he made for us all. So, he chose to make a hard candy to remind us that Christ is our rock. He chose to shape the candy like a staff to represent Jesus as our Good Shepherd. The white color was chosen to represent our sinless Savior. The red color was chosen to represent the blood of Christ and the three red stripes represent the Holy Trinity. The candy maker told everyone that the candy should be broken and shared, not only to represent the broken body of Christ, but also to bear witness to the wonderful story of Jesus.
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Large couch, three armchairs, kitchen counter, decorated Christmas tree, end table. These items remain ONSTAGE throughout the play.

ONSTAGE, Scene One: Pad of paper and a pen on the end table and on the floor next to the sofa a shopping bag containing a reindeer antler headband and a red “Rudolph” nose.

BROUGHT ON, Scene One: Baby wrapped in blanket (KITTY) Angel tags (MARY, JANE, CANDY, KITTY, WALKER)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Two: Shopping bag with two boxes of hair color (CANDY)

ONSTAGE, Scene Three: Hand mirror on end table, tray of brownies on kitchen counter

BROUGHT ON, Scene Three: Magazine, cell phone (LORI) Oversized towel (CANDY) Bag of basketball equipment (WALKER)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Four: Pad of paper, pen (KITTY) Drivers license in wallet (CHRIS)

ONSTAGE, Scene Five: Christmas paper, scissors, tape, ribbon, bows, tissue paper, ink pen and two “tickets” on the kitchen counter. Optional wrapped Christmas boxes to symbolize gifts.

BROUGHT ON, Scene Five: Basket of candy canes (CANDY) Gifts for wrapping (SARAH, LORI)

ONSTAGE, Scene Six (In front of curtain): Hospital bed, IV stand, small chair

BROUGHT ON, Scene Six: Basket of candy canes (CANDY)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Seven: Cell phone, watch (WALKER) Camera or cell phone (MARY) Baskets of candy canes [optional] (CAST)
CANDY: Look at it as an investment in my future nursing career.
MARY: Good! Better a nurse than a comedian!
CHRIS: I don’t know. Her performance got a lot of laughs at the hospital.
CANDY: I may do both! (MARY takes pictures.) Wait! I just thought of something! My name could change when I get married.
LORI: Yep, no more Candy Kane!
SARAH: Maybe you’ll be Candy Smith.
JANE: (Stage whispers to MARY.) Or Candy Lopez!
MARY: (Elbows JANE in the ribs, then takes another picture.) One more, guys! I think Sarah’s eyes were closed.
CANDY: Wow! I actually kind of like my name now. I don’t think I would ever want to change it.
JANE: Yeah, and what if you marry a guy whose last name is Corn?
MARY: (Takes a picture of CANDY’S horrified expression. ALL laugh.) Or what if you marry a guy whose last name is Barr? Or Graham?
CANDY: (Puts her arm around MARY’S shoulder.) All right, Miss Mary, I’ll play. What if you marry a guy named Mr. Christmas?
JANE: Wow! You would be Mary Christmas! (ALL laugh.)
MARY: Ha ha, laugh’s on me. But honestly, Candy, it looks like you’ve finally gotten over the issues with your name.
CANDY: I think you’re right. I realize now that I’ve taken a lot of things for granted, and I am going to try not to do that anymore! (Hugs MIGUEL)
WALKER: (Looks at his watch.) Hey, everyone, it just turned midnight!
JESÚS/MIGUEL: Feliz Navidad!
ALL: (To AUDIENCE.) Merry Christmas! (BLACKOUT. [OPTIONAL: After bows, the CAST may pass out candy canes to the AUDIENCE.]
END OF PLAY
CANDY: (Laughs menacingly.) Be there in a minute!

KITTY: We're all waiting!

CANDY: One minute! (Laughs again.)

WALKER: And leave the attitude in your room, young lady. (KITTY, WALKER, JANE and MARY FREEZE as CANDY addresses the AUDIENCE.)

CANDY: (Mimics WALKER.) “And leave the attitude in your room, young lady.” (Disgusted.) Just look at them! (Crosses to stand behind WALKER and KITTY on the couch.) They look like something off the cover of a family magazine, with their perfect hair (Messes up WALKER'S hair), bright eyes (Pops her head in between WALKER and KITTY) and neat preppie clothes. (Tugs on JANE'S shirt.) Gag! (Messes up WALKER'S hair.) They look like something off the cover of a family magazine, with their perfect hair, bright eyes and neat preppie clothes.

WALKER: I hereby call the annual Kane Christmas meeting to order. We have several items on our agenda tonight. (Makes a confused face and smooths down his tousled hair.)

KITTY: Yes, we do, beginning with Angel Shopping. Did everyone pick a tag off the Angel Tree at church? (EVERYONE except CANDY holds up their tag.)

MARY: I got a 10-year-old-boy. His name is George, and he likes football and rap music.

JANE: I got a four-year-old boy named Tyler. He likes to draw and watch cartoons. Who'd you get, Dad?

WALKER: I picked a senior saint this year. Seventy-two-year-old Ethel May. She likes rock 'n' roll and jelly beans.

KITTY: I chose Caroline. She is two and loves everything! (They ALL turn and look at CANDY.)

WALKER: Candy, where is your tag?

CANDY: I burned it!

KITTY: Don't get smart with us, young lady. Remember, Santa Claus is watching!

MARY: Yeah, Candy. You're going to have to do some major good deeds to get off the naughty list this year! (She and JANE laugh.)

CANDY: I picked 17-year-old Jesus this year. (English pronunciation of Jesus.) He says that he likes hockey but hates Christmas. (ALL except CANDY gasp in horror.)

WALKER: That's not funny, missy.

KITTY: Come on, Candy. Let's see your tag.

here and get the decorations up. (SOUND EFFECT: WALKER'S CELL PHONE RINGS.)

WALKER: (Looks at his phone.) That's the signal, everybody. Chris and Candy just pulled up. (They ALL hide. There is a pause, then CANDY and CHRIS ENTER LEFT. CANDY wears a clown costume.)

ALL: (Except CANDY.) Surprise! (CHRIS gives CANDY a slight push into the room.)

KITTY: Happy birthday, Candy!

CANDY: Wow! A surprise party?! For me? (JESÚS and MIGUEL ENTER LEFT.)

MIGUEL: Happy birthday, Christmas Clown!

CANDY: Miguel! Oh my gosh! This is the best! The absolute best! (Hugs him.) You're out of the hospital! That's great! The best birthday present I could get! (Hugs her PARENTS.) And you guys are the best parents a girl could have! (Hugs MARY and JANE, then SARAH and LORI. ALL sing “Happy Birthday” as she gives out the hugs.)

WALKER: Hope you don't mind celebrating your birthday a day early.

CANDY: Not at all! This is the perfect way to end a great day!

KITTY: I'll bring out the cake!

MARY: I'm taking pictures! (Pulls out a camera or a cell phone.)

CANDY: Go ahead. You'll be seeing a lot more of Kan'Day. Actually, I've decided that Miguel was right. You'll be seeing a lot more of Candy Kane the Clown. I'm going to make regular appearances on the children's floor of the hospital.

CHRIS: Candy Kane the Christmas Clown was such a big hit with the kids that the staff has asked her to be a regular year-round!

WALKER: That's great, Candy. We're very proud of you!

LORI: Sarah and I can be your assistants.

SARAH: I've always wanted to be in show business!

JANE: Mary and I can help, too. We know how to make balloon animals.

MIGUEL: I'll help too!

JESÚS: Yeah, we can be your test audience!

CANDY: That would be wonderful! I am so looking forward to next year!

KITTY: But you are going to fix your hair, right?

CANDY: Yeah, right after Christmas. I promise! Granny gave me the number to her hair dresser. But I was hoping you guys would help me get a wig.
CANDY: Yeah, well it gets even better. My birthday is on Christmas day!

MIGUEL: Your name is Candy Kane, you get to be a clown AND you were born on the most special day of the year?! You are so lucky!!

CANDY: Lucky? You think it’s lucky to be teased all the time and get candy canes for every gift occasion? You think it’s lucky to never have a birthday of your own? I never wanted to be a clown. It’s just that I feel like my life is one big joke, so I might as well!

MIGUEL: Candy canes are special. Don’t you know the legend of the candy cane?

CANDY: Yeah, yeah—about the candy maker who wanted to make a candy to honor Jesus, so he invented the candy cane. That was my parent’s favorite story to tell me when I was little.

MIGUEL: It’s one of my favorite Christmas stories, too. The cane shape is to represent Jesus as our good shepherd. The white color of the candy represents our sinless savior and the red color represents the blood of Christ. But did you know the candy should be broken and shared? (Takes a candy cane out of the basket, breaks it and gives her a piece.)

