

The Twelve Plays of Christmas

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

These 12 Yuletide sketches will provide an evening of laughter while never losing sight of the holiness of the season. With flexible casting and only a chair or bench for scenery, they're just right for any stage and ideal for dinner theatre. On this visit to Christmastown you'll meet some passersby in a park who tell you what Christmas really means to them and some strangers waiting for a bus who give gifts to each other, inspired by a little girl's doll. Find out what the wise men were thinking, at least when they are portrayed by three 10-year-olds in their church pageant. And your audiences will love hearing Prof. Hollie lecture on "Fruitcake Etiquette," or listening to the Christmastown singers, all fighting colds, perform "And a Partridge in Ah-Choo!" Directors can easily add carols or other variety acts, if desired.

Production Notes

As indicated above, this show is very easy to produce, calling for only pieces of scenery rather than a full set, although a full holiday atmosphere is preferred. Each scene needs only a rocking chair or maybe a bench or chair, making the show very practical for travel.

The following simple props are needed.

Sc. 1: Newspaper.

Sc. 2: Songbooks, pitch pipe.

Sc. 3: Dish towel, wash cloth, hard hat, gift bag.

Sc. 4: Letter.

Sc. 5: Nicely-wrapped package.

Sc. 6: Camera on a tripod.

Sc. 7: Rag doll, briefcase, button, brooch in gift box, lace tablecloth, gift card.

Sc. 8: Quilt, needle, thread, flannel shirt with square missing.

Sc. 9: Notes, cotton, wrapped sandwich.

Sc. 10: Menu, wad of dollar bills, waiter's pad/pencil.

Sc. 11: Wise men costumes and gifts.

Sc. 12: No props needed.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

(Narrator opens all the scenes.)

Scene 1: "What's Christmas Mean to You?"
(1 man, 2 women, 1 girl)

Scene 2: "And a Partridge in Ah-Choo!"
(Maestro, singers)

Scene 3: "The Man From Bethlehem"
(2 men, 1 woman, 1 girl)

Scene 4: "Cowboys in the Manger"
(3 men, 1 girl)

Scene 5: "Christmas Presents of Mind"
(1 man, 1 woman)

Scene 6: "A Yuletide Photo"
(4 men, 2 women, 1 teen girl)

Scene 7: "The Gift of Giving"
(2 men, 2 women, 1 girl)

Scene 8: "The Christmas Quilt"
(1 man, 1 woman)

Scene 9: "Fruitcake Etiquette"
(1 actor, either male or female)

Scene 10: "That Giving Spirit"
(2 men, 2 women, 2 either)

Scene 11: "Three (Young) Wise Men"
(3 kids)

Scene 12: "The (Misunderstood) Sounds of Christmas"
(2 men, 2 women, rest of cast)

CASTING is very flexible. Some roles, such as Prof. Hollie, Waiter, etc., may be played by either a man or a woman.

Scene 1
“What’s Christmas Mean to You?”

(AT RISE: While LIGHTS are still down a very soft rendition of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” begins. Slowly the LIGHTS come up to reveal the NARRATOR, reading a paper and sitting on a bench, DSL. He lowers his paper and looks out.)

NARRATOR: Oh, excuse me. I didn’t see you. *(HE rises.)*
Well, well. First allow me to welcome you to Christmastown. I have been appointed to greet you and make you all feel welcome. Merry Christmas. Oh, excuse me again. See, I wasn’t really appointed as I said before. But the thing is, here in Christmastown whoever meets a stranger is automatically appointed a goodwill ambassador for the village, so to speak. It then behooves them to makes the stranger comfortable. *(SFX: MUSIC dies down. The NARRATOR speaks confidentially.)* Actually, we don’t get too many strangers. You know what I mean. *(Indicates the audience.)* You are no stranger to Christmastown. Look around. You know the place, the people. You grew up with them, you remember them, you see them every day. You know what they’re like. And here, especially at this time of year, everyone is even more that way. *(LIGHTS come up on the whole area. MAN and a WOMAN 2 rush on, obviously hurrying somewhere.)* And you can especially see it as they go through the park here.

