

BETHLEHEM ALLEY

By
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STORY

If you liked "Angel on a Stepladder," or "Dust on the Christmas Star," this play is for you. The Christmas manager scene that James Bradbury put up for his children's pleasure five years before has become a neighborhood tradition. It is the WHOLE of Christmas to young Oliver. This year, family conflicts and a death on the street have quenched the Christmas spirit. Father believes it best to forget the usual tableaux. But when Ollie makes a sign to nail across the empty shed, the people on the street realize that they all need to get closer to the "grown-up" Christ who came to "help in time of need." Realistic and touching with a message that is needed to make Christmas joyful.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2m, 4w, 1b, 1g)

JAMES BRADBURY: A typical suburbanite businessman and husband. Head of a Christian family.

RUTH BRADBURY: His good-natured wife.

OLIVER: The nine-year-old son who is about to lose Christmas.

JUDY: His eleven-year-old sister who thinks "it's a dirty deal."

ANGIE KORMAK: A close neighbor who is a possessive mother.

LUKE KORMAK: Angie's newly-married son who is at his wit's end.

ELLEN KORMAK: The young, unhappy wife who loves Luke, but who has not yet met or learned to love the Savior. Dresses in a rather "far-out" popular style.

THELMA NOWELLS: A grieving Christian widow. Dresses very fashionably.

(ALL ACTORS wear ordinary everyday winter clothing except for manger tableaux where Biblical costumes are necessary for James and Ruth Bradbury.)

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TIME: Day before Christmas.

PLACE: The Bradbury home on a short dead-end street.

PLAYING TIME: One hour.

SYNOPSIS

SCENES: All in living room at three different times of day.

ACT I: Mid-afternoon.

ACT II: Early Evening.

ACT III: Almost Midnight.

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STAGE SETTING

An ordinary living room arranged according to the facilities of the stage. There should be two exits if possible. The furnishings include a few occasional chairs and small tables, coat tree, hassock, davenport and Christmas tree. If size of stage permits, there could be a real or artificial fireplace, table lamps, floor lamps, etc. The room should be very Christmasy. The cozy, easy family living atmosphere of the room adds much to the feeling of the play. The room does not have a precise finished look. There are still a number of things to be done before the family is ready for Christmas.

LIGHTING

Ordinary lighting that can be dimmed at the appropriate spots. The tableaux scene should be spotlighted.

SOUNDS

Church bells and recorded music and a taped reading of the Christmas story as told in Luke 2: 1-14. Music can be selected from Christmas records. Music used in original production is listed in body of play.

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PROPERTIES

(Other than usual living room furnishings and Christmas decorations.)

Two doll blankets (one old, one newer)
Bags of candy
Package of nuts
Loose tree decorations
Tiered candy dish
Box of raisins
Nut bowl
Three cider mugs
Folded napkins (large enough to be tied about the children's heads)
Bible
Tray for mugs
Pair of scissors
Large square of cardboard
2 pieces of cardboard marked HE GROWED UP SO HE
COULD HELP PEOPLE
Foil plate of cupcakes wrapped
Biblical costumes for a man and a woman, very colorful
Manger and straw
Doll baby

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ACT I

(AT RISE: The living room is empty. A few Biblical costumes lie across the davenport. A few bags of candy are on the small table. The lights on the Christmas tree are not lighted. The tree still needs a few decorations put on it. The bulbs, etc. are lying on another table near the tree. MUSIC seems to be coming from a small radio on table. [Few bars of lively "SILVER BELLS"] MUSIC began before CURTAIN went up. Lowsers as children are heard. OLLIE and JUDY are heard chasing each other. Judy is yelling at him and Ollie dashes on-stage. He is carrying a small doll blanket which Judy has evidently been trying to get away from him. Their voices carry over the sound of the MUSIC. Ollie is dressed in winter clothes with an unzipped jacket. Judy is in slacks. They chase each other about stage as they talk. Ollie manages to stay out of her way.)

JUDY: Oliver Bradbury, you give me that blanket! *(Calls, looking toward kitchen.)* Mother!

OLLIE: *(As HE dodges around furniture.)* I've gotta have it. Mom said I could ... for the manger. *(Steps onto davenport or chair and holds it out of reach.)*

JUDY: Not my very best doll blanket. MOTHER!

OLLIE: Don't you want Jesus to have a decent blanket? Think of the nice things the wise men brought Him.

JUDY: *(Exasperated.)* Your old manger out there in the yard is nothing but make-believe.

OLLIE: That's what you think. At midnight everything becomes REAL.

JUDY: You're Christmas crazy. *(Frantically, toward kitchen.)* MOTHER!

(MRS. B. comes on-stage from kitchen. She wears an apron and carries a box of raisins.)

MRS. B.: Judy, stop your screeching. *(SHE turns off radio.)* I heard you the first time but I was putting the cake in the oven. Ollie, get off that ...

End of Freeview

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