CANDY: Miguel, nobody wants a broken candy cane.

MIGUEL: Sharing the broken candy is a way to share the story of your name, Candy Kane, and also share the story of Jesus. That is why I know God didn’t make me sick. God sent us Jesus, and Jesus sacrificed himself for all of us. It’s God’s power and love that is helping me through this.

CANDY: (Begins to cry.) Oh, Miguel, I’ve been so selfish! So very, very selfish. (BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene Six

Scene Seven

CURTAIN UP: The living room on December 24. The room is now decorated for a birthday party—balloons, sweet sixteen birthday banner, etc. MARY, JANE, KITTY, LORI, SARAH and WALKER are sitting and standing around the room, waiting anxiously for CANDY and CHRIS to arrive.

LORI: Candy is going to love this surprise party, Mrs. Kane. The house looks great!

KITTY: It’s not too childish?

SARAH: Absolutely not. It’s perfect!

JANE: When is she going to get here?

KITTY: Chris is bringing her home from the Jolly Follies dress rehearsal. He asked her to help set up for tomorrow so we could come back.
CANDY: Mom, I am not posing as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer!

KITTY: Yes, you are. We all are!

CANDY: Mom, I am not wearing a red nose!

JANE: Oh, Rudolph! Goody! (Claps, takes the antlers and begins putting them on.)

MARY: Ah, Mom, that’s just too cool. And Jane, I love all your Christmas enthusiasm, but... (Takes the antlers off JANE’S head.) ...we were thinking that this year, we should have a picture reflecting our maturity.

JANE: (Remembers.) Oh yeah, our maturity.

MARY: Perhaps we could just wear the antlers or some matching Christmas sweaters with reindeers on them.

CANDY: (Jumps in to give support.) Yeah! We were elves last year in pointy hats and shoes. We were Santas complete with beards and bellies the year before that. And the year before that we were dressed as Christmas trees with twinkling lights! Come on, Mom... reindeer, sure, but no Rudolph noses. Okay?

WALKER: Kitty, I have to agree with the girls on this. Maybe we should tone things down this year and leave off the glowing red noses.

KITTY: Well, perhaps that would be all right, but on one condition—that Candy actually smile for the photograph this year. And it has to be a real smile, not her fake over-the-top smile. (They all look at CANDY.)

CANDY: (Reluctantly.) Agreed.

MARY: But, Mom, I don’t think Candy knows how to smile.

JANE: Oh, I can help. (Goes behind CANDY; reaches around and pulls CANDY’S cheeks back on both sides.) You just have to flex these muscles. (Massages CANDY’S cheeks.)

CANDY: (Grabs JANE’S hands as if she does this all the time.) Thanks, Jane, but I think I can figure it out on my own. (JANE sits back down.)

WALKER: Okay, next up. As you all know, the church has decided to produce a talent show this year in conjunction with the usual nativity play.

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MARY: Mary and I have been practicing our dance routine since July!

MARY: Yeah, we’re going to smoke the competition! You better step it up and bring your “A” game, Candy Girl! (She and JANE high-five each other.)

JANE: What are you going to do for the talent show, Candy? You could play the tambourine for our act.

MARY: No way. Candy can’t keep a beat. She’ll ruin us.

JESÚS: Candy, do you mind staying here in case Miguel wakes up?

CANDY: No problem.

JESÚS: Thanks. He doesn’t like waking up to an empty room. We’ll be right back. (He and CHRIS EXIT RIGHT.)

CANDY: (Looks at MIGUEL as she sets her basket down at the foot of his bed. To herself.) Oh, what am I doing here? What can I do to help this poor boy? Why would God do this to a child?

MIGUEL: (Opens his eyes.) But God didn’t do this to me.

CANDY: I am so, so sorry! I didn’t mean to disturb you!

MIGUEL: Why would you think that God made me sick?

CANDY: Oh, I’m sorry! I don’t know what I’m talking about. (Laughs nervously.) Uh, hi. My name is Candy. I came with your brother to say hello.

MIGUEL: (Sits up.) Hi! My name is Miguel. (Awkward pause.)

CANDY: Hey, do you like jokes? What do reindeer hang on their Christmas trees?

MIGUEL: I don’t know.

CANDY: Horn–aments. (MIGUEL giggles.) Why is Prancer always wet?

MIGUEL: I don’t know. Why?

CANDY: ’Cause he’s a rain deer. (MIGUEL giggles again.) How do you get into Donner’s house? (MIGUEL just grins and shrugs his shoulders.) You ring the deer bell.

MIGUEL: (Giggles.) You’re a clown! That explains your funny hair! Jesús brought me a clown named Candy for Christmas!

CANDY: Actually, it’s Kan’Day the Christmas Clown, at your service. (Bows.) I dyed my hair to perform as Kan’Day in the Jolly Follies at our church.

MIGUEL: But Candy is a better name than Kan’Day for a Christmas clown. Hey, what about Candy Cane the Christmas Clown? That would be the best name! Candy canes are very special, you know.

CANDY: Yes, I know. And you aren’t going to believe this, but that’s my real name. Candy Kane, with a K.

MIGUEL: No way! Your name is Candy Kane, really and truly?

CANDY: Yep, really and truly. Kids at school tease me about it all the time.

MIGUEL: That’s too bad. My brother gets teased about his name too sometimes. A lot of people think it’s pronounced Jesus because of how it’s spelled. But it doesn’t seem to bother him.
CANDY: (Rolls her eyes, ignores them and pleads with WALKER and KITTY.) Do I really have to be in the show? It’s my birthday! Instead of giving me a present this year, couldn’t you just let me skip the show?

KITTY: No can do, Candy. Your school counselor says you need the socialization to help build your self-esteem.

WALKER: You’ll thank us one day when you are a confident and well-rounded adult.

JANE: Oh, I know, Candy. Remember when we were little and you would belch out “Jingle Bells”? You could do that for the show.

KITTY: Girls, that’s enough. Now go up and finish your homework and get to bed. It’s getting late. (GIRLS stand, cross UP RIGHT.)

CANDY: (Under her breath.) Stupid school counselor.

MARY: I heard that, Candy, and so did Santa. Remember the naughty list!

CANDY: Bah humbug! (GIRLS EXIT UP RIGHT. KITTY and WALKER remain seated on the sofa. They clasp hands.)

KITTY: (Sighs deeply.) Walker, what are we going to do with Candy? I’m so worried about her.

WALKER: I know, Kitty. Candy is going through a rough time, which means we all are going through a rough time. But she’s a good kid, and she’ll figure it out.

KITTY: I know she’s a good girl. Despite the sarcasm and bad attitude, she has a gentle heart. But that makes the teasing about her name all the more difficult for her.

WALKER: I don’t like to see Candy hurt either. But this will pass, Kitty. Remember when we named her? How we knew that it was the perfect name for her? That hasn’t changed.

KITTY: I know, but as her mother, I want to fix everything for her. It makes me angry. I wish that I could have five minutes alone with every person who has ever made our little girl feel bad!

WALKER: Me too. No parent wants to see their child hurt.

KITTY: She doesn’t understand. It hurts her most of all to think we deliberately have made her life difficult. (Sighs and hugs him.) You’re right. We’re doing everything we can, and we’ll get her through this. You’re a good man, Walker Kane.

WALKER: (Hugs her back.) And you’re a good woman, Kitty Kane. And we really do have good kids. Someday, Candy will understand. Everything will be okay.

KITTY: I know it will. (They stand up.)

MARY: (From OFF RIGHT.) Mom! Candy’s light is still on!

1 LORI: You’re right. Too many people only care about the stuff they get for Christmas.

SARAH: They forget it’s an important religious celebration.

JESÚS: People think Christmas is just about Santa Claus and presents and parties. I’ve spent the last two Christmases at the hospital because my brother is really sick. If everyone could just spend a day with those kids at the hospital, they’d realize how much they take for granted.

CANDY: I never thought about it that way.

10 LORI: That must be so hard for you, especially at Christmas.

SARAH: Is there anything we can do?

CHRIS: I’m sure there are plenty of people at church who would like to help.

JESÚS: Well, the kids are too sick to come see the nativity service. Do you think there’s any way to take the service to the hospital?

CHRIS: Sure. I think I could make that happen. I think that’s a great idea!

CANDY: Do you think I can bring candy canes like the ones in your basket?

CHRIS: I just need to talk to the hospital staff.

JESÚS: I was going to head over to the hospital from here. Would you all like to come with me? I can introduce you to my mom and brother, and we can tell them our idea.

CANDY: Sure, I’d love to!

20 SARAH: Oh, sorry. Lori and I have to babysit.

LORI: But we’ll go another time for sure!

CHRIS: (To CANDY and JESÚS,) I’ll drive you guys over. Would you like to stop for lunch on the way, my treat?

