

ONE STARRY NIGHT - Motion Picture (1 x 110)

Written by Matthew Canning-Wall

In a picture-perfect Suffolk village where the annual Christmas panto funds the community's lifelines, an overworked young vicar scrambles to save a failing *Cinderella* by recruiting the A-list celebrities who've moved in nearby- dragging a Broadway hometown boy, a Hollywood heartthrob, a pop diva, a rock legend and a fearsome grande dame into one chaotic rehearsal process that just might rekindle their humanity (and spark a few unexpected romances) before Christmas Eve.

ONE STARRY NIGHT is a big-hearted, laugh-out-loud Christmas ensemble comedy with the warm glow of village life- and the bite of truth underneath it. We arrive in **Hollowtrees**, a snow-dusted Suffolk postcard of twinkly lights, muddy boots and community noticeboards, where the village hall and the annual **pantomime** aren't just seasonal fun: they're the financial engine that keeps the village's small support systems alive (Christmas lunch for the lonely, help for pensioners, youth programmes, the "we still take care of our own" stuff that quietly stops people falling through the cracks).

This year's show is **Cinderella** - and it's a disaster before it's even begun. Auditions are a parade of well-meaning chaos: bad singing, baffling song choices, overconfident teenagers, and an emotional-support goat that somehow feels like the most qualified performer in the room. Holding the line is **Rev. Emma Copley**, early 30s: warm, capable, and increasingly frazzled- because in Hollowtrees the vicar doesn't just lead services; she also ends up leading *everything*. Alongside her is the panto's exhausted backbone: **Miss Pritchard**, the village music teacher with steel under the gentleness; **Sir Alastair**, the lord of the manor with a camp twinkle and a withering quip; and **Debbie Dolan**, a formidable local organiser who can weaponise common sense like a Christmas bauble in a snowball fight.

When it becomes clear the panto can't be cast- and cancelling it would ripple into real hardship- Emma has a last-ditch revelation: **look to the stars**. Hollowtrees has recently become a magnet for famous people seeking "the simple life," and Emma decides the village is allowed to cash in on that choice. One by one, she and the committee begin approaching a surreal local constellation: **Tyson Finch**, the American action-star heartthrob who wants privacy, not village-hall theatre; **Kiki Watts**, a glamorous pop diva whose charity begins and ends with "call my agent"; **Syd Blade**, an aging rock icon living in beautiful squalor who doesn't "do Christmas"; and **Dame Cecily Sharpe**, an icy stage-and-screen legend who considers "panto" beneath contempt. The recruitment becomes its own comedy set-piece- each encounter a clash of class, ego, insecurity, and the village's relentless insistence that community actually means something.

Once the "stars" are in the room, the story pivots into a joyous pressure-cooker: rehearsals in a draughty hall (and later a barn), villagers and celebrities colliding in the most British way possible- passive aggression, biscuits, and emotional breakthroughs mid-argument.

Dame Cecily brings ruthless professionalism; Kiki can't stop being iconic; Syd wants everything to sound like a real band; Tyson discovers that being charismatic on camera doesn't automatically translate to being part of an ensemble. Around them, the villagers - especially a shy, talented young woman cast as Cinderella - have to find their courage in the shadow of famous people, learning that "star power" is useless unless it's used in service of others.

Threaded through the comedy is genuine feeling: the quiet loneliness behind celebrity, the ache of aging and relevance, the way small communities survive by showing up even when it's inconvenient. And in classic Christmas-romcom fashion, love starts to creep in where nobody planned it- most notably between Emma and a returning hometown success story: **Jack Tanner**, a Broadway darling abruptly back on family turf and pulled into the panto's orbit. Jack knows how a company works; Emma knows what the village needs. What begins as practical problem-solving turns into something riskier: intimacy, belonging, and the terrifying possibility that the "life you're meant to live" might be the one you didn't think was big enough.

In the run-up to Christmas Eve, the panto becomes a microcosm of the village itself: messy, funny, stubborn, imperfect - yet capable of surprising grace. **ONE STARRY NIGHT** builds toward an event-night crescendo where performance, community, and vulnerability collide, delivering a festive crowd-pleaser with a simple thesis: sometimes the light you're chasing isn't somewhere else - it's right here, and it only works if someone has the courage to switch it on.