

The Gifts of the Ornaments

By Karen Jones

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DEDICATION

To the Glory of the God

STORY OF THE PLAY

It Christmas and once more the ornaments have been hauled out of storage and put on display. But why? That is the question that the Christmas tree ornaments are asking themselves. Why are they stuffed in boxes for months on end just to be hauled out and stuck on a prickly old tree once a year? As they argue amongst themselves and bemoan their aches and pains from being cramped up for so long, they are suddenly confronted with the characters from the crèche: an angel, a shepherd and a wise man. They've come to tell the ornaments to keep it down as they are going to wake the "baby." This leads to the unfolding of the Christmas story as the crèche characters relate the story of God's gift to mankind, the birth of His Son. As the true meaning of Christmas is finally revealed to them, the ornaments find their own unique way to honor the newborn king. An ideal one-act play for actors and audiences alike to see that under the fun, glitter and glitz of Christmas there is an everlasting present that will never lose its brilliance.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 3 w, 5 flexible)

Ornaments:

CHRISTMAS ANGEL (f): Cranky and outspoken, with bent wings and skewed halo.

SPARKLE: (flex): Timid glass star ornament afraid of being broken.

TOY SOLDIER (m): Guards the ornaments and takes his job seriously.

NUTCRACKER (m): Captain of the toy soldiers and self-appointed leader.

FRED THE SNOWMAN (m): "Average Joe" type character.

MOLLY MOPPET (f): A musical rag doll with an attitude.

CHRISTMAS BEAR (flex): Laid-back character who enjoys hibernation.

GINGERBREAD MAN (flex): Anxious newcomer to the group.

ELF (flex): Mischievous imp who likes to build things.

ROCKY (flex): Rocking horse who gets motion sickness.

Manger figurines:

GLORIA (f): Angel that encourages others to be quiet so the new baby can sleep.

SHEPHERD (m): Has come to visit the baby, but is quickly frustrated by the ornaments.

WISEMAN (m): Caught by the toy soldier while looking for the King.

Offstage:

VOICE (flex): Represents a mother or father. Can be played by Gloria, Shepherd, or Wiseman.

SETTING

"Christmas tree" with ornaments is center stage. Tree can be depicted by steps or risers. Green cloth can be hooked above the risers and pulled down each side to provide a treelike back drop. Packages are scattered on the floor around the tree. The Christmas Tree Angel is on the top step. Several steps down will be Sparkle and Molly Moppet. The Christmas Bear, Fred the Snowman and the Gingerbread Man are on the third step down with the Nutcracker, Rocking Horse, Elf and the Toy Soldier at the base of the tree.

PROPS

Cork gun
Tool belt with hammer /saw
Broom
Wind-up key
Shepherd's staff, sling and rock
Rolling platform with rockers
Wise Man's gift for the King
Cotton stuffing
Scarf
Wooden box
Wrapped presents

SOUND EFFECTS

Baby crying
Footsteps
Door closing
Rustling paper
Phone ringing
Hammer and sawing
Music box rendition of "Away in a Manger"

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(AT RISE: ORNAMENTS are frozen in place. SFX: There is a sound of footsteps leaving the room and a door shutting. After a pause, the TOY SOLDIER slowly steps from the tree with his cork rifle on his shoulder. He does a sharp left turn and marches to the left. He then does an about turn and repeats the action to the right. He returns to the tree and salutes the NUTCRACKER.)

TOY SOLDIER: All clear, sir.

NUTCRACKER: *(Returns the salute.)* Very good, private. Keep a close watch out.

TOY SOLDIER: Yes, sir. *(Salutes again and continues his patrol.)*

NUTCRACKER: Okay, everyone, the coast is clear.

(The rest of the ORNAMENTS relax and come to life.)

SPARKLE: *(Peeks around.)* Are you sure it's safe?

NUTCRACKER: Never fear, little star. You're perfectly safe with my man on guard.

MOLLY MOPPET: *(Sneezes.)* Ah...Ah...Achoo!