CANDY: Fantastic!

JESÚS: Let’s go. (Gathers his presents. ALL rise. BLACKOUT. CURTAIN.)

End of Scene Five

Scene Six

SPOTLIGHT UP: The hospital an hour later, played in front of the curtain. MIGUEL sleeps in a hospital bed. CANDY, CHRIS and JESÚS ENTER DOWN LEFT. CANDY carries another basket of candy canes. JESÚS gently tucks the covers up around MIGUEL.

JESÚS: (In a hushed voice.) He’s sleeping. I think my mom is in the cafeteria. Chris, do you want to come with me, and we’ll tell her about our plans for a Christmas service here at the hospital?

CHRIS: Sure, I’d love to meet her.
1 CANDY: (From OFF RIGHT.) Get out of my room! (KITTY and WALKER collapse back onto the couch. BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

LIGHTS UP: CANDY ENTERS UP RIGHT, carrying a bag that contains two boxes of hair dye. SOUND EFFECT: DOORBELL.

CANDY: Coming! (Sets the bag on the counter and crosses LEFT. Opens the front door for her best friends, SARAH and LORI, who ENTER.) Thanks for coming over, guys. I really need your help. (They cross to CENTER.)

SARAH: You can count on us!

CANDY: Last night I had the most hideous nightmare. I dreamed that Miss James, that stupid school counselor, held me captive in a mandatory mis-namers support group.

SARAH: Mis-namers?

CANDY: Yeah, people, who are like me—mis-named at birth. I was there with Ben Dover, Ilene Wright, Justin Case, Iona Comb ... (Laughs.) Oh, and Harry Roach.

CANDY: Don’t forget about Will Power.

SARAH: (She and LORI retrieve the gifts they wrapped from under the tree.) Maybe you could go to the hockey game with your brother.

JESÚS: (Sadly.) Maybe.

CANDY: Well, regardless of how cute he is, Jesús needs our help. Chris is bringing him over to meet us, and he said that we should try and find out why he hates Christmas. I still think I already know why. (SOUND EFFECT: KNOCK at the door LEFT.) They’re here. (CANDY opens the door, and CHRIS and JESÚS ENTER.)

CANDY: (Stage whisper to CANDY and SARAH.) Wow! He is cute!

CHRIS: Hi, Candy. This is Jesús Lopez.

SARAH: (She and LORI hand him their presents and sit next to CANDY on the sofa.) Merry Christmas!

CHRIS: (Smiles.) Jesús, we’re curious. On your tag, it said that you hate Christmas. Can we ask why?

CANDY: (Takes a box of hair color out of the bag.) Well, for starters, I am going to change my hair color from red to blonde.

LORI: Your parents will have a fit!

CANDY: Besides, your red hair is so pretty.
as Kan’Day the Christmas Clown or as Candy. You decide what you’d like to do.

CANDY: Sure, I can help pass out candy canes. I’ll let you know about the performance.

KITTY: Candy, we could make some of our homemade candy canes for you to give out! We haven’t made those in a long time.

WALKER: We used to give them out as gifts with the legend of the candy cane attached.

MARY: I remember. But then Candy started pitching a fit about it and wouldn’t let us make them anymore.

CANDY: Well, I’m in high school now, and we would be making them for the church. (To MARY and JANE.) Would you like to help make the candy canes?

MARY/JANE: Sure! Goody!

CANDY: I guess this will at least keep me off of Chris Kringel’s naughty list. Mary is convinced that I’m at the top of Santa’s. (BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene Four

Scene Five

LIGHTS UP: The living room. Stuff for wrapping gifts—Christmas paper, scissors, tape, boxes, ribbon, etc.—is on the kitchen counter, along with a pen, two tickets and perhaps some wrapped Christmas gifts. CANDY is at the counter with a basket full of candy canes. She carefully tucks the two tickets in the middle of the candy canes and puts a bow on the handle. SARAH and LORI are wrapping boxes.

CANDY: (With pen in hand.) Look what I’m going to do. On this gift tag for Jesús I’ll put a candy cane in the “from” section.

LORI: Good idea.

SARAH: (Watches her.) I wish I could draw like you.

LORI: Me, too. Where did the tape go? (They finish wrapping the presents, put them under the Christmas tree and sit on the couch.)

CANDY: Thanks for coming over and helping with the presents for my Angel Tree pal.

SARAH: No problem.

LORI: It’s fun. My family hardly does anything to celebrate Christmas. We more or less exchange gift cards.

SARAH: We only have dinner and then exchange gifts at my grandma’s.

LORI: I wonder if your Angel Tree pal is cute!

CANDY: You’ll all get over it. Once it’s done, I should be able to convince my parents that it’s important for my self-esteem to keep it blonde.

SARAH: Good thinking. I always say it’s easier to beg forgiveness than ask permission.

LORI: It might just work, especially if you use that line about self-esteem.

CANDY: I also had another idea when I saw the name of the guy on my Angel Tree tag. His name is written the same as Jesus, but it is pronounced Jesús.

SARAH: Yeah, both my parents have names like that. My mom’s name looks like Jamaica but is pronounced Ja-meek-a. My dad’s name looks like Terrance, but it’s pronounced Tie-rance. That’s why my parents named me Sarah.

LORI: Your name—and how it’s pronounced—is a part of who you are.

CANDY: I wish you would tell that to Miss James and my parents! Anyway, that’s what gave me the idea. I don’t have to change my name. I can just change the pronunciation of it.

SARAH: What are you talking about?

CANDY: Tomorrow, ladies, I am going to wake up as Kan’Day, a fun-spirited blonde!

SARAH: You go, girl! A name and a beauty makeover all in the same day. I like it!

LORI: You’re reinventing yourself. It’s like a reality show—Extreme Image Makeover!

SARAH: (Picks up the box of hair coloring and reads from it.) “Pretty Platinum: a bold and exciting color.” But I have to say, I don’t know about coloring your hair ourselves.

LORI: Candy, Sarah and I don’t know anything about dying hair. What if we mess up?

CANDY: Oh, come on. All we have to do is follow the directions on the box. And as a backup, I got this Brilliant Brunette color. (Pulls other box out of bag.) If we mess up, we can always just cover it up with this.

SARAH: I guess I’m in, as long as you promise not to get mad at us if it doesn’t turn out right.

LORI: And if your parents show up, you’re on your own. We know nothing!

CANDY: I promise, pinky swear. (They link pinkies.)

LORI: (Reading box.) This looks like it will take a little while. When will your folks be home?
CANDY: We’ve got the house to ourselves all afternoon. Mary and Jane have back-to-back basketball games. I faked a headache so I didn’t have to go.

SARAH: Well, let’s get to it, Miss Kan’Day, fun-spirited blonde! *(They EXIT UP RIGHT as LIGHTS GO OUT.)*

End of Scene Two

Scene Three

LIGHTS UP: The living room an hour later. There is now a hand mirror on the end table and brownies on the kitchen counter. SARAH and LORI ENTER UP RIGHT. LORI holds a magazine in one hand and a cell phone in the other. She sits on the couch and looks through the magazine while SARAH paces nervously.

SARAH: How much longer?

LORI: *(Looks away from magazine to look at cell phone.)* One more minute. Will you sit down? You’re making me nervous.

SARAH: *(Sits on the couch then gets right back up.)* Are you sure you read the directions correctly?

LORI: *(Not looking up from the magazine.)* Yes, I read the directions correctly.

SARAH: I don’t know… I just have this feeling we messed up. The color didn’t look right to me. You read the directions to me word for word?

LORI: *(Looks at her cell phone and calls UP RIGHT to CANDY.)* Candy, time’s up. Come on out!

*CANDY appears UP RIGHT, posing with an oversized towel wrapped around her hair. *(She wears a wig underneath towel.)*

SARAH: Are you ready to say good-bye to the old Candy Kane and hello to Kan’Day Kane, fun-spirited blonde? *(Grabs hand mirror.)*

CANDY: *(Laughs excitedly as she crosses CENTER and yanks the towel off her head. Her red hair now has blonde stripes.)* Ta da!

SARAH: Holy cow!

LORI: Jiminy Cricket!

CANDY: *(Grabs the mirror, looks and screams.)* Oh!... My!... Gosh! Look at my hair! I have stripes! Not streaks, but actual stripes! *(Runs her fingers through her hair frantically.)*

SARAH and LORI lift CANDY: *(laughs a little at his joke.)* I’m sorry. I just don’t think that I can do this.

CHRIS: Why not? There’s no pressure, this is for fun. We just want to get everyone in the Christmas spirit.

CANDY: My hair, I dyed it like this on accident. I thought I could change my life and who I am by changing my hair color and pronouncing my name differently. *(WALKER and KITTY gasp in surprise.)*

MARY: *(Smiles.)* I knew it!

