

Christmas in Juneberry

By Andrew M. Frodahl

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DEDICATION

To my Dad, Michael Frodahl. I have many fond memories watching Andy Griffith show reruns with you Dad. Your love of classic comedy influenced my humor. Thanks for your Godly example and larger than life laugh.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Come on back to a simpler time and visit the folks at Juneberry this Christmas! Things seem peaceful at the courthouse on Christmas Eve, and Sheriff Randy Baylor thinks that is mighty fine. His Deputy, Arnie Nife, couldn't disagree more. Arnie is tired of the lack of action happening in the small town. Even locking up Curtis, the town drunk, isn't exactly cheering him up. When a few robberies start getting reported and a couple of carolers go missing while singing for the town, boring Juneberry gets real busy, real fast! Come join the citizens of Juneberry, whom you might know – Aunt Pea, Hopie, Homer Nile, Reverend Lloyd, Oober the taxi cab driver, Betty Lou, and more – for a hilarious Christmas Eve filled with small town antics, the true meaning of Christmas, and plenty of laughs!

Running time: About an hour and 15 minutes.

CAROLS

Suggested music is sung acapella. You may personalize the selections for your group.

Silent Night – lyrics by Joseph Mohr

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen – lyrics by Unknown

Hark the Herald Angels Sing – lyrics by Charles Wesley

O Come all Ye Faithful – lyrics by Unknown

Joy to the World – lyrics by Isaac Watts

CAST OF CHARACTERS

12 characters (5 w, 5 m, 2 flexible. Doubling possible.)

SHERIFF RANDY BAYLOR: *(Male)* The loveable small-town Sheriff of Juneberry. Hopie's father and Aunt Pea's nephew. Middle-aged.

DEPUTY ARNIE NIFE: *(Male)* The incompetent but loveable Deputy Sheriff of Juneberry. He is going steady with Betty Lou. Middle-aged.

AUNT PEA: *(Female)* The kind aunt who serves as a mother figure to both Randy and Hopie. 50s - 60s.

HOPIE: *(Flexible)* Randy's kid who isn't quite sure what Christmas really means. 8 - 12 yrs.

BETTY LOU: *(Female)* The new caroling leader for All Souls Church. She and Arnie are going steady but she would like to get hitched. Middle-aged.

HOMER: *(Male)* Juneberry's only gas station service attendant. He loves to sing. Middle-aged.

CURTIS: *(Male)* The town drunkard who just can't help himself. 40s - 50s.

OOBER: *(Flexible)* Homer's cousin and the only taxi cab driver in town. Middle-aged.

REVEREND LLOYD: *(Male)* Minister of Juneberry All Souls Church. Middle-aged.

ERNESTINE TROUT: *(Female)* She wishes her family visited her more at the retirement home. Her memory is fleeing. Her roommates convince her she used to be a member of their gang. 65 - 80s.

FRANCIS: *(Female)* A former thief sent to Juneberry Acres to finish her days. But she can't help but long for her crooked past. 65 - 80s.

MYRL: *(Female)* She, like Ernestine, wishes her family came to visit. She used to be part of a gang with Francis called the Magi Gang. 65 - 80s.

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SETTING

Juneberry Courthouse. A desk, two chairs cornered either stage left. A front door center stage. A window near the desk. Coat rack, a bulletin board with wanted posters on it. Upstage right is a small jail cell with one swinging bar door. Inside the cell is a small cot with pillow and blanket. A hook for the cell keys next to the cell. On the other side of the cell is a hallway leading offstage to a backroom of the office. The Courthouse can be decorated for Christmas.

Juneberry Acres. Just three chairs positioned stage right of the Juneberry Courthouse. If space or stage allows, could play in front of Apron, depending on visibility. Use the Juneberry Courthouse front door for Randy's entrance and the backroom for the closet.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Juneberry Courthouse – Christmas Eve afternoon.

Scene 2: Juneberry Acres Retirement Home – a bit later.

Scene 3: Juneberry Courthouse – Christmas Eve evening.

Scene 4: Juneberry Acres Retirement Home – Past supper time.

Scene 5: Juneberry Courthouse – Way past supper time.

Scene 6: Juneberry Courthouse – Early, early Christmas morning.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Juneberry Courthouse. Center stage is a justice of the peace desk, with two chairs. Stage right is a jail cell. Stage left is front door. Upstage right is a hallway leading to the back of the station. SHERIFF RANDY BAYLOR is sitting at the desk reading part of a newspaper, 'The Juneberry Journal.' Sitting next to him in a chair is DEPUTY ARNIE NIFE. He is sharpening a pencil with his jack knife.)

ARNIE: I just love this time of year, don't you, Rand?

RANDY: Yep, I reckon it's the best.

ARNIE: I bet Hopie is excited?

