

TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

By Rachel Cloer Lukhard

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I love Christmas; the excitement of the season only increases as the years pass. I love the music, the decorations, the memories, the giving, the receiving. I love the fantasies ... Santa, Rudolph, the Christmas tree ... but most of all, I love the Spirit of Love that is Christmas. I wouldn't want to miss one moment of it.

TIME FOR CHRISTMAS is the story of a woman of Bethlehem, who was so caught up in the activities of the day that she missed the very first Christmas. It is also the story of some people of our own time who almost missed Christmas for the same reason.

DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to my mother, Flora Jean Cloer, who taught me the real meaning of Christmas, and who always encouraged me to write.

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CAST

Scenes 1 and 3

(In order of appearance)

(At the store)

ABATHA(Abb'-a-tha): Older, anachronistic figure; Biblical dress

HAZEL & GEORGE: Older shoppers

BARBARA: Young teenager

JENNY: Another

CHRISSY: Another

SHOPPERS: Any number desired

CAROLERS: Any number, any age

JIM & SARAH: Older shoppers

(At the nativity)

SHEPHERDS: 3 or 4, Biblical dress

THREE WISE MEN: Biblical dress

MARY: Biblical dress

JOSEPH (2nd): Biblical dress

AUNT BETTY: Elderly lady, confined to wheelchair

BARBARA'S PARENTS: Appear with daughter in last scene; non-speaking

CHRISSY'S PARENTS: Also non-speaking.

JENNY'S PARENTS: Also non-speaking

NARRATOR: Final scene; choir robe

CAST

Scene 2

(At the inn in Bethlehem)

YOUNGER ABATHA: Woman of Bethlehem

EPHRAIM (Efiree-um): Innkeeper; husband of Abatha

JONAS: Teenage son of Abatha and Ephraim

JOSEPH (1st): Seeking room at inn

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PERFORMANCE TIME

With music, about one hour.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Mid-day Christmas Eve, contemporary times, on a store-lined street (*one is a small toy store.*)

Scene 2: In Bethlehem at an inn, the night before Jesus was born.

Scene 3: Contemporary times; Christmas Eve service at a church's outdoor nativity scene.

SETTING

Can be as simple or as elaborate as your stage accommodates.

Scene 1: The shop windows are decorated for Christmas. The toy store has a train set up among all the other toys and decorations. A street sign DR or DL will add to realism.

Scene 2: The inside of the Inn should be kept simple ... a door leading outside is needed for Joseph to enter. A window is beside the door. A doorway opposite it leads to the rest of the inn.

Scene 3: Artificial turf in front of the nativity scene and perhaps an artificial shrub or potted plants to give an outdoor effect.

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PROPS

Shopping bags and packages for shoppers; receipts and lantern for Ephraim; ring for Barbara; packaged train set for Sarah.

MUSIC

The music is used to give time for scene changes. It can be lengthened or cut as needed. Suggested songs include "Go, Tell It on the Mountain," "Joy to the World," "Star of the East," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "What Child Is This?", "Away in a Manger," "Silent Night, Holy Night," "O Come, All Ye Faithful," and "O Holy Night."

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: An anachronistic figure in Biblical garb enters in front of a contemporary toy store. It is ABATHA, a woman of Bethlehem from the time of Christ's birth. She looks quietly around her, and as voices are heard off stage, she steps aside where she is unseen by the shoppers. Enter - 2 or 3 WOMEN chatting about their shopping.)

1st SHOPPER: My feet are killing me. Why do I always wait until the last minute to shop? I always do this!

2nd SHOPPER: I know what you mean. Milly has had her gifts all wrapped for weeks. I wish, just once, I would get ready for Christmas early.

3rd SHOPPER: Not me! I love the excitement of last minute shopping, and if we wait another hour or so, they'll start cutting prices.

1st SHOPPER: Well, let them slash away. I'm going home, myself.

(THEY exit. Enter HAZEL and GEORGE, an older couple. He is laden down with packages. She carries a large shopping bag and tugs at his arm.)

HAZEL: George, will you please come on? I've got a dozen more gifts to buy and I want to go to that church service tonight.

GEORGE: Hump! I didn't know we even knew this many people. Since when are you supposed to give everyone you know a gift? *(HE drops package; SHE picks it up and pulls him into shop door.)*

HAZEL: Stop complaining and come on in here. They have a sale on men's ties.

(Other SHOPPERS stroll by ... look in shop windows and chat about Christmas. They enter shops or pass off stage,

End of Freeview

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