

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING

Due to characters being onstage simultaneously, doubling is not possible.

The only gender-neutral role is Riley, originally envisioned as a girl but easily performed as a boy instead. The name need not change, and Janet must simply refer to Riley as her “grandson.”

COSTUMING

Characters are dressed for New England winter: sweaters, vests, flannel, etc. Everyone except Luke and Bethany wears a coat at some point, plus other winter gear like scarfs, gloves, and the like.

In general, the ladies dress simply and sensibly. In Scenes One, Three, and Five, Bethany has an apron with pockets. Cynthia, Janet, and Maria, being older than the others, wear more dated outfits. Heather and Riley dress casually. In contrast, Vera looks stylish, though in Scene Five she’s forgotten that she has curlers in her hair, and Joy wears fashionable little girls’ clothes.

The men look comfortable but classy. Luke’s and Glen’s clothes are nice casual. Oscar wears a professorial suit. Nick looks the most laidback, in jeans and a plaid flannel shirt.

ONSTAGE PROPS

Scene One: Couch, large armchair/small sofa, side table, waste basket, lamp, “The Three Bees Inn & Bookshop” sign, Christmas decorations

Scene Two: Same as Scene One

Scene Three: Shelves full of books (including The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe), window seat, shop counter, iPad, small table, two chairs, volume of Shakespeare, stepping stool

Scene Four: Same as Scenes One and Two

Scene Five: Same as Scene Three, minus Shakespeare volume and stepping stool

PROPS BROUGHT ONSTAGE

Scene One: Laundry basket with unfolded bedsheets (Bethany); cellphone (Luke)

Scene Two: Small backpack (Joy); two pizza slices (Luke); suitcase, duffel bag, and large purse (Glen); small cosmetic case (Vera); potholders (Cynthia)

Scene Three: Briefcase with volume of Shakespeare inside (Oscar); cellphone (Luke); backpack, wallet with several \$20 and \$50 bills (Nick); cellphone (Bethany)

Scene Four: Mint, cellphone (Heather); shopping bag, purse, Bible, flashlight (Maria); cellphone (Luke); cellphone, flashlight (Bethany); lantern, two folding chairs (Oscar); flashlight (Nick)

Scene Five: Book bag full of Bibles, glass of water (Luke); Bible, cellphone (Bethany)

SPECIAL EFFECTS: SOUND

To create a muffled effect, Cynthia's opening line in Scene One should be spoken without her mic turned on, as if she is calling to Bethany from outside.

The unseen front door audibly opens and closes several times in Scenes One, Two, and Four ("DOOR OPEN" and "DOOR CLOSE"). The most important instance happens on page 30, where the sound of the door creaking open terrifies the ladies inside. For the sake of consistency, however, as well as to help indicate the location of the front door just offstage, the sound effect ideally should be heard every time it is suggested in the script. The effect occurs in Scene One on pages 3, 6, and 10; in Scene Two on pages 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16; and in Scene Four on pages 28, 29, 30, and 36.

Twice, a "DOORBELL" sound effect precedes the entrance of a character—on page 6 and page 13. In Scene Five, carolers are heard singing "Joy to the World" in the distance, first on pages 38-9 and later on pages 42-4.

SPECIAL EFFECTS: LIGHTING

To represent a power outage, in Scene Four all stage lights turn off simultaneously, on page 29. A few lines later, when characters begin pulling out their phones for light, dim stage lights should subtly return, just enough for the audience to discern the characters on stage. Shortly after, when Oscar enters with a lantern on page 31, the lights can grow slightly brighter, though still dim. The lights then remain at this level until page 36 in the script, when The Three Bees regains electricity and the stage lights flash back to full power.