RANDY: Yeah, she is purty excited.

ARNIE: Yeah, it's purty exciting for kids. I remember counting down the days. Never did get what I really wanted, though.

RANDY: Oh, what was that?

ARNIE: A coon skin cap. Like Daniel Boone wore.

RANDY: I think you are getting Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett confused, Arn. Crockett had the coon cap. Boone, if I recall, said it made his head itch.

ARNIE: Did you have a conversation with him?

RANDY: *(Laughs.)* Course not, Arn. It's in his diaries.

ARNIE: Now Rand, you can't trust the accuracy of those. I'm not going to let you ruin my child hood memories.

(Beat.)

RANDY: Did you get anything for Betty Lou?

ARNIE: *(Proud.)* Of course. I got her the perfect gift.

RANDY: Yeah, whatcha git?

ARNIE: I don't want to tell you, Rand.

RANDY: Why not? I'm not going to tell her.

ARNIE: Remember when I told you I didn't like her casserole?

RANDY: Yes, if I recall you called out sick.

ARNIE: Mmmhmm, mmmhmm. Yup, she heard from Aunt Pea that I hated her cookin'.

RANDY: But I didn't tell Aunt Pea that!

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ARNIE: *(Excited.)* And just who do you suppose did! She didn't speak to me for a week and I had tickets to the theater. No refunds!

RANDY: I'm sorry, Arn, but I never told.

ARNIE: *(Not believing it.)* Yeah, well, won't make that mistake again.

RANDY: *(Smirking.)* What mistake? Eating the casserole?

ARNIE: Alright, Rand, alright, can we try to be professional while we are on the job?

RANDY: *(Pushing buttons.)* And how should we conduct ourselves, Deputy?

ARNIE: *(Stands up and straightens his back. He sniffs and puffs out his chest.)* Sitting around waiting for something to happen is not professional.

RANDY: But Arn, it's Christmas Eve.

ARNIE: Does crime take days off? No, no, crime never rests.

RANDY: Arn, people are last minute shopping, going to the parade 'n tree lighting, and out caroling. I doubt anyone in Juneberry has time for much else.

ARNIE: Rand, all people do is hoot and holler and carry on at these Christmas parties, the parades block traffic flow, and don't get me started on people going door to door singing off key. Christmas is just an excuse to disturb the peace!

RANDY: Oh, Arn, don't be like that. You are acting like a stick in the mud.

ARNIE: It don't make sense to me.

RANDY: What doesn't?

ARNIE: The whole thing. They should rename it stressmess!

RANDY: Oh, Arn, Christmas is more than all that.

ARNIE: It sure is fooling me! A holiday that makes you feel obligated to give gifts to people you wouldn't go fishin' with. Never mind the pressure to get that perfect present for your significant other.

RANDY: I take it you don't have anything for Betty Lou yet?

ARNIE: Nothing.

RANDY: But you said you had the perfect gift fo' her?

ARNIE: I lied alright.

RANDY: I know one thing she would like.

ARNIE: Yeah, well, we are taking things slow.

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RANDY: Arnie, you've been going steady with Betty Lou for five years! Poor girl is starting to wonder if yer knees won't bend.

ARNIE: Do you know she wants me to go to the church service tomorrow?

RANDY: I figured she would. Aunt Pea, Hopie, and I will be there. Nothing wrong with church, Arn.

ARNIE: That's what you all say. But the minute I step into that building the Reverend is going to ask me to empty my pockets. Then the choir is going to sing off key. Way off key!

RANDY: Sort of like you, Arn.

ARNIE: You cut that out, Rand. You know as well as anyone bout my classical training.

RANDY: But Arn, Betty Lou is the new choir director.

ARNIE: Exactly, and when she asks me how did it sound, I'm gonna have to lie, in church! I don't need that. Never mind the Reverend's long drawn out sermons put me into a coma!

RANDY: Maybe if you managed to stay awake till the end you would have a better understanding of what Christmas is all about?

ARNIE: I don't get it. I just don't get it. If it was up to me it would be outlawed!

RANDY: Oh, Arnie.

ARNIE: And another thing. We are getting a little too lenient around here. And Randy, if we aren't careful we could get rusty.

(CURTIS enters the front door stumbling his way to the desk.)

CURTIS: *(Slurred.)* Jingle bells, my breath smells, Deputy Nife laid an egg! *(Laughs then hiccups.)*

ARNIE: *(Not impressed.)* Curtis! Knock it off! See what I mean, Randy?

RANDY: Merry Christmas, Curtis.

CURTIS: *(Teeters back and forth and steadies himself on the corner of the desk. Slurred.)* Why thank you, Randy. Same to you.

ARNIE: Curtis, you will be addressing the Sheriff properly and by his title.

End of Freeview

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