

Christmas at Gumption Gulch

By Brian Sylvia

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Rebecca, who convinced me to take the characters I developed for a Kids Camp series of sketches and turn them into a Christmas production. Thanks for constantly encouraging me to create. To my amazingly gifted daughter Annaliese, who took the stage (as Annabelle) for the first time in one of my original scripts. You made me proud! Thanks to the inCharacter School of Ministry cast, who brought this to life and who believe in the power of creativity in ministry. Oh, and thanks for the fun show logo, JP Marker. And to Jesus, the reason for this wonderful season. Thank You, Lord, for your message of hope and salvation.

STORY OF THE PLAY

No one loves Christmas more than Chrysanthemum Parker. She lives on a ranch with her grandma (Gertie). As Grandma Gertie and Chrysanthemum are discussing plans for a possible Christmas celebration show in Gumption Gulch, Sheriff Gideon Gumption arrives to say that Jedediah Thornsides (an escaped criminal from nearby Bitterbranch) may be in the area. Jedediah actually is in the area, with his partner-in-crime, Belinda Burnheart. They concoct a sinister plan to swindle the town away from its current deed holder, Sheriff Gumption. Through a series of blunders, Sheriff Gumption falls for their scheme and the town now belongs to the villains. When Roscoe (Grandma Gertie's great nephew) and Maisie Clearwater, who is clearly pregnant, arrive looking for a place to stay for the night, Sarsaparilla Sam directs them to the root cellar of his Root Beer Emporium and Inn (the only available space in town). When Jedediah and Belinda appear, they are just in time for the birth of Cousin Roscoe and Maisie's little miracle, Jack (which means "God is merciful"). Suddenly the townspeople are reminded of the story of Christ's birth. Watching their tender moments, Jedediah destroys the contract and everyone agrees to celebrate Christmas the way it should be - with the Christ child as the focal point.

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ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE

December 7-9, 2016 — inCharacter School of Ministry

Sheriff Gideon Gumption.....	JP Marker
Chrysanthemum Parker	Nicole Miller
Grandma Gertie	Mikayla Fontenot
Sarsaparilla Sam.....	Ethan Russ
Tumbleweed	Sean Brannon
Tillie	Christy Tice
Habakkuk Hound	Bobby Putt
Jedediah Thorside	Hunter Peacock
Belinda Burnside.....	Anna Riley
Annabelle.....	Annaliese Sylvia
Roscoe Clearwater	Jared Miller
Maisie Clearwater	Linleigh Adams

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES / SONGS

Scene 1: A few days before Christmas

Song 1: *Jingle Bells (Chrysanthemum and audience)*

Song 2: *(Chrysanthemum dances)*

Scene 2: Later that same day

Song 3: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (Tumbleweed and Tillie)*

Scene 3: The next morning.

Scene 4: That afternoon.

Song 4: *Bluegrass music*

Scene 5: Same afternoon.

Song 5: *Amazing Grace (Jedediah and Belinda)*

Intermission

Scene 1: December 23rd.

Song 6: *Go Tell It on the Mountain (Tumbleweed and Tillie)*

Scene 2: Later that day

Scene 3: December 24th.

Song 7: *Silent Night (Tumbleweed and Tillie)*

Song 8: *O Holy Night (Chrysanthemum)*

Scene 4: Sunset on Christmas Eve.

Song 9: *O Holy Night (Chrysanthemum and cast)*

Song 10: *Square Dance number (Dance)*

Song 11: *Go Tell It on the Mountain (ALL)*

SETTING

Grandma Gertie's ranch. It is a simple exterior set with typical farm items and a fence.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 5 w, 2 flexible, 1 girl and extras)

SHERIFF GIDEON GUMPTION: (m) Handsome, likable sheriff of Gumption Gulch. Sweet on Chrysanthemum Parker.

CHRYSANTHEMUM PARKER: (f) Young heroine of the story; Christmas is her favorite time of year.

GRANDMA GERTIE: (f) Chrysanthemum's grandma; ranch owner; had a crush on Sheriff Gumption's Grandpappy; blind without her spectacles.