CHRIS: I don’t understand. What’s wrong with the beautiful and smart red-haired girl named Candy Kane that your father’s told me about?

CANDY: Didn’t you hear what you just said? I am a redhead named Candy Kane. Do you know how much grief I get at school because of that?

CHRIS: Yeah, I remember. School can be hard. But…

CANDY: Also, my birthday is on Christmas Day. I don’t even get to have a normal birthday. I’m a clown every day of my life because it is one big joke!

CHRIS: I can understand why it would seem that way. But your name is definitely not a joke. I know that kids can be cruel, and if they didn’t have your name to make fun of, they’d find something else. You are just going to have to learn to ignore it until the kids see that it doesn’t bother you and they move on.

CANDY: Yeah, that’s what my school counselor keeps telling me. But that’s easy for you guys to say. Her name is Jennifer and yours is Chris.

CHRIS: *(Smiles.)* That’s right. Your father didn’t give you my last name when he introduced us. Candy Kane, allow me to officially introduce myself. My name is Chris, Chris Kringel.

JANE: Wow! That’s a great name!

CANDY: If you’re kidding, that’s not funny!

CHRIS: *Nope, totally serious. It’s on my driver’s license and everything! I’ll show you. *(CANDY sobs and laughs at the same time as CHRIS pulls out his wallet and shows his license.)* Hey, it will all be all right. You don’t have to perform as Kan’Day the Christmas Clown if you don’t want to.

CANDY: Really?

CHRIS: Really. I don’t want you to feel like you’re being forced to participate, especially on your birthday. If you want, there are plenty of ways you can be involved besides performing. I could use your help passing out candy canes to the little kids at the nativity service before the Jolly Follies on Christmas Eve. You could do it
KITT Y: Party at the Clarks, RSVP check!
WALKER: (SOUND EFFECT: DOORBELL. Gets up to answer the door.
CHRIS ENTERS LEFT.) Hey, come in! Chris, this is my family—Kitty, Mary, Jane and Candy. Everyone, this is Chris, the new youth minister. He is in charge of the Jolly Follies this year. Please have a seat, Chris. (Motions to chair. They both sit.)
CHRIS: Thank you for inviting me to dinner. I don’t know many people here yet. (Looks at CANDY.) That’s a festive wig you’re wearing. I’ve never seen anything like it.
CANDY: What wig? This is my real hair.
CHRIS: Huh, I…
CANDY: Just kidding. It’s for my Jolly Follies act. I’m Kan’Day the Christmas Clown! Of course, I’ll have on more of a costume for the show.
CHRIS: That’s a great idea! I can’t wait to see your performance.
MARY: You should give Chris a preview of your act.
KITT Y: We have a while to visit before dinner, so I suppose that would be all right.
CHRIS: Great! I’d love to see it.
CANDY: Oh, you don’t need a preview.
CHRIS: Sure, come on.
WALKER: Come on, Candy. It’s good to rehearse before a live audience.
KITT Y: We’ve watched Mary and Jane practice for months.
CANDY: Okay, here goes. (Very deadpan.) Did you hear about the snowman that was feeling under the weather? (Pause.) Don’t worry. He’ll be better in snow time at all. (Joke falls flat, but WALKER does a rim shot anyway. OTHERS stare at CANDY, waiting awkwardly for the next joke. CANDY looks at MARY and remembers her joke.) Okay. Why did Santa’s helper see the doctor?
CHRIS: I don’t know. Why?
CANDY: Because he had low (Begins to sob.) elf-esteem. (Breaks down completely, sits and sobs into her hands.)
KITT Y: Candy, what’s wrong? (Goes to CANDY.)
CANDY: (Sobs.) I have no elf-esteem! (Sob.) Who am I kidding? (Sob.) The joke’s on me! I am a joke. My name’s a joke. And my life’s a joke!
CHRIS: (Crosses to CANDY and speaks softly.) Candy, I loved the first part of your performance, but I am afraid that this last bit will need some work. You see, there is no crying allowed at the Jolly Follies. That’s why we call them jolly.
CANDY: Locks of hair up in disbelief. The GIRLS look at one another, then CANDY bursts into laughter. SARAH and LORI join in.)
SARAH: Sister, you look like the bride of Frankenstein!
LORI: I’ve got to get a picture of this! (Pulls out her cell phone and takes a picture.)
CANDY: Fine, but you better not post those pictures anywhere! It’s a good thing I got that other box of hair dye.
SARAH: I think we need a brownie break before we try to apply the Brilliant Brunette.
LORI: Do the brownies have nuts?
SARAH: Girl, look at her hair. She is nuts! (They laugh, grab brownies from the counter and sit down. KITTY, WALKER, MARY and JANE ENTER LEFT singing “fa-la-las.” Their singing comes to an abrupt end as they spot CANDY, who is trying to hide behind the couch.)
CANDY: Mom! Dad! What are you guys doing home so early? (WALKER drops a bag of basketball equipment in astonishment. His mouth opens and closes. MARY and JANE stand with mouths agape in expressions of gleeful horror.)
KITT Y: (Crosses to CANDY.) Candy Kane, what have you done to your hair?! (Plucking at CANDY’S hair.) How could you?! Why would you?! (LORI and SARAH try not to be noticed.)
MARY: You are in so much trouble!
JANE: Hi, Sarah! Hi, Lori! (Waves at them happily.) What are you guys doing here?
LORI: (She and SARAH wave back weakly.) Hi, Jane, Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Kane!
SARAH: We were just in the neighborhood and dropped in to say hi.
LORI: Yeah! But, we gotta go now! I got a thing at this place with my mom.
SARAH: Yeah, see ya! Gotta go! (They run out the front door OFF LEFT.)
KITT Y: Chris, I loved the first part of your performance, but I am afraid that this last bit will need some work. You see, there is no crying allowed at the Jolly Follies. That’s why we call them jolly.
CHRIS: (Crosses to CANDY and speaks softly.) Candy, I loved the first part of your performance, but I am afraid that this last bit will need some work. You see, there is no crying allowed at the Jolly Follies. That’s why we call them jolly.
Kitty: All right! Let’s all take a deep breath and let Candy explain herself. Obviously, she wouldn’t have made herself look like a... a... a clown without a good reason!

Candy: Mom, you are so smart! You guessed it! I did this to look like a clown. Since I do not have a choice about participating in the Jolly Follies Talent Show, I thought I might as well go all the way. Let me introduce myself. (Bows low, then jumps up in a jumping jack pose.) Ta-da! I’m Kan’Day the Christmas Clown! (The Family stares in disbelief.)

Walker: Candy, what are you up to?

Kitty: Will that wash out of your hair or not?

Candy: Do you really think I’m going back to school after Christmas break looking like this? I mean, come on, Mom! I will be your (Air quotes.) “favorite pain in the neck redhead” again in a couple of weeks. (Smiles big and waits to see if they believe her lie.)

Walker: Why didn’t you just get a wig or something?

Candy: I couldn’t find one that I liked. And they’re too expensive. But, come on. Do we really have to make a big deal out of this? I mean, I’m doing what everyone else wants, right? If it was... corny jokes at the church. So can’t you just give me a break? I really don’t feel like making a big deal out of this.

Mary: I think you’re a great clown, Candy. But then, I’ve always thought you were funny!

Jane: I love clowns. Tell us one of your jokes, Christmas Clown.

Candy: Well, I haven’t really had much time to get my materials together. I’ve been too busy perfecting my image. (Fluffs her hair.)

Kitty: Oh, come on, Candy. You must have at least one joke figured out.

Candy: Hmm, okay. Why did the reindeer cross the road?

Jane: I don’t know. Why?

Candy: Because he was tied to a chicken. (They laugh weakly.)

Mary: But that doesn’t make any sense. A chicken can’t carry a reindeer across the road.

Jane: (Elbows Mary.) It was a giant chicken, wasn’t it, Candy? Ha ha. Funny. A giant chicken.

Mary: Not really.

Jane: Oh, I know a joke you could tell. What’s the first thing that elves learn in school?

Candy: I don’t know. What?

Jane: The elf-abet! (They laugh.)
KITTY: All right! Let’s all take a deep breath and let Candy explain herself. Obviously, she wouldn’t have made herself look like a... a... a clown without a good reason!

CANDY: Mom, you are so smart! You guessed it! I did this to look like a clown. Since I do not have a choice about participating in the Jolly Follies Talent Show, I thought I might as well go all the way. Let me introduce myself. (Bows low, then jumps up in a jumping jack pose.) Ta-da! I’m Kan’Day the Christmas Clown! (THE FAMILY stares in disbelief.)

