

CHRISTMAS COMES
to
DETROIT LOUIE

By Bobby G. Wood

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CHRISTMAS COMES TO DETROIT LOUIE

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7m, 7 w, 1 flexible)

DETROIT LOUIE: Hard-hearted pickpocket who doesn't care for Christmas.

HARRY: Louie's right-hand man. A little dumb, but loyal.

OLD MAN: Refuses to face the truth. He is being put in an old folk's home.

JOHN and CARA: The Old Man's son and wife. Upon the insistence of Cara, John is having his father "committed."

DOCTOR: A busy man who would like to spend Christmas at home. He stays until the last patient is cared for.

NURSE: Dedicated to her chosen field, but feels people shouldn't take advantage of the doctor.

MRS. AIKEN: Hypochondriac. If there is a disease she hasn't had, it hasn't been discovered yet.

BLIND GIRL: Will not give up that there is no cure for her. Believes strongly in prayer and helping others.

ANGEL No. 1: A little nervous. Wants to know she's really right before she makes a step.

ANGEL No. 2: On probation; she must make this mission count. There's no room for a mistake.

WOMAN (Betty): Makes suicide attempt; has a problem she can't share with her husband.

HUSBAND (Jim): An understanding young man.

ANGEL No. 3: Comes in form of a Salvation Army Worker; helps make a wish come true.

SPECIALIST: He could help ... if he wanted to.

ACT I

Scene 1 - Stage apron, in front of curtains.

Scene 2 - Waiting room of clinic.

ACT II

Scene 1 - Stage apron.

Scene 2 - Waiting room.

PLAYING TIME: 50 minutes.

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PROPS

Purse, hanky, knitting - Mrs. Aiken.
Cane - Old Man.
Assorted newspapers and magazines - waiting room.
Bell and papers - desk.
Clipboard - Nurse.
Nurse's pen, watch, and Bible on Harry. Also several watches
on his arm.
Paper and notebook - Angel No. 2.
Hanky and coat - Woman.
Tissue and coat - Nurse.
Smelling salts - Nurse.
Collections plate, Bible - Angel No. 3.
Doctor's bag - Specialist.
Wings - Angel No. 2.

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ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Before curtains. JOHN and CARA argue. Cara is dominant and John is in distress.)

JOHN: *(Pleading.)* But, Cara, can't we put it off for a few days? At least until after Christmas. Let's wait until the holidays are all over. We can do it then.

CARA: I'm not leaving this place until he's admitted. If you can't be man enough to face facts, then I'll sign the papers to get him in myself.

JOHN: Can't you understand, Cara? He's my father. I can't just cast him aside like an old, worn out shoe. He's my father. I'm his son. I owe him more than that.

CARA: You're not just casting him aside. He's old, John. Too old to care for himself. Here they can take care of him. They're fixed for it and he will be with others his own age. Don't you think he'd like that?

JOHN: *(Shaking head, confused.)* I don't know. I just don't know. I keep thinking about what he would do for me if I were in his place.

CARA: Well, what about it? Are you going to sign the papers?

JOHN: What about the kids? What will we tell them when they see us come home without him? They've already bought their gifts for him.

CARA: We'll just tell them that he's gone to visit someone and will be back later. Oh, John, can't you see? It's the only way. He doesn't fit in any more. He doesn't understand our ways ... the children ... our friends.

JOHN: *(Irritated.)* He's just in the way then. Is that it?

CARA: No, that's not it. It's just that ... that ... oh, John, why can't you understand? *(Cries.)*

JOHN: I understand. *(Consoles WIFE with arm around her.)* Don't cry, darling. I understand. It's just not every day a man has to turn his own father out of his home. You go on and sign the papers. I'll try and tell him ... something. *(THEY exit. One going SL and the other SR behind curtains.)*

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The stage is set as a run-down clinic-rest home waiting room. Several are sitting patiently waiting for the doctor. There is an OLD MAN, small BLIND GIRL and two elderly WOMEN waiting. DOCTOR and NURSE pass hurriedly through the room several times, paying no attention to them.)

NURSE: *(Comes to first WOMAN.)* You can go in now, Mrs. Brown. *(MRS. BROWN exits SL. To MRS. AIKEN.)* Well, what is it this time, Mrs. Aiken? Don't tell me you still have something left that hasn't either been photographed or taken out yet.

MRS. AIKEN: *(Dabs eyes with hanky.)* Well! You would think that a person in my condition would receive at least a little more respect. Heaven knows we lack attention. I'd like to see the doctor, if you please.

