

SYNOPSIS: A MAGICAL MISTLETOE CHRISTMAS

By Carl Burcham

Just before Christmas after landing the lead role in an L.A.-based TV series, aspiring actor **MACKENZIE "MACKIE" SNOWE** (30) receives an urgent call from sister **NOELLE** (25) back in their hometown of Mistletoe, Minnesota. Greedy local developers **DON** and **DAWN GYNCH** are conspiring to take over and demolish the Snowe family theater, *The Stardust*, to make way for an upscale ski resort. Torn between a promising acting career and her family's crisis, Mackie decides to return to Mistletoe to help mom **SUSAN** (60s) and sister Noelle save the theater. The TV studio reluctantly agrees but with this ultimatum: Mackie must return within two weeks or lose the role of a lifetime.

In Mistletoe, Mackie finds her hometown to be the same friendly, one-stoplight village of her youth, where average Americans go about their simple everyday lives -- work, play, school, and *Christmas!* Here, Mackie's a Hollywood star, a 'local kid done good.' She begins to rediscover the importance of family, community, and Christmas.

In a meet-cute involving a sled crash and a snowbank tumble, Mackie is introduced to Mistletoe's sole attorney **ETHAN HART** (30s) and his chatty daughter **HOLLY** (9). From the start, the chemistry between Mackie and Ethan is obvious though neither is prepared to acknowledge it... yet. Acting as a youthful matchmaker, Holly invites Mackie to help pick out a Christmas tree for Ethan's office. During that and subsequent scenes -- a sleigh ride, snowball fight, ice skating, the town's Christmas Tree Lighting, caroling, and more -- Mackie's and Ethan's relationship blossoms from playful flirting into something much more intimate and lasting.

Mackie confesses to Ethan that her L.A. life is not all glamor and gold. She misses her family, her hometown, and cold, snowy days, especially around the holidays. Ethan understands. He shares with Mackie that it was his deceased wife -- Holly's mother, Nicole -- who convinced him to start a private practice in tiny Mistletoe, instead of pursuing a "Big Law" career in California. It's a decision, he tells her, that he has never regretted. In that moment, Mackie begins to second-guess the decision she made to pursue acting in L.A. instead of remaining in Mistletoe.

Meanwhile, the Gynches intimidate Susan about the debt she must pay off by Christmas day. To raise funds to save the theater from the Gynches, Mackie recruits friends and neighbors to perform in a variety production called *The Save The Stardust Christmas Show*. When her former high school drama teacher becomes ill, Mackie takes over as the show's director. With Noelle belting out Christmas classics, Holly performing a phenomenal 'mash up' dance routine, and other local performers pitching in, the show's a big hit. Mackie discovers she has a talent for directing as well as acting. It appears *The Stardust* has been saved.

But the good luck soon changes to bad. The producer of Mackie's TV pilot visits Mistletoe to demand her return to L.A. in two days, or she'll be fired. And despite paying off the second mortgage from the Christmas show earnings, Susan receives another bill from the Gynches for processing and late fees totaling \$14,000. Susan has had enough. She tells Ethan to prepare paperwork for turning over the theater. Around this time, Holly finds and adopts a stray dog she names **GABE** (short for Gabriel, her guardian angel). Gabe seems magical; good things happen when he's around and he predicts when bad things are about to occur. While the Snowes and Harts pack up the theater to turn it over to the Gynches, Gabe wanders into a storage room. There he finds a mysterious box. In it is an easement document that prevents commercial development beneath *The Stardust*. It also ensures that ownership of the theater will remain in the Snowe family 'in perpetuity.' This time, the theater is truly saved.

With her work now complete, Mackie reluctantly takes a cab to the airport for her return to L.A. She's sad to be leaving and a bit confused, so she doesn't tell Ethan and Holly. But Noelle does, causing Ethan to chase Mackie through town on foot. He stops the cab, climbs in, snatches mistletoe hanging on the rearview mirror, and passionately kisses her. They finally admit their connection is real. Mackie decides to stay in Mistletoe. She loses her TV role, but without her, the show is a huge flop. With Ethan's help, Mackie converts *The Stardust* storage room into an acting studio. And on Christmas night, after declaring this "the best Christmas ever," Mackie, Ethan, Holly, Susan, and Noelle watch a dazzling performance of shooting stars as they blaze across the cold, winter sky in tiny Mistletoe, Minnesota.