WALKER: Candy, what are you up to?
KITTY: Will that wash out of your hair or not?
CANDY: Do you really think I’m going back to school after Christmas break looking like this? I mean, come on, Mom! I will be your “favorite pain in the neck redhead” again in a couple of weeks. (Smiles big and waits to see if they believe her lie.)

WALKER: Why didn’t you just get a wig or something?
CANDY: I couldn’t find one that I liked. And they’re too expensive. But, come on. Do we really have to make a big deal out of this? I mean, I’m doing what everyone else wants, right? If it was corny jokes at the church. So can’t you just give me a break? I really don’t feel like making a big deal out of this.

MARY: I think you’re a great clown, Candy. But then, I’ve always thought you were funny!
JANE: I love clowns. Tell us one of your jokes, Christmas Clown.
CANDY: Well, I haven’t really had much time to get my materials together. I’ve been too busy perfecting my image. (Fluffs her hair.)
KITTY: Oh, come on, Candy. You must have at least one joke figured out.
CANDY: Hmm, okay. Why did the reindeer cross the road?
JANE: I don’t know. Why?
CANDY: Because he was tied to a chicken. (They laugh weakly.)
MARY: But that doesn’t make any sense. A chicken can’t carry a reindeer across the road.
JANE: (Elbows MARY.) It was a giant chicken, wasn’t it, Candy? Ha ha. Funny. A giant chicken.
MARY: Not really.
JANE: Oh, I know a joke you could tell. What’s the first thing that elves learn in school?
CANDY: I don’t know. What?
JANE: The elf-abet! (They laugh.)

KITTY: Good one, Jane! Here’s one for you. What would a reindeer do if it lost its tail? (Pause.) It would go to a re-tail store to replace it! (They laugh.)
WALKER: Cute! I have one too. Why does Scrooge love reindeer?
JANE: Why, Dad?
WALKER: Because every buck is dear to him!
MARY: Ugh! These are so corny! This one’s better. Why did Santa’s helper see the doctor? (Pause.) He was suffering from low elf-esteem!
CANDY: Wow! I didn’t know I lived in a family of comic geniuses. I’ll use all those jokes in my act. Thanks, guys!
WALKER: Well, in terms of the hair, I guess what’s done is done. But right after the Jolly Follies, I expect you to be back to normal.
MARY: Whatever that is!
JANE: (Whispers to CANDY) I like the new look. I think you should keep it!
KITTY: (Hugs CANDY) Candy, your father and I are so relieved that your attitude is improving. We want you to be able to truly accept and love yourself as we love you.
MARY/JANE: Awww, family hug! (THEM ALL hug then break apart.)
KITTY: This reminds me, the rehearsals for the Jolly Follies begin at the church next week. We all need to be getting our acts together.
WALKER: I need a snack first. Did you and your friends save us any brownies?
CANDY: Sure did, Dad. (WALKER grabs one.)
WALKER: Good, you really would have been in some trouble if you hadn’t.
KITTY: What does Mary say? Oh, yeah, you’d have been in uber trouble! (WALKER, KITTY, MARY and JANE cross UP RIGHT.)
WALKER: Candy, are you coming upstairs with us?
CANDY: I’ll be there in a minute, after I pick up in here. (WALKER, KITTY, MARY and JANE EXIT UP RIGHT. CANDY falls into the couch near tears.) I’ve really gotten myself into a mess this time! Peppermint hair! It’s like some cruel cosmic joke! How will I ever get through these holidays?!(BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene Three

Scene Four

LIGHTS UP: Living room, the next week. The FAMILY sits in their usual seats. As usual, KITTY has pad and pen and is marking things off her list.
KITY: Party at the Clarks, RSVP check!

WALKER:  (SOUND EFFECT: DOORBELL. Gets up to answer the door. CHRIS ENTERS LEFT,) Hey, come in! Chris, this is my family—Kitty, Mary, Jane and Candy. Everyone, this is Chris, the new youth minister. He is in charge of the Jolly Follies this year. Please have a seat, Chris. (Motions to chair. They both sit.)

CHRIS: Thank you for inviting me to dinner. I don’t know many people here yet. (Looks at CANDY.) That’s a festive wig you’re wearing. I’ve never seen anything like it.

CANDY: What wig? This is my real hair.

CHRIS: Huh, I...

CANDY: Just kidding. It’s for my Jolly Follies act. I’m Kan’Day the Christmas Clown! Of course, I’ll have on more of a costume for the show.

CHRIS: That’s a great idea! I can’t wait to see your performance.

MARY: You should give Chris a preview of your act.

KITY: We have a while to visit before dinner, so I suppose that would be all right.

CHRIS: Great! I’d love to see it.

CANDY: Oh, you don’t need a preview.

CHRIS: Sure, come on.

WALKER: Come on, Candy. It’s good to rehearse before a live audience.

KITY: We’ve watched Mary and Jane practice for months.

CANDY: Okay, here goes. (Very deadpan.) Did you hear about the snowman that was feeling under the weather? (Pause.) Don’t worry. He’ll be better in snow time at all. (Joke falls flat, but WALKER does a rim shot anyway. OTHERS stare at CANDY, waiting awkwardly for the next joke. CANDY looks at MARY and remembers her joke.)

Okay, Why did Santa’s helper see the doctor?

CHRIS: I don’t know. Why?

CANDY: Because he had low (Begins to sob.) elf-esteem. (Breaks down completely, sits and sobs into her hands.)

KITY: Candy, what’s wrong? (Goes to CANDY.)

CANDY: (Sobs.) I have no elf-esteem! (Sob.) Who am I kidding? (Sob.)

The joke’s on me! I am a joke. My name’s a joke. And my life’s a joke!

CHRIS: (Crosses to CANDY and speaks softly.) Candy, I loved the first part of your performance, but I am afraid that this last bit will need some work. You see, there is no crying allowed at the Jolly Follies. That’s why we call them jolly.
CANDY: We’ve got the house to ourselves all afternoon. Mary and Jane have back-to-back basketball games. I faked a headache so I didn’t have to go.

SARAH: Well, let’s get to it, Miss Kan’Day, fun-spirited blonde! (They EXIT UP RIGHT as LIGHTS GO OUT.)

End of Scene Two

Scene Three

LIGHTS UP: The living room an hour later. There is now a hand mirror on the end table and brownies on the kitchen counter. SARAH and LORI ENTER UP RIGHT. LORI holds a magazine in one hand and a cell phone in the other. She sits on the couch and looks through the magazine while SARAH paces nervously.

SARAH: How much longer?

LORI: (Looks away from magazine to look at cell phone.) One more minute. Will you sit down? You’re making me nervous.

SARAH: (Sits on the couch then gets right back up.) Are you sure you read the directions correctly?

LORI: (Not looking up from the magazine.) Yes, I read the directions correctly.

SARAH: I don’t know... I just have this feeling we messed up. The color didn’t look right to me. You read the directions to me word for word?

LORI: Well, not word for word, but close enough.

SARAH: Lori!

LORI: What!? There were a lot of unnecessary words! I read you all the important ones!

SARAH: This can’t end well.

LORI: Shhh... it will be fine. Relax! (Looks at her cell phone and calls UP RIGHT to CANDY.) Candy, time’s up. Come on out! (CANDY appears UP RIGHT, posing with an oversized towel wrapped around her hair. [She wears a wig underneath towel.])

CANDY: (Laughs excitedly as she crosses CENTER and yanks the towel off her head. Her red hair now has blonde stripes.) Ta da!

SARAH: Holy cow!

LORI: Jiminy Cricket!

CANDY: (Grabs the mirror, looks and screams.) Oh...! My!... Gosh! Look at my hair! I have stripes! Not streaks, but actual stripes! (Runs her fingers through her hair frantically. SARAH and LORI lift
as Kan’Day the Christmas Clown or as Candy. You decide what you’d like to do.

CANDY: Sure, I can help pass out candy canes. I’ll let you know about the performance.

KITTY: Candy, we could make some of our homemade candy canes for you to give out! We haven’t made those in a long time.

WALKER: We used to give them out as gifts with the legend of the candy cane attached.

MARY: I remember. But then Candy started pitching a fit about it and wouldn’t let us make them anymore.

CANDY: Well, I’m in high school now, and we would be making them for the church. (To MARY and JANE.) Would you like to help make the candy canes?

MARY/JANE: Sure! Goody!

CANDY: I guess this will at least keep me off of Chris Kringle’s naughty list. Mary is convinced that I’m at the top of Santa’s. (BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene Four

Scene Five

LIGHTS UP: The living room. Stuff for wrapping gifts—Christmas paper, scissors, tape, boxes, ribbon, etc.—is on the kitchen counter, along with a pen, two tickets and perhaps some wrapped Christmas gifts. CANDY is at the counter with a basket full of candy canes. She carefully tucks the two tickets in the middle of the candy canes and puts a bow on the handle. SARAH and LORI are wrapping boxes.

