

# The Old Shoemaker's Christmas

Dramatized by Chris Danyluk  
*From the story by Leo Tolstoy*

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my husband Bill and my sister Kathy, whose belief in me never ceases to make me wonder; and to Dwayne, Lynette, Lisa, Kaeli, Darrell and Steve, whose giftedness and enthusiasm made the first production possible; and to David Ramsey, the kindest "old" Papa Panovich you can imagine.*

*The Playwright, Chris Danyluk*

## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Christmas Eve has come, but the old Russian shoemaker, Papa Panovich, is sad and alone. When he begins to read the story of the very first Christmas, the treasured words take on new life as he imagines and interacts with the words of Scripture. Then Papa Panovich believes he hears Jesus speaking to him, telling him that He will visit him tomorrow. All the next day while looking longingly for Jesus, Papa Panovich stops to help so many – providing a warm drink for Ivan, the old street sweeper; encouraging a struggling widow; keeping a gang of young pickpockets out of trouble; and finally giving a precious pair of shoes to a young mother's child. In the end Papa learns a timeless lesson. In this beautiful version designed to include children, care was taken to weave the Scriptural account of Christmas into the original story.

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(Large, flexible cast. Minimum with doubling:  
8 m, 4 w, 1 flexible,  
4 children, 1 toddler, extras.)*

**NARRATOR**

PAPA PANOVICH: A kindly old shoemaker.

**VILLAGERS**

WIDOW: A friend and neighbor to Papa Panovich.

MARYA, LYDIA, OLGA and KATYA: Widow's four daughters.

GROWN-UP VISITOR: Former town resident.

VILLAGE WOMAN #1 and CHILD #1

ELDERLY VILLAGE WOMAN and CHILD #2

POOR VILLAGE MAN: Customer who can't pay Papa Panovich.

VILLAGE WOMAN #2 and family

VILLAGE WOMAN #3 and family

**NATIVITY**

GABRIEL

MARY

JOSEPH

SHEPHERDS #1, #2, #3, #4

MAGI #1, #2, #3

HEROD'S AIDE

KING HEROD

JEWISH PRIESTS #1, #2

VOICE (of Jesus)

**THOSE HELPED BY PAPA PANOVICH**

GANG OF FOUR URCHINS: Young rascals, unwanted orphans.

IVAN: A coarse old road sweeper, poor and rejected by his peers.

BUTCHER: Blustering, angry shopkeeper.

MRS. PACHINSKI: An elderly woman, chronic complainer.

BAKER: Angry shopkeeper.

SERGEI DEMOSKOFF: Self-important businessman.

YOUNG MOTHER: Poor, with a small toddler.

TODDLER: Non-speaking role for boy or girl.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS: Angels, villagers (adults and children),  
additional shepherds, servants for Herod and for Magi.

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**SUGGESTIONS FOR DOUBLING**

**Male roles:**

Grown-up Visitor / Poor Customer / Herod's aide  
Gabriel / Priest #1  
Joseph / Priest #2  
Shepherd #1 / Ivan  
Shepherd #2 / Butcher  
Shepherd #3 / Baker  
Shepherd #4 / Herod / Sergei Demoskoff

**Female roles:**

Widow / Village Woman #2  
Village Woman #1 / Elderly Village Woman  
Village Woman #3 / Mrs. Pachinski  
Mary / Young Mother

**Magi roles** may be doubled by the Village Women or the Shepherds. If doubled by the latter, the Magi robes should be under the shepherd robes for an easier, faster costume change.

**Children's roles:**

Child #1 & #2 / Widow's 4 children / 4 Street Urchins.  
(Four children can play all the children's parts, except for the Toddler. The play is written for boys to play the Street Urchins and girls to play the Widow's Daughters, but the roles are interchangeable.)

**Note:** *"Panovich" is a Russian name derived from the Polish word "pan," meaning "lord." Panovich, like other Russian names derived from "pan," means "belonging to the Lord."*

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**SETTING**

The play is set on Christmas Eve in Russia in 1900. The scene is an old Russian village, with a series of houses and shops. Papa Panovich's shop should be at the far right-hand end of the village, while a small barn that will serve as the stable for the nativity scene is at the opposite side (stage left). Papa Panovich's shop should be equipped with a bed, chair, shelves, table, cast-iron stove, and an assortment of tools and shoes. Throughout the script, the direction of the entrances and exits, as well as the exact positioning of the shepherds, the angels, Herod, the Magi, and the Russian villagers are at the discretion of the director. This is to accommodate various sizes and shapes of stages and auditoriums.

**PROPS**

Covered dish  
Firewood and sticks (bundles)  
Boots  
Bible  
Soup pot  
Stool  
Manger  
Baby doll  
Quilt  
(2) Coffee cups  
Coffee pot  
Throne  
Gifts (gold, incense, myrrh)  
Shoebox (small, dusty)  
Shoes (children's pair)  
Spectacles  
Wheelbarrow  
Broom  
Dust pan  
Buckets  
String of sausages  
Wallet  
(2) Loaves of bread (baguettes)  
Piece of bread  
Bowl  
Spoon

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**Actor's Rehearsal Notes**

## **End of Freeview**

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