NURSE: Please, Mrs. Aiken. Couldn't you come back another day? Don't you know it's Christmas? He has a family at home the same as everyone else and he wants to be with them tonight of all nights. I'll tell you what. I'll give you a bottle of nice little pink and blue pills and you try them. By Monday morning, if you're not feeling better, you come back and the Doctor might even operate again. Now, how about it?

MRS. AIKEN: *(Thinks for a moment, as though considering.)* That would be nice. *(Pause.)* No, I might not last until then. I want to see the Doctor. That is, if I can hold on that long. *(Takes deep breath, calmly leans back in chair and knits.)*

(NURSE shakes head, then exits. ALL sit in silence.)

GIRL: *(To OLD MAN, sitting near HER.)* Hello!

OLD MAN: Hello!

GIRL: You're mighty lonesome, aren't you?

OLD MAN: Yes, I guess I am. What makes you ask that? Do I look lonesome?

GIRL: *(Laughing.)* I can't see you. But, I'll bet you do.

OLD MAN: I'm sorry. I didn't know you couldn't -

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GIRL: *(Interrupts.)* That's all right. I don't mind. Besides, being blind isn't as bad as people think. I see a lot more than you might imagine. Take you, for instance. You're a rather old gentleman. Your legs aren't too dependable. Your hands shake and you're very, very lonesome.

OLD MAN: *(Warmly.)* How do you know that? If you can't see, then how can you tell me all these things?

GIRL: I knew you were old for I heard another man call you "Dad" and they had to help you in here. I knew about your legs from the sound of your cane. The paper keeps rattling when you read it, so I know that your hands must be shaking.

OLD MAN: What makes you think I'm lonesome?

GIRL: That was the easiest part of all ... your voice. *(Quiet for a few seconds)* Are you sick, Mister? Did you come here to get well?

OLD MAN: No, I just came up with my son to visit someone. He'll be back for me soon. My, but you're a pretty little girl. How old are you?

GIRL: I'm twelve. I'm glad you're just visiting and not like some of the others I've met on my visits. Once there was an old lady whose son left her here just because she was old and -

MRS. AIKEN: *(Interrupts.)* Pardon me. Do either of you have the time?

OLD MAN: No, I'm sorry.

MRS. AIKEN: Well, that's all right. I'm not going anywhere. I do wish that doctor would hurry. I've got the most fascinating symptom to tell him about. Do you know the doctor?

OLD MAN: No, I don't. I'm just visiting here with my son.

GIRL: I know him. He says that maybe one day, when I'm old enough, he can make me see again. If he can just get that specialist to come and look at my eyes.

MRS. AIKEN: Dr. Wilson is my doctor. What a marvelous man. Eleven operations he's performed on me and never dropped a stitch. What a wonderful man.

(SON enters from SL, sit beside OLD MAN, head lowered.)

JOHN: Dad ... Cara and I ... we thought ...

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OLD MAN: *(Places hand on SON'S shoulder.)* It might be a little while then. Is that it, Son? Is that what you're trying to tell me? John, do you remember the time you brought the little puppy home with you that you found by the railroad tracks? Remember how it ran around the house knocking things over and getting in your mother's way? I'll never forget the way you cried when she told you you'd have to get rid of it. You locked yourself in your room and said you'd never speak to her again. By supper you'd already quit crying and that night before you said your prayers, you wrapped those tiny little arms around her neck and told her you were sorry and that you knew it was best for the little puppy to go live somewhere else...Go on, John, take as long as you have to. I'll be here waiting for you.

JOHN: Dad, it's that we ... I'll be back in a minute. *(Exits hurriedly.)*

GIRL: Was your boy crying, mister? Why was he crying?

OLD MAN: *(Looking at door, replies softly.)* He just gave away his last little puppy.

GIRL: *(Puzzled.)* What did you say?

OLD MAN: *(Snaps out of it.)* Oh, nothing important. Nothing nearly so important as tomorrow is to a little girl of twelve.

GIRL: What's gonna happen tomorrow?

MRS. AIKEN: *(Looks up from knitting.)* Why, it's Christmas, child. Haven't you ever heard of Christmas?

GIRL: Oh, that. I guess so.

(Door opens. Two MEN enter and look around, trying to decide whether to stay or not.)

LOUIE: *(To OLD MAN.)* Hey, Mac. Is the doc in?

OLD MAN: Yes, he's in. You can ring for the nurse if you'd like. There's a little bell right over there. *(Points to desk.)*

LOUIE: Thanks, pal. Sit down here, Harry. *(Helps friend who appears to be in agony.)* Take it easy with them fingers. The doc'll fix you up in no time.

MRS. AIKEN: *(Laying knitting aside.)* Oh, dear me. Have you hurt your hand?

LOUIE: No, lady, he just comes in for a manicure once a week.

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