CANDY: (With pen in hand.) Look what I’m going to do. On this gift tag for Jesús I’ll put a candy cane in the “from” section.

LORI: Good idea.

SARAH: ( Watches her.) I wish I could draw like you.

LORI: Me, too. Where did the tape go? (They finish wrapping the presents, put them under the Christmas tree and sit on the couch.)

CANDY: Thanks for coming over and helping with the presents for my Angel Tree pal.

SARAH: You go, girl! A name and a beauty makeover all in the same day. I like it!

LORI: You’re reinventing yourself. It’s like a reality show—Extreme Image Makeover!

SARAH: ( Picks up the box of hair coloring and reads from it.) “Pretty Platinum: a bold and exciting color.” But I have to say, I don’t know about coloring your hair yourselves.

LORI: Candy, Sarah and I don’t know anything about dying hair. What if we mess up?

CANDY: Oh, come on. All we have to do is follow the directions on the box. And as a backup, I got this Brilliant Brunette color. ( Pulls other box out of bag.) If we mess up, we can always just cover it up with this.

SARAH: I guess I’m in, as long as you promise not to get mad at us if it doesn’t turn out right.

LORI: And if your parents show up, you’re on your own. We know nothing!

CANDY: I promise, pinky swear. (They link pinkies.)

LORI: ( Reading box.) This looks like it will take a little while. When will your folks be home?
CANDY: (From OFF RIGHT.) Get out of my room! (KITTY and WALKER collapse back onto the couch. BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

LIGHTS UP: CANDY ENTERS UP RIGHT, carrying a bag that contains two boxes of hair dye. SOUND EFFECT: DOORBELL.

CANDY: Coming! (Sets the bag on the counter and crosses LEFT. Opens the front door for her best friends, SARAH and LORI, who ENTER.)

SARAH: Can you count on us!

LORI: Yeah. What do you need?

CANDY: Last night I had the most hideous nightmare. I dreamed that Miss James, that stupid school counselor, held me captive in a mandatory mis-namers support group.

SARAH: Mis-namers?

CANDY: Yeah, people, who are like me—mis-named at birth. I was there with Ben Dover, Ilene Wright, Justin Case, Iona Comb …

LORI: (Laughs.) Oh, and Harry Roach.

SARAH: Don’t forget about Will Power.

CANDY: Yeah, you get it. So anyway, Miss James was giving me her usual “You should learn how to love yourself for the special, beautiful person that you are” speech. Then she got to the part about taking control of the situation, learning to laugh at yourself and not letting what others think bother you so much.

SARAH: Yeah, I know that speech. But I like Miss James. I think she’s pretty nice.

CANDY: Not in my book. But anyway, I actually found something she said in my dream to be of use.

CANDY: (Takes a box of hair color out of the bag.) Well, for starters, I am going to change my hair color from red to blonde.

LORI: Your parents will have a fit!

SARAH: Besides, your red hair is so pretty.

CANDY: Well, regardless of how cute he is, Jesús needs our help. Chris is bringing him over to meet us, and he said that we should try and find out why he hates Christmas. I still think I already know why. (SOUND EFFECT: KNOCK at the door LEFT.) They’re here.

CANDY: opens the door, and CHRIS and JESÚS ENTER.

LORI: (Stage whisper to CANDY and SARAH.) Wow! He is cute!

CANDY: Shhh.

CHRIS: Hi, Candy. This is Jesús Lopez.

CANDY: Hi, please come in and sit down. These are my friends, Sarah and Lori.

JESÚS: ¿Cómo están Ustedes? (Looks more closely at CANDY.) Wow. I like the hair. (ALL chuckle. CANDY obligingly prims her hair. CHRIS and JESÚS cross to two armchairs and sit down.)

CANDY: This is for you. Merry Christmas! (GETS the basket of candy from under the tree and points to the tickets.) There are two hockey tickets to the New Year’s game for you and a friend. Your tag said that you like hockey. (HANDS JESÚS the basket and sits on the sofa, close to JESÚS and CHRIS.)

JESÚS: (Smiles.) Gracias for the tickets, and I love candy. My brother, Miguel, also has a real sweet tooth. I can’t wait to share this with him.

SARAH: (She and LORI retrieve the gifts they wrapped from under the tree.) Maybe you could go to the hockey game with your brother.

JESÚS: (Sadly.) Maybe.

LORI: (She and SARAH hand him their presents and sit next to CANDY on the sofa.) Merry Christmas!

SARAH: These gifts are also for you!

CANDY: I hope you like your presents. I wasn’t sure what else to get.

JESÚS: Well, it isn’t the gift but the thought that counts. Thank you very much. (Sets the presents on the floor.)

CHRIS: (Smiles.) Jesús, we’re curious. On your tag, it said that you hate Christmas. Can we ask why?

CANDY: Is it because of your name? Because I can totally relate.

JESÚS: Is it because of your name? Because I can totally relate.

CANDY: Oh, sorry, I just thought that... (Sighs.) Never mind.

JESÚS: It’s not really that I hate Christmas. Of course, I don’t hate celebrating Jesus’ birthday. I just hate the way Christmas has become such a commercialized holiday.

CANDY: Oh!
1 LORI: You’re right. Too many people only care about the stuff they get for Christmas.
2 SARAH: They forget it’s an important religious celebration.
3 JESÚS: People think Christmas is just about Santa Claus and presents and parties. I’ve spent the last two Christmases at the hospital because my brother is really sick. If everyone could just spend a day with those kids at the hospital, they’d realize how much they take for granted.
4 CANDY: I never thought about it that way.
5 LORI: That must be so hard for you, especially at Christmas.
6 SARAH: Is there anything we can do?
7 CHRIS: I’m sure there are plenty of people at church who would like to help.
8 JESÚS: Well, the kids are too sick to come see the nativity service. Do you think there’s any way to take the service to the hospital?
9 CHRIS: Sure. I think I could make that happen. I think that’s a great idea!
10 CANDY: Do you think I can bring candy canes like the ones in your basket?
11 CHRIS: I just need to talk to the hospital staff.
12 JESÚS: I was going to head over to the hospital from here. Would you all like to come with me? I can introduce you to my mom and brother, and we can tell them our idea.
13 CANDY: Sure, I’d love to!
14 SARAH: Oh, sorry. Lori and I have to babysit.
15 LORI: But we’ll go another time for sure!
16 CHRIS: (To CANDY and JESÚS,) I’ll drive you guys over. Would you like to stop for lunch on the way, my treat?
17 CANDY: Fantastic!
18 JESÚS: Let’s go. (Gathers his presents. ALL rise. BLACKOUT. CURTAIN.)

End of Scene Five

Scene Six

SPOTLIGHT UP: The hospital an hour later, played in front of the curtain. MIGUEL sleeps in a hospital bed. CANDY, CHRIS and JESÚS ENTER DOWN LEFT. CANDY carries another basket of candy canes. JESÚS gently tucks the covers up around MIGUEL.

JESÚS: (In a hushed voice.) He’s sleeping. I think my mom is in the cafeteria. Chris, do you want to come with me, and we’ll tell her about our plans for a Christmas service here at the hospital?

CHRIS: Sure, I’d love to meet her.

1 CANDY: (Rolls her eyes, ignores them and pleads with WALKER and KITTY.) Do I really have to be in the show? It’s my birthday! Instead of giving me a present this year, couldn’t you just let me skip the show?
2 KITTY: No can do, Candy. Your school counselor says you need the socialization to help build your self-esteem.
3 WALKER: You’ll thank us one day when you are a confident and well-rounded adult.
4 JANE: Oh, I know, Candy. Remember when we were little and you would belch out “Jingle Bells”? You could do that for the show.
5 KITTY: Girls, that’s enough. Now go up and finish your homework and get to bed. It’s getting late. (GIRLS stand, cross UP RIGHT.)
6 CANDY: (Under her breath.) Stupid school counselor.
7 MARY: I heard that, Candy, and so did Santa. Remember the naughty list!
8 CANDY: Bah humbug! (GIRLS EXIT UP RIGHT. KITTY and WALKER remain seated on the sofa. They clasp hands.)
9 KITTY: (Sighs deeply.) Walker, what are we going to do with Candy? I’m so worried about her.
10 WALKER: I know, Kitty. Candy is going through a rough time, which means we all are going through a rough time. But she’s a good kid, and she’ll figure it out.
11 KITTY: I know she’s a good girl. Despite the sarcasm and bad attitude, she has a gentle heart. But that makes the teasing about her name all the more difficult for her.
12 WALKER: I don’t like to see Candy hurt either. But this will pass, Kitty. Remember when we named her? How we knew that it was the perfect name for her? That hasn’t changed.
13 KITTY: I know, but as her mother, I want to fix everything for her. It makes me angry. I wish that I could have five minutes alone with every person who has ever made our little girl feel bad!
14 WALKER: Me too. No parent wants to see their child hurt.
15 KITTY: She doesn’t understand. It hurts her most of all to think we deliberately have made her life difficult. (Sighs and hugs him.) You’re right. We’re doing everything we can, and we’ll get her through this. You’re a good man, Walker Kane.
16 WALKER: (Hugs her back.) And you’re a good woman, Kitty Kane. And we really do have good kids. Someday, Candy will understand. Everything will be okay.
17 KITTY: I know it will. (They stand up.)
18 MARY: (From OFF RIGHT.) Mom! Candy’s light is still on!
CANDY:  Mom, I am not posing as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer!
Kitty:  Yes, you are. We all are!
CANDY:  Mom, I am not wearing a red nose!

