

HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS RUNAWAY

By Alberta Hawse

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-2-

STORY

Another Christmas Eve at Holly Day's Inn! New customers including two young runaways, one who is popping pills; as well as old customers including the parents who almost split up last year, are back at the Inn. Holly Day's Inn is not a fancy place but as the characters find out, a place filled with love and hope.

STAGE SETTING

This can be done very simply, or as elaborately as stage carpenters can make it. At USR there is a long counter or high bar. At least two or three stools are in front of the counter. Behind the counter Holly has shelves or a low table to hold supplies. There are two exits, one to outside (USL) and one to kitchen (USR). At DSR, there is a small restaurant type table with three chairs, one with its back toward the counter, and one each on the SR and SL sides of the table. These should be light-weight, open-backed chairs that won't cut off any of the view of the action. At DSL, opposite the table, there is a small booth-like seating area. Benches can be upholstered and set against a background of panelled walls. The booth is open toward the audience. Behind the booth there is standing space with a coat rack. If panelled flats are used to cut off view of the exits, this portion of wall could have coat hooks on it. If possible there should be a big "window" at center rear with cafe curtains half way up. The letters for Holly Day's Inn could be put on so the audience reads them backwards. There is an open/closed sign in the window. Drop lights can be used over the tables. The shop is decorated for Christmas. As a whole, Holly Day's Inn gives the impression of warm friendliness and informality. Appropriate handwritten signs are on the walls with prices for hamburgers, hot dogs, chili, coffee and doughnuts, etc.

HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS RUNAWAY

-3-

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 4 w, 2 teen b, 3 teen g, 1 g, extras)

HOLLISTER DAY: A good-natured proprietor of small hamburger shop at Crossroad Corners.

MAMIE: His understanding and likable wife. These two personify the spirit of Christian love.

BRENDA: A troubled teen about 18, emotional, likable.

***CHUCK:** Her not-so-likable boyfriend with a drug habit.

***LINDA:** A teen girl about 14 years old.

JODY: An adorable girl 8 to 10 years old.

LESLIE BROWN: A humorous hypochondriac, bored with his retirement.

***DELPHIE:** His exasperated wife with dreams of her own.

***MARY:** Teenager in Biblical costume.

***JOSEPH:** Teenager in Biblical costume.

***SHIRLEY:** Linda and Jody's mother. Pretty, career woman.

***JACK:** Her nice-looking husband.

JERRY: Young garage mechanic, down-to-earth and likable.

MR. THATCHER: Brenda's father. A trim executive type.

***LUCY:** Brenda's aunt. Nice-looking woman in mid-forties.

CAROLERS: Can be a flexible group, on or off-stage.

*Denotes characters that are only in one act.

NOTE: Although this play uses a large number of people, it is very easy to do since several are in one act only and the play can be rehearsed in segments.

SYNOPSIS

TIME: Late afternoon the day before Christmas.

PLACE: Holly Day's Inn, a small hamburger joint.

PLAYING TIME: About 60 or 70 minutes.

HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS RUNAWAY

-4-

COSTUMES

Except for Biblical characters, all wear modern winter clothing.

LIGHTING

Ordinary bright lighting. A spot should be used on the tableau with Mary and Joseph.

SOUND EFFECTS

Ring of telephone which is on wall behind counter, or on the end of the counter. The outside door should have a bell that jangles as it opens and closes. A very short musical break could be used between acts and as the play opens. Suggested music would be those numbers mentioned in the play: "Joy to the World" and "The Birthday of a King." Carolers may use any number or numbers as director desires.

PROPS

HOLLY'S COUNTER: Coffee pot, large tray, chocolate mug, water pitcher and glass, towel, white short order cook apron, napkin holder with napkins, coffee cups and saucers, spoons, cream pitcher, small box each of aspirin and cough drops.

TABLES: Small tablecloths to match cafe curtains (use double-sided tape to keep them anchored), salt and pepper shakers, sugar bowls, Christmas candles (optional).

OTHER PROPS: Empty pie tin for Jerry; small baby doll wrapped in blanket for Mary; staff for Joseph; small suitcase, extra jacket, purse for Brenda; several Christmas packages for Jody including one containing a frilly Christmas apron; old sweater on Holly's coat rack; boxes of pills, etc. for Les; bottles of capsules or pills for Chuck; handful of loose change for Chuck and Les.

HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS RUNAWAY

-5-

ACT I

(AT RISE: HOLLY is not visible but can be heard singing "Silent Night" with spirit. DOORBELL jingles. BRENDA and CHUCK enter. Singing fades, Holly is slow in appearing.)

CHUCK: *(Looks around with evident disdain)* Well, Brenda, this isn't exactly what I had in mind for our first stop. *(Peels off gloves and is ill-humored)*

BRENDA: *(Stamps her feet and rubs HER hands)* Who cares, Chuck? It's better than staying over at that garage while the car is being fixed.

CHUCK: *(Slaps gloves on counter)* Hey, anybody here? Come on, man, we know you're out there somewhere. *(To BRENDA)* Talk about a two-bit place!

BRENDA: Chuck! *(Puts her finger to HER lips)*

HOLLY: *(From off stage kitchen)* Make yourself at home. Be with you in a second.

CHUCK: *(Perching on stool)* My car would have to conk out at the back door to nowhere. You have any idea where we are?

BRENDA: *(Walking around and hugging HERSELF to get warm)* A place called Crossroad Corners, I think. Dad and I have been through here.

CHUCK: *(Looking around)* Two tables if you count the booth. Must be a real riot here at lunch time.

BRENDA: How long will it take to fix the car?

CHUCK: I don't know. Can't be anything too serious. Maybe the heater fan or the thermostat. What did he say his name was?

BRENDA: Jerry. *(Sits at table)* Life is funny. The car was boiling and I was freezing.

CHUCK: *(Reaches into pocket and pulls out small bottle of capsules or pills. Dumps one into HIS hand and hands it toward BRENDA)* Here, swallow it. Guaranteed to make you think you're on the beach at Lauderdale.

BRENDA: *(Refusing it rather shortly)* I've told you and told you I am not taking any of your...your pills.

HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS RUNAWAY

-6-

CHUCK: Give it a whirl. You've been lower than a snake's belly ever since you ran off from your lovin' pappy.

BRENDA: Leave my father out of this.

CHUCK: Anything you say. *(Considers the pill and then takes it HIMSELF)*

BRENDA: *(Instantly concerned)* You told me you wouldn't take any more of those while we're traveling.

CHUCK: I have a short memory.

BRENDA: Keep on and you won't have any memory at all.

CHUCK: Oh, lay off. *(Leans over counter and yells)* You in there...you forget you got customers? *(To BRENDA)* Probably stuck in his fruit jello.

(HOLLY enters wearing his restaurant apron, wiping his hands on a towel.)

HOLLY: Sorry to make you wait. Had something I had to finish.

CHUCK: I'm relieved. I thought you'd dropped dead. How about some coffee?

HOLLY: Easy enough.

CHUCK: Make it hot and fresh.

HOLLY: Just made a new pot. *(Looks at BRENDA who is hugging herself)* You cold?

BRENDA: Our car didn't have any heat. We left it at the garage.

HOLLY: If Jerry's there he'll have it fixed for you in no time.

CHUCK: So he said. *(Sounds doubtful)*

HOLLY: *(Setting out sugar and cream, to BRENDA)* You want coffee, too?

BRENDA: Yes, please.

CHUCK: Make mine black...and hot!

(HOLLY pours two cups. Hands one to CHUCK and takes BRENDA'S to the table. Hands her the cream and sugar. Lays out napkins and spoons.)

End of Freeview

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