HABAKKUK HOUND: (flexible) A dog that talks to Chrysanthemum but mimes information to everyone else. *(Could be played by a female - just change the name to Hannah Hound.)*

JEDEDIAH THORNSIDE: (m) The villain; a swindler trying to get the deed to the entire town from Sheriff Gumption.

BELINDA BURNHEART: (f) Sidekick of Thornsides.

ROSCOE CLEARWATER: (m) Grandma Gertie's nephew who just happened to be in the area and popped in for a visit.

MAISIE CLEARWATER: (f) Roscoe's pregnant bride.

SARSAPARILLA SAM: (flexible) Owner of the town's Root Beer Emporium and Hotel. An older gentleman with 'selective listening' disorder. *(Could be played by a female - just change the name to Sarsaparilla Sam as in "Samantha".)*

TUMBLEWEED: (m) A traveling entertainer. *(Provides a break between certain scenes.)*

TILLIE: (f) Tumbleweed's traveling entertainer friend who sings with him.

ANNABELLE: A little girl from the town.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Townspeople, as needed. May assign lines to other characters.

SIGN HOLDERS: Holding up signs saying things like "Applaud" and "Boo." *(Can also use a video projector to project the 'sign' onto a screen.)*

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on the ranch. TUMBLEWEED enters through the audience with a washboard, accompanied by TILLIE. Tumbleweed has a totally crazy hairdo.)

TUMBLEWEED: I'll tell ya, Tillie, seems like Thanksgiving was just yesterday.

TILLIE: It sure does, Tumbleweed.

TUMBLEWEED: Remember the turkey and dressing and cranberry jam?

TILLIE: I sure do, Tumbleweed.

TUMBLEWEED: Now it's already Christmas time. Can you believe it?

TILLIE: I sure can't, Tumbleweed.

(HABAKKUK HOUND enters.)

TUMBLEWEED: And nobody seems to be here at the Parker Ranch right now. *(Notices HABAKKUK.)* Well, except for their hound dog. Guess maybe we'd better mosey along and see if Grandma Gertie and Chrysanthemum are in town.

TILLIE: We sure should, Tumbleweed.

TUMBLEWEED: I just love how you converse so deeply with me, Tillie.

TILLIE: Me too, Tumbleweed.

(THEY exit. CHRYSANTHEMUM enters, unaware that her dog, HABAKKUK HOUND, is already on stage.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Looks around the yard while talking to herself.)* Yep, the Parker Ranch looks the same as it has my whole life. Oh my, I'm talking to myself now. I guess maybe cuz I'm bored out of my gourd. All I do day in and day out is work on this ranch. *(Notices HABAKKUK on the other end of stage.)* Oh, hi there, Habakkuk, I didn't see you there.

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(HABAKKUK steps toward CHRYSANTHEMUM.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Cont'd.)* Guess I wasn't talking to myself after all! *(Sighs.)* It's nearly Christmas time, Habakkuk, and Grandma Gertie still ain't wantin' me to put up any decorations. Guess all I'd need to do is steal her eye glasses. Cuz you know that Grandma Gertie, if she takes her glasses off, why she's blinder than a possum at noon time in July.

(THEY chuckle.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Cont'd.)* Y'know, Habakkuk, that Christmas is my favorite time of year. I know Grandma Gertie ain't gonna want to hear this, but I really want to do a Christmas production this year. Cuz, you know how much I like singin' and dancin', *(Spins around.)* and, well, Christmas too.

(HABAKKUK nods.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Cont'd. Looks around.)* And Habakkuk, I still got a dream to direct my very own production for the holidays.

(HABAKKUK gasps.)

CHRYSANTHEMUM: *(Cont'd.)* Why, it'd be an excitin' Christmas production right here in Gumption Gulch. But if I do it this year, there's not much time left to rehearse. Maybe you can help me, Habakkuk. Let's sing a Christmas song right now. How about my favorite one? *(Looks all around.)* I know that you and me are the only ones that know you can talk to me. But dear, sweet Grandma Gertie couldn't handle that. She'd think I was plum crazy!

(HABAKKUK winks at her.)

End of Freeview

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