JANE:  Oh, Rudolph! Goody! (Claps, takes the antlers and begins putting them on.)
MARY:  Ah, Mom, that's just too cool. And Jane, I love all your Christmas enthusiasm, but... (Takes the antlers off JANE'S head.) ...we were thinking that this year, we should have a picture reflecting our maturity.

JANE:  (Remembers.) Oh yeah, our maturity.
MARY:  Perhaps we could just wear the antlers or some matching Christmas sweaters with reindeers on them.

CANDY:  (Jumps in to give support.) Yeah! We were elves last year in pointy hats and shoes. We were Santas complete with beards and bellies the year before that. And the year before that we were dressed as Christmas trees with twinkling lights! Come on, Mom... reindeer, sure, but no Rudolph noses. Okay?

WALKER:  Kitty, I have to agree with the girls on this. Maybe we should tone things down this year and leave off the glowing red noses.

KITTY:  Well, perhaps that would be all right, but on one condition— that Candy actually smile for the photograph this year. And it has to be a real smile, not her fake over-the-top smile. (They all look at CANDY.)

CANDY:  (Reluctantly.) Agreed.
MARY:  But, Mom, I don’t think Candy knows how to smile.
JANE:  Oh, I can help. (Goes behind CANDY, reaches around and pulls CANDY'S cheeks back on both sides.) You just have to flex these muscles. (Massages CANDY'S cheeks.)

CANDY:  (Grabs JANE'S hands as if she does this all the time.) Thanks, Jane, but I think I can figure it out on my own. (JANE sits back down.)

WALKER:  Okay, next up. As you all know, the church has decided to produce a talent show this year in conjunction with the usual nativity play.
JANE:  Mary and I have been practicing our dance routine since July!
MARY:  Yeah, we’re going to smoke the competition! You better step it up and bring your “A” game, Candy Girl! (She and JANE high-five each other.)

JANE:  What are you going to do for the talent show, Candy? You could play the tambourine for our act.
MARY:  No way. Candy can’t keep a beat. She’ll ruin us.
CANDY: Yeah, well it gets even better. My birthday is on Christmas day!

MIGUEL: Your name is Candy Kane, you get to be a clown AND you were born on the most special day of the year?! You are so lucky!!

CANDY: Lucky? You think it’s lucky to be teased all the time and get candy canes for every gift occasion? You think it’s lucky to never have a birthday of your own? I never wanted to be a clown. It’s just that I feel like my life is one big joke, so I might as well!

MIGUEL: Candy canes are special. Don’t you know the legend of the candy cane?

CANDY: Yeah, yeah—about the candy maker who wanted to make a candy to honor Jesus, so he invented the candy cane. That was my parent’s favorite story to tell me when I was little.

MIGUEL: It’s one of my favorite Christmas stories, too. The cane shape is to represent Jesus as our good shepherd. The white color of the candy represents our sinless savior and the red color represents the blood of Christ. But did you know the candy should be broken and shared? (Takes a candy cane out of the basket, breaks it and gives her a piece.)

CANDY: Miguel, nobody wants a broken candy cane.

MIGUEL: Sharing the broken candy is a way to share the story of your name, Candy Kane, and also share the story of Jesus. That is why I know God didn’t make me sick. God sent us Jesus, and Jesus sacrificed himself for all of us. It’s God’s power and love that is helping me through this.

CANDY: (Begins to cry.) Oh, Miguel, I’ve been so selfish! So very, very selfish. (BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene Six

Scene Seven
CURTAIN UP: The living room on December 24. The room is now decorated for a birthday party—balloons, sweet sixteen birthday banner, etc. MARY, JANE, KITTY, LORI, SARAH and WALKER are sitting and standing around the room, waiting anxiously for CANDY and CHRIS to arrive.

LORI: Candy is going to love this surprise party, Mrs. Kane. The house looks great!

KITTY: It’s not too childish?

SARAH: Absolutely not. It’s perfect!

JANE: When is she going to get here?

KITTY: Chris is bringing her home from the Jolly Follies dress rehearsal. He asked her to help set up for tomorrow so we could come back later.

CANDY: Why don’t you ever believe me? I’m telling the truth! (Pulls the tag from her pocket and holds it out.) Read it yourself!

KITTY: (Takes the tag and looks at it.) Hmm, she’s telling the truth. But his name is pronounced Jesús (Spanish pronunciation). It’s Jesús Lopez, and he does say he hates the Christmas holiday.

WALKER: Really?! That’s a shame.

JANE: How could anyone hate Christmas?

MARY: Guess you’re not the only one on the naughty list this year, Candy.

CANDY: He probably hates Christmas because his name is Jesus! (English pronunciation.)

MARY: You aren’t going to start ranting about how horrible your name is again?!

CANDY: You little plain-named Mary and Jane have no idea what it’s like to have a freak name.

MARY: Well, Dad’s name is Walker Kane.

JANE: Yeah, and you never hear him complaining!

CANDY: Well, he’s not teased every day, is he?

KITTY: Candy, we all know that you are unhappy with your name, especially now with the holiday season. But as I said, the boy’s name is pronounced Jesús, not Jesus! And I’m sure there must be more to his troubles than the mispronunciation of his name.

WALKER: Candy, I know it’s hard, but one day, I promise you will appreciate the uniqueness of your name. Now, let’s drop the subject and move on.

KITTY: (To CANDY.) You’ve got your work cut out for you. You have to choose Jesús’ gift on your own—family rule.

WALKER: What do you give a boy who thinks he hates Christmas?

CANDY: Don’t worry, I’ll think of something. (Gives them a fake smile.)

KITTY: (Picks up her pad and pen from end table.) Okay. The deadline to have the gifts purchased and wrapped is two weeks from today. (Makes a big check on her notepad.) Check!

WALKER: Right! Next on the agenda is the picture for the Christmas card. We’ll take it here after church on Sunday. What’s our theme this year, Kitty?

KITTY: You guys are going to love this! (Grins, puts down pen and pad and reaches into the shopping bag at her feet. WALKER, MARY and JANE all lean forward eagerly as KITTY pulls out reindeer antlers with jingle bells and red noses.)
CANDY: (Laughs menacingly.) Be there in a minute!

KITTY: We're all waiting!

CANDY: One minute! (Laughs again.)

WALKER: And leave the attitude in your room, young lady. (KITTY, WALKER, JANE and MARY FREEZE as CANDY addresses the AUDIENCE.)

CANDY: (Mimics WALKER.) “And leave the attitude in your room, young lady.” (Disgusted.) Just look at them! (Crosses to stand behind WALKER and KITTY on the couch.) They look like something off the cover of a family magazine, with their perfect hair (Messes up WALKER'S hair), bright eyes (Pops her head in between WALKER and KITTY) and neat preppie clothes. (Tugs on JANE’S shirt.) Gag! (Pretends to put a finger down her throat, then plops down in an armchair, folds her arms and scowls. FAMILY UN-FREEZES.)

WALKER: I hereby call the annual Kane Christmas meeting to order. (Makes a confused face and smooths down his tousled hair.) We have several items on our agenda tonight.

KITTY: Yes, we do, beginning with Angel Shopping. Did everyone pick a tag off the Angel Tree at church? (EVERYONE except CANDY holds up their tag.)

MARY: I got a 10-year-old-boy. His name is George, and he likes football and rap music.

JANE: I got a four-year-old boy named Tyler. He likes to draw and watch cartoons. Who'd you get, Dad?

WALKER: I picked a senior saint this year. Seventy-two-year-old Ethel May. She likes rock 'n' roll and jelly beans.

KITTY: I chose Caroline. She is two and loves everything! (They ALL turn and look at CANDY.)

WALKER: Candy, where is your tag?

CANDY: I burned it!

KITTY: Don’t get smart with us, young lady. Remember, Santa Claus is watching!

