

CHRISTMAS BELLES

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Christmas music plays over a crackling P.A. system. Lights come up on Miss Geneva Musgrave, 60s, the crusty proprietor of BooKoo BoKay, the only flower shop in Fayro, Texas, population 3,003. The shop is also the town bus depot. The phone rings. She answers.

GENEVA. This is BooKoo BoKay. Whether you're sayin' "Get well soon," "I do" or "I'll never touch that woman again," say it with flowers. How can I help you? ... Why, Tenny, how you doin'? ... Actually, I'm waiting for the three twenty-five from Houston to bring my floral shipment. Nelda's funeral today cleaned me out. And speaking of which, if Nelda Lightfoot was half the psychic she claimed to be, how come she didn't know that runaway Christmas float was bearing down on her? ... Yeah, up 'til then it was a real good parade. The float from Clovis Sanford's House of Meat was definitely my favorite, even though it turned out to be a killer ... Oh, business is great. After all these years, I have found the key to success in the floral business: helium. Do you know I've tripled my Christmas orders by introducing the "Happy Birthday Jesus Balloon Bouquet"? Well, I sure have. And even my Greyhound franchise is startin' to pay off. Oh, hold on, Tenny. I got a bus just in from Brownsville ... *(Into a microphone.)* Atención, Ladies and Gentlemen, Señores y Señoritas. Welcome and bienvenito to Fayro, Texas. We hope you'll do your holiday shopping para la entire familia while you're here. So let BooKoo BoKay help with any

floral necessitas you may have. Merry Christmas and Feliz Navidad to y'all and yours! (*Back to the phone.*) I'm telling you, Tenny, all this success has helped take the sting out of not being asked to direct the church Christmas Program — for the first time in twenty-seven years ... Evidently the Deacons thought the show needed new blood. I only hope Honey Raye Futrelle knows the mess she's getting into. ... You're right. I have to let it go. After all, it is Christmas. And to quote Tiny Tim, "God help us every one" ... Of course I know it's really "God *bles*s us every one," but girl, this is Fayro, Texas. And we need all the help we can get ... (*Blackout.*)

Scene 2

A light comes up on Honey Raye Futrelle, 50, a sexy, vivacious go-getter. She writes on a notepad at one end of a table. Gina Jo "G.J." Dubberly, 20s, guileless and enthusiastic, sits at the opposite end of the table sewing silver stars onto a white garment.

HONEY RAYE. How's it going over there, Shug?

G.J. I think I'm getting the hang of it. Aunt Honey Raye, I'm so excited you're directing the Christmas Program this year at the Tabernacle of the Lamb.

HONEY RAYE. Me, too. I've always wanted to get my hands on this show and people are going to be dazzled! They're gonna feel like they've just seen Baby Jesus born on Broadway! For starters, this year the Wise Men will be accompanied down the aisle by ... a camel.

G.J. A real, live camel?!

HONEY RAYE. Even better, a two-person camel costume I rented from the Waco Light Opera Company. And it's not just *three* Wise Men, either. I have finagled a special celebrity appearance by none other than Cee Cee Windham.

G.J. The lady who hosts *Hospitality House* every morning on Channel Fifteen?