(Another WOMAN rushes on from the other direction and almost collides with the couple.)

WOMAN: Excuse me!

MAN: Excuse us!

WOMAN 2: Merry Christmas!

WOMAN: Thank you! And a very Merry Christmas to you as well!

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NARRATOR: (*Moves CS.*) You ever wish you could read their minds? I wonder (*Leans in to the WOMAN. The COUPLE freezes.*)

WOMAN: (*Looking out.*) What a lovely couple! Such nice manners, even when they're in such a hurry. Still they take time out to be nice. That's nice. Where on earth did she get that dress? (*SHE freezes.*)

NARRATOR: Let me try again.

(*HE moves to the COUPLE and leans in to the man. The man unfreezes.*)

MAN: Did I drain the lawn mower? I think I drained the lawn mower. I'm almost sure I drained the lawn mower. When you put up the lawn mower for the winter you always drain it. I KNOW I drained the lawn mower. (*A beat.*) Did I put antifreeze in the car? (*HE freezes.*)

NARRATOR: (*Looks out.*) One more time. (*HE leans in to WOMAN 2.*)

WOMAN 2: (*Unfreezes.*) Milk, eggs, flour, salt – wait I have salt. Milk, eggs, flour, butter – that's it butter – black olives... black? Green. Black. Green, black, green. Forget the olives. I hope he'll help me with the shopping and isn't thinking about that dumb lawn mower again. (*SHE freezes.*)

NARRATOR: Well, let's try a different tack. Let's give them something to think about. (*HE leans in to the MAN.*)

MAN: (*Unfreezes.*) I know I put antifreeze in the car, the same time I drained the lawn mower.

NARRATOR: No, no, you had your turn. I'd like to ask you all a question. (*The other two WOMEN unfreeze.*) If you have a moment.

WOMAN: Well, I need to be getting along –

WOMAN 2: I have shopping to do –

NARRATOR: It's about Christmas.

WOMAN: (*Gleefully.*) Oh, then go ahead.

WOMAN 2: By all means.

NARRATOR: And you, sir?

MAN: (*Looking out.*) Where did I put my leaf blower?

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WOMAN 2: Will you pay attention? The man wants to ask us a question.

MAN: Oh, I'm sorry, what's the question?

NARRATOR: Simply this. What does Christmas mean to you?

WOMAN: Wow!

MAN: Oh, the easy ones first, huh?

WOMAN: That is such a huge question, isn't it?

WOMAN 2: Where do you begin?

MAN: Putting up your lawn equipment.

WOMAN 2: *(Slaps HIS shoulder.)* RALPH!

MAN: What?! *(Rubs his shoulder.)*

WOMAN: The car left the garage behind, can't you?

MAN: I'm sorry! *(HE looks at the NARRATOR.)* Christmas? What's it mean?

NARRATOR: That's right. In your own words, of course.

MAN: *(Still rubbing his shoulder, HE looks at his WIFE.)*

That's not always so easy, you know.

WOMAN 2: Just tell the man.

MAN: Why don't you? *(Inspiration.)* Ah! Christmas means putting your best foot forward, being kinder to others. Such as letting your wife go first. *(HE eyes HER triumphantly and laughs quietly.)* He he he he

WOMAN 2: Think you're being cute, do you?

MAN: And you, ma'am?

WOMAN 2: Oh, me? Well, Christmas is a time for giving, for sharing with others. I don't mean just presents, I mean the true type of giving – giving of yourself. Charity for all, you know? I like to bake things. Every year I make several fruitcakes and give those away.

MAN: *(To himself.)* And she calls that charity.

WOMAN 2: What does that mean?

MAN: You have to give those away, nobody at home will touch them.

WOMAN 2: I don't know why I ever let you out of the garage.

(A little GIRL wanders out and listens to the others.)

NARRATOR: *(Moves to WOMAN.)* And you, ma'am?

WOMAN: Me?

End of Freeview

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