MARY: Yeah, Candy. You’re going to have to do some major good deeds to get off the naughty list this year! (She and JANE laugh.)

KITTY: Girls, that’s enough.

CANDY: I picked 17-year-old Jesus this year. (English pronunciation of Jesus.) He says that he likes hockey but hates Christmas. (ALL except CANDY gasp in horror.)

WALKER: That’s not funny, missy.

KITTY: Come on, Candy. Let’s see your tag.

here and get the decorations up. (SOUND EFFECT: WALKER’S CELL PHONE RINGS.)

WALKER: (Looks at his phone.) That's the signal, everybody. Chris and Candy just pulled up. (They ALL hide. There is a pause, then CANDY and CHRI S ENTER LEFT. CANDY wears a clown costume.)

ALL: (Except CANDY.) Surprise! (CHRIS gives CANDY a slight push into the room.)

KITTY: Happy birthday, Candy!

CANDY: Wow! A surprise party?! For me? (JESÚS and MIGUEL ENTER LEFT.)

MIGUEL: Happy birthday, Christmas Clown!

CANDY: Miguel! Oh my gosh! This is the best! The absolute best! (Hugs him.) You’re out of the hospital! That’s great! The best birthday present I could get! (Hugs her PARENTS.) And you guys are the best parents a girl could have! (Hugs MARY and JANE, then SARAH and LORI. ALL sing “Happy Birthday” as she gives out the hugs.)

WALKER: Hope you don’t mind celebrating your birthday a day early.

CANDY: Not at all! This is the perfect way to end a great day!

KITTY: I’ll bring out the cake!

MARY: I’m taking pictures! (Pulls out a camera or a cell phone.)

CANDY: Go ahead. You’ll be seeing a lot more of Kan’Day. Actually, I’ve decided that Miguel was right. You’ll be seeing a lot more of Candy Kane the Clown. I’m going to make regular appearances on the children’s floor of the hospital.

CHRIS: Candy Kane the Christmas Clown was such a big hit with the kids that the staff has asked her to be a regular year-round!

WALKER: That’s great, Candy. We’re very proud of you!

LORI: Sarah and I can be your assistants.

SARAH: I’ve always wanted to be in show business!

JANE: Mary and I can help, too. We know how to make balloon animals.

MIGUEL: I’ll help too!

JESÚS: Yeah, we can be your test audience!

CANDY: That would be wonderful! I am so looking forward to next year!

KITTY: But you are going to fix your hair, right?

CANDY: Yeah, right after Christmas. I promise! Granny gave me the number to her hair dresser. But I was hoping you guys would help me get a wig.

WALKER: Most certainly!
A CANDY KANE CHRISTMAS

Scene One

LIGHTS UP: Played in front of the curtain. Sixteen years ago. WALKER and KITTY ENTER RIGHT, dressed in bathrobes, carrying a baby wrapped in a blanket.

KITTY: Look at our beautiful little red-haired girl, Mr. Kane. And born on Christmas Day!

WALKER: It is the best Christmas present there could be, Mrs. Kane. (They gaze admiringly at their child.)

KITTY: Oh, look at that face. I don’t think there’s a candy in the world sweeter than this little face. (Kisses the baby.)

WALKER: What are we going to call our sweet little red-headed Christmas Kane? (They look at each other knowingly.)

BOTH: Candy!

KITTY: Candy Kane. Oh, Walker, it’s perfect!

WALKER: She’s going to love her name!

(He and KITTY EXIT RIGHT. SPOTLIGHT shifts DOWN RIGHT to CANDY, who is dressed in black.)

CANDY: Yeah, I suppose Candy Kane is a cute name—if you’re an infant! But I’m not a baby anymore. I should have a grown-up name, like Brooke or Kimberly. Imagine when I’m 20 and being... party. “It’s nice to meet you. My name is Candy Kane. No, it’s not a stage name. It’s my real given-to-me-at-birth name.” (In a lower, menacing voice.) Oh, my parents will rue the day! It wasn’t enough that they chose to have me on Christmas day and that I only get one lousy birthday gift because of it? Now I have to be in the church Christmas talent show! The Jolly Follies! On my sixteenth birthday! I hate my life. (Wipes away her tears.)

And Jennifer James, that stupid school counselor—this is all her fault! Telling my parents I need more interaction with my peers.” If Jennifer James had a name like mine, she might have an issue or two herself. It’s obvious—if I want a decent life, I’m going to have to change my name. In the meantime, I’m going to make everyone else as miserable as I am at Christmas. This year, they’re all going to find out what it’s like to have a Candy Kane Christmas! (CURTAIN UP to reveal the living room one December evening. A shopping bag containing a reindeer antler headband and a red “Rudolph” nose rests on the floor next to the sofa. A pad of paper and a pen are on the end table. JANE, MARY, KITTY and WALKER ENTER UP RIGHT. KITTY and WALKER, now without bathrobes, sit next to each other on couch and GIRLS sit in adjacent armchairs. CANDY remains DOWN RIGHT.)

KITTY: Candy! Family meeting time!
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Large couch, three armchairs, kitchen counter, decorated Christmas tree, end table. These items remain ONSTAGE throughout the play.

ONSTAGE, Scene One: Pad of paper and a pen on the end table and on the floor next to the sofa. A shopping bag containing a reindeer antler headband and a red “Rudolph” nose.

BROUGHT ON, Scene One:
- Baby wrapped in blanket (KITTY)
- Angel tags (MARY, JANE, CANDY, KITTY, WALKER)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Two:
- Shopping bag with two boxes of hair color (CANDY)

ONSTAGE, Scene Three:
- Hand mirror on end table, tray of brownies on kitchen counter

BROUGHT ON, Scene Three:
- Magazine, cell phone (LORI)
- Oversized towel (CANDY)
- Bag of basketball equipment (WALKER)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Four:
- Pad of paper, pen (KITTY)
- Drivers license in wallet (CHRIS)

ONSTAGE, Scene Five: Christmas paper, scissors, tape, ribbon, bows, tissue paper, ink pen and two “tickets” on the kitchen counter. Optional wrapped Christmas boxes to symbolize gifts.

BROUGHT ON, Scene Five:
- Basket of candy canes (CANDY)
- Gifts for wrapping (SARAH, LORI)

ONSTAGE, Scene Six (In front of curtain):
- Hospital bed, IV stand, small chair

BROUGHT ON, Scene Six:
- Basket of candy canes (CANDY)

BROUGHT ON, Scene Seven:
- Cell phone, watch (WALKER)
- Camera or cell phone (MARY)
- Baskets of candy canes [optional] (CAST)
COSTUMES
At the beginning of Scene One, KITTY and WALKER wear long bathrobes. When KITTY and WALKER enter the living room in the present day, they should be dressed in normal clothing, which can be under the bathrobes.

From the middle of Scene Three to the end of the play, CANDY wears a red and white striped wig (meant to be her real hair).

In Scene Six, MIGUEL wears a hospital gown.

In Scene Seven, CANDY wears a clown suit and wig. WALKER wears a wristwatch.

SOUND EFFECTS
Doorbell, cell phone ringing.

SETTING
The stage should be set to look like a typical family living room at Christmas. A decorated Christmas tree is UP LEFT. There should be a large couch CENTER as well as three armchairs to comfortably sit at least five. An end table is at the RIGHT end of the couch. There’s a kitchen counter STAGE RIGHT. An EXIT UP RIGHT leads upstairs. The working front door is LEFT. Other furniture, windows, wall hangings and plants can decorate the room as desired.

Scene Six takes place in a hospital room, which is suggested by a bed, played in front of the curtain.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
Scene One: Forestage (memory sequence), sixteen years in the past, played in front of the curtain; then the Kane family living room in the present, one December night.

Scene Two: Kane living room, the next afternoon.

Scene Three: Kane living room, an hour later.

Scene Four: Kane living room, a couple of days later.

Scene Six: Hospital room, later that same day.

Scene Seven: Kane living room, December 24.

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The legend of the candy cane is shared in the play, but you may also want to print it in your program.

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ORIGINAL PRODUCTION
A Candy Kane Christmas was first produced by Theatre On Main in Acworth, Georgia on December 6, 2008. It was directed by Alan DeRocher, and the Stage Manager was Katie Crabb. The cast was as follows:

CANDY KANE .......................Merrilee LaVilla
KITTY KANE .......................Dana O’Bryan
WALKER KANE .....................Kirk Smith
MARY KANE .......................Mallory O’Bryan
JANE KANE ........................Breanne Fain
SARAH ...............................Ashley Cooper
LORI .................................Sarah Horowitz
CHRIS KRINGEL ......................Charles Bailer
JESÚS ...............................Joel Atchison
MIGUEL ..............................Jake Smith
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