(MOLLY MOPPET falls off the tree and rolls to the right. The rest of the ORNAMENTS sway. The CHRISTMAS ANGEL waves her arms as if to keep her balance.)

CHRISTMAS ANGEL: Watch it, Molly. I'm not too secure up here, you know.

MOLLY MOPPET: *(Sniffs and picks herself up.)* I'm sorry. It's just they forgot to close my box securely, and you know how dusty it gets up in the attic. I've been sneezing since June.

FRED: Yes, I know, and for your information my scarf is not a handkerchief.

MOLLY MOPPET: Oh, I'm sorry. It was dark in there. I thought I had some tinsel.

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ELF: At least you had some decent company. They stuck me in the box with the Christmas lights. They kept me up for months with all that blinking. *(Chuckles.)* I got them back though. I loosened one of those bulbs and put them all out.

FRED: Oh, you didn't. You know how crazy that makes the humans.

ELF: Well, they should have been more thoughtful when they packed me up.

CHRISTMAS BEAR: Tell me about it. I got crammed in the box with the Christmas wreath and woke up with a pine cone stuck in my ear. Just look. *(Pulls the ribbon away from its ear.)* They just about tore my ear off trying to get it out.

CHRISTMAS ANGEL: Well, it must not have bothered you too much. Your snoring could be heard three boxes away.

CHRISTMAS BEAR: Hey! I can't help it if I slipped into hibernation. I'm a bear, you know. Besides, you don't know for sure it was me. It could have been Molly and her allergies.

MOLLY MOPPET: Now, wait a minute! You can't blame that horrendous racket on me. I barely slept at all.

FRED: I can vouch for that. She tossed and turned most of the year. She even tried to fluff me up to use as a pillow.

MOLLY MOPPET: Well, I couldn't get comfortable with this silly key stuck in my back.

FRED: I guess that could be annoying. But personally, I like that little tune you play.

CHRISTMAS BEAR: Me, too. Makes me want to curl up and go to sleep.

ELF: Then heaven forbid, throw that thing away.

MOLLY MOPPET: Believe me, I've tried. Unfortunately, they keep finding it. And now they've gone and tied it to me. *(Shakes wrist.)*

FRED: Aw, it can't be that bad. It's such a delicate sound.

MOLLY MOPPET: Well, you're hearing it from a distance. Remember, it comes blasting from inside of my head. By the time the tune ends I have a splitting headache.

SPARKLE: Oh, you poor thing.

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CHRISTMAS ANGEL: How about you, Rocky? How did your storage time go?

(ROCKY appears not to notice the question. He shakes his head and mane which starts him swaying on his rocker.)

MOLLY MOPPET: *(Marches over to ROCKY and bends over and pats him.)* Are you all right? You're not answering Angel.

ROCKY: *(Jumps as if startled, and then answers in a loud voice.)* What did you say? I couldn't hear you over the bells.

(The rest of the ORNAMENTS look at each other with confusion.)

ELF: What are you talking about, Rocky? There're no bells ringing.

ROCKY: Huh? What did you say?

ELF: I said there are no... Wait a minute. *(Speaks louder.)* Did you get put up with the jingle bells this year?

ROCKY: *(Nods.)* I sure did. Those humans draped them over my back so they wouldn't get tangled up, and so every time I rocked it sounded like a five-alarm fire call going off.

FRED: Then why did you rock, silly?

ROCKY: It's not like I had a choice in the matter. They put me over the kids' room and every time they jumped on their bed, ran through the hall, or slammed the door it jarred me in motion. And that, in turn, started those dang bells a'jingling.

CHRISTMAS BEAR: That's strange. I didn't hear a thing.

ELF: I wonder why.

MOLLY MOPPET: So, I take it you didn't get much sleep either?

ROCKY: Not hardly. Between those noisy bells and that constant rocking "back and forth, back and forth" *(Starts swaying.)* "up and down, up and down," "jingle, jingle," I ended up with motion sickness.

End of Freeview

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