Airport: A Christmas Story

A One-Act Play With Original Music

by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Set in a crowded, snowed-in airport waiting area on Christmas Eve, different types of stranded passengers present their views on Christmas. There's the Cynic, who serves as our Everyman; the efficient Travel Agent; a bumbling Paramedic and super-efficient Nurse; the Davis family, whose new baby makes its appearance; and two ambassadors, one Arab and one Israeli. The miracle that occurs that night changes them all. Members of your choir can serve as additional travelers while also performing the songs.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 3 w, 1 flexible, 3 children, plus choir and offstage Deejay)

CYNIC: A guitar player would be nice, but not absolutely necessary. He will be required to learn a couple of chords on guitar, however, he's supposed to be bad at playing it, so proficiency is not required. He begins the play attired casually, but nicely, perhaps the school-teacher look. When he disappears behind the curtain, he does a quick change into grubby clothes and unkempt appearance. A five-o'clock shadow can be achieved with standard stage make-up. Cynic is good guy trying to be bad. He speaks his asides both to himself and to the audience. It is his eyes that we see the play through.

TRAVEL AGENT: She is self assured, very public relations oriented. Pattern her around an efficient tour guide type. Her "uniform" may be put together from someone's closet. A blazer (light or dark.) of a solid color with matching skirt or contrasting skirt and white blouse works nicely. An effective outfit is a navy-blue blazer, red skirt, white blouse. She needs some type of official badge on the blazer. The audience needs to see her become weary, but she always manages to exude cool confidence to her passengers.

PARAMEDIC: He or she is a bumbler; comes on like a large puppy whose feet are too large and clumsy for his body yet. He is in the process of "becoming" and conveys the idea that he may never make it. Nevertheless, he's a nice person, needs to remind the audience of a young son or nephew they know. He may be dressed in casual clothes, or have "whites" on. White pants do lend to the idea that he is a medical student. He needs a dark colored bag that can pass as a medical bag.

MRS. DAVIS: Begins the play extremely pregnant. She is cool, calm, and experienced at childbirth. She radiates joy that the time has come. It is not appropriate to act out graphic birth pangs on stage. The evidence that she is in labor comes with the breathing exercises she does. She is very relaxed. Very earth mother.

MR. DAVIS: Has few lines, but is important supporting role. He too is calm, times contractions, is solicitous of his wife's welfare. Only evidence that he may be tense comes when he explodes at paramedic.

NURSE: Drill sergeant personality. Bossy, but likable. This role could be played by a man with a few minor script changes. Nurse is dressed in civilian clothing, knitting, but aware of what goes on during opening scene.

CHILD #1: Child of about 8-10. Male or female. When casting is complete, give the character a name to identify with and be sure the name is printed on the program. It sounds more important than a number. This character is the eldest and therefore a bit more mature or his/ her age. Carries an air of bossiness, neatly dressed in either casual clothing or Sunday clothes.

CHILD #2: Child of about 6-8. Male or female. (See note on Child 1.) This character is a Dennis the Menace type. Regardless of gender, child is very boyish. Whether clothing chosen is casual or Sunday best, this child's clothes are sloppy and disheveled. Regardless of dress, child wears baseball cap.

MISSY: Child of about 4-6, female. Missy must give performance without many words. She is shy, withdrawn, except when her lamb is taken. She must command a great deal of audience sympathy, so waif-like appearance is essential. Dressed comparable to siblings, but carries a shaggy, ragged stuffed lamb tightly clutched to her body.

PRINCE RASHID: Arab ambassador. Should be very imposing figure. Dressed in business suit and Arab headdress. His attitude conveys a bit of royal snobbery. He is very proper in manner, dress, and speech.

ABRAHAM MOSTEL: Israeli ambassador. He can be small and feisty to complement the Prince Rashid character, although it's not necessary. He speaks with heavy Yiddish accent. He may be orthodox Jew and dress the part in dark suit, flat brim hat, curls and beard, or he may be attired in business suit.

DEEJAY VOICE: Offstage, never seen.

CHOIR/PASSENGERS: There are several small roles for members of the choir. Choir members should be dressed in traveling clothes, the younger group probably will wear jeans and casual clothes. Not all choir members should be dressed as part of the Central Valley Choir. Adult members of the choir may be dressed as other travelers. They may wish to bring small children to the last rehearsals to lend more sense of reality. Blocking for a group this large, and planning background activity will be up to the director, but choir members may wish to develop and convey attitudes to audience. For example, boy and girl spend much of the time draped all over one another to the complete disapproval of an older lady who begins to scold in pantomime. When choir members leave for bus, boy and girl ad lib "Wait for us" and run off stage. Older lady ad libs "Oh no, not without a chaperone" and follows. All are friends in final scene.

STAGE SETS

This play use standard foyer furniture. There is a couch stage right, an easy chair on either side of an end table center stage, and two chairs (easy chairs.) side by side SL. At the back of the stage and to the left, is another couch with low table in front of it. Folding or stacking chairs make up the rest of the furnishings placed at directors' discretion, but avoiding the rank upon rank effect. Go for small group settings. There are all kind of hand luggage and a few sleeping bags around. Effect should be one of crowded, uncomfortable conditions, but not so much that no one can move without great difficulty. Travel posters (obtainable through various airlines) are mounted on cardboard and hung on the curtains. Concession to the season may be some tired-looking tinsel garland looped over the posters.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play is adaptable to different Christmas music. Choirs vary in their abilities, so choose music yours can handle confidently. A few song suggestions are included. Two original songs, “Alleluia!” and “Listen and Learn,” are available from the publisher.

Blocking has not been strictly outlined in the script as cast size and stage area varies. Don't forget to use your choir members as appropriate scenery too, and remember not to have them sitting or standing woodenly between choir numbers. Several choir members should have a small gift of some kind to present the new baby in the final scene. One woman, knitting a shawl throughout the play, presents the finished article. Let choir members use their imagination. Choirs may wish to rehearse separately from speaking parts during early rehearsals. All principles should also attend some choir practices and be familiar with the music. Music should be memorized.

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