

SOMETHIN' SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS

By Pat Cook

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DEDICATION

*For Ashley,
In loving memory. We miss you.*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Christmas in West Texas can be pretty drab, especially for three ranch hands who usually just decorate a cactus with painted barbed wire. However, when it looks as if their boss' ranch may be bought out from under them, Smitty, Bubba and Eddie decide they better come up with something, and fast. Sara, their boss, has just about given up and is putting up a valiant front for her nine-year-old daughter, Jordan. "This has to be the best Christmas, ever," Sara says to the boys. Jordan is busy trying to learn her line for the Christmas pageant and is delighted when the show needs three wise men. Guess who gets drafted? And guess who decides to play Santa Claus for Jordan? And when things seem to go haywire, like "Santy" getting on the wrong roof, or Eddie's duck getting loose, it adds up to a holiday comedy of errors. All of our childhood memories flood the stage in this poignant Yuletide slice-of-life that celebrates the hope and faith of one family. And it's up to the ranch hands to come up with "Somethin' Special For Christmas."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 M, 3 W)

SMITTY - A tall, rather rough-looking cowhand, in his fifties, usually soft-spoken and level-headed. The foreman.

BUBBA - A round, jolly cowboy, in his late forties, who dreams of far away places and having a good time.

EDDIE - The third member of the trio, also in his late forties, not very bright but has a heart as big as the plains he rides.

JORDAN PRIENTESS - A nine-year-old girl, smarter than most, who has to face life long before her time.

SARA PRIENTESS - Jordan's mother, a woman of untold worries, with the patience and understanding to deal with it all.

OPAL ROBINSON - Jordan's teacher, who takes pride in helping out her students whenever she can.

JASON BENEDICT - Has his eye on Sara's ranch and ranch hands.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Several days before Christmas

Scene 2: Later that night

Scene 3: The next night

ACT II

Scene 1: Christmas Eve

SETTING

The setting for this rustic carol is a rather primitive bunkhouse belonging to the Prientess Ranch in the mid-1950s. This large room contains a bunk bed, located in the USL corner and a cot on the back wall. There is a large table located DSR, accompanied by three chairs left over from the garage sale. An old wardrobe rests in the US wall near a wall hat rack. A small table sits in the USR corner, which holds a hot plate and coffee pot with cups. The walls are decorated with various pictures of horses and landscapes, old calendars, horseshoes and faded photographs.

There are three doors utilized in this plan. The first, which leads outside, is the front door and is located SR. The second, which leads to the bathroom, is located on the US wall, next to Smitty's cot. The third door is situated on the SL wall and leads outside. Despite the colorful season, this room is still as drab and cluttered as usual. The one exception is an unadorned, sparse Christmas tree located DSL.

PROPS

(All items must be of the type used in the mid-1950s.)

SET PROPS - coffee cups and pot, *National Geographic* magazines, jug of cider, sock, Christmas tree

SMITTY - notepad, pen, cardboard box w/ tin foil, ornaments, Christmas star, magazine pictures, 5 cards taped together (4-8 of hearts) Christmas card, long piece of rope, boot spur, script

JORDAN - school books, 4 presents-picture frame, duck leash for Spot, small angel ornament (1 present remains unopened) sewing kit

OPAL - script, handbag, Santa beard

ACT I
Scene 1

(Before the LIGHTS come up, a WOMAN'S VOICE is heard.)

WOMAN'S VOICE: I grew up on a little piece of a farm, or ranch I guess you would call it, out in West Texas. In those days, ever'body did ever'thing they could just to get by. We had crops, like ever'body else, but we had cattle as well. And I don't guess there's any of us that can enjoy Christmas without remembering our childhood. Mine wasn't much different from others ... basically. And I guess, one Christmas that I remember most happened back when I was about nine. Papa had passed away three years earlier and it was all Mama could do to keep ever'thing together. And it was comin' up on time for our big school pageant ... we had one ever' year. Now, we had these three hired hands ... *(The LIGHTS come up. SMITTY is sitting on his cot, writing a letter on a ragged pad of paper.)* And I guess it all started with them. Oh, they were wonderful folks, underneath it all. And as near as I can recall, Smitty, he was the boss of the outfit, he was forever writing to his beloved, but far away Alice ...

SMITTY: "... and like I wrote you last time, I expect to clear quite a tidy sum with my new cross-breed, which we take to market next month. I don't have to tell you how much the Internal Revenue boys want to take out, but with my new bookkeeper and his board of lawyers, we hope to make some headway. As far as Christmas goes, all my hands are really in the spirit ..."

(Just then, the front door slams open and BUBBA comes flying through it, as if thrown, and sprawls on the floor. EDDIE jumps in after him and pins him down.)

BUBBA: You dirty, no good ... !

EDDIE: You give?!

BUBBA: Get OFF me!

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EDDIE: Not 'til you say "calf rope."

BUBBA: You can go rot for all a'me, you ... !

EDDIE: Say it!

(BUBBA shoves EDDIE off and jumps on him. SMITTY rises, closes the door and resumes his writing.)

BUBBA: Thought you had me, didn't you?!

EDDIE: You fat horse, if I get up, I'll - !

BUBBA: *(Sitting on HIM.)* You'll what?

EDDIE: I'll cut your liver out with a hoe!

SMITTY: "What a wonderful time of year, when it seems as if ever'one is full a' good cheer and high hopes."

EDDIE: I hope you get gangrene, you bloated ox!

BUBBA: Now, you say it. Come on. "Calf rope".

EDDIE: I ain't!

BUBBA: Say it, or I'll move here for the winter!

EDDIE: NO!

SMITTY: "Even the livestock is gettin' restless, it seems. Ever'one and ever'thing is in high spirits and ... and ..."
(HE thinks a minute.)

EDDIE: I can't breathe!

SMITTY: *(Writing.)* "Breathlessly waitin' for the big day."

BUBBA: What wuzzat?

EDDIE: I said, I'm turning blue, you walrus!

SMITTY: "What a colorful season. I wish you was here ..."

BUBBA: That didn't sound like "calf rope" to me. Say it!
Come on!

(SARA enters and rushes over to BUBBA.)

EDDIE: I will not, you ... ! *(SARA yanks BUBBA off EDDIE and turns to him.)*

SARA: Bubba! Just what do you think you're doin'?

(EDDIE, still on the floor, loudly sucks in two lungs full of air.)

BUBBA: Nothin', Miss Sara.

SARA: Now, you were so. You was fightin', again.

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BUBBA: Yes, ma'am, Miss Sara.

SARA: And I want you to stop it! Right now! You hear me?!

BUBBA: Yes, ma'am, Miss Sara.

(SARA moves to SMITTY.)

SARA: Smitty, you're the foreman. Can't you keep 'em from this sort of carryin' on? Especially at this time of -

(The minute she lets go of BUBBA, he places his foot on EDDIE'S throat and pins him on the floor again.)

BUBBA: Calf rope! Say it!

EDDIE: *(Hoarsely.)* Calf rope! Calf rope!

(SARA grabs BUBBA again and pulls him off EDDIE.)

SARA: Now what did I just say?!

BUBBA: That we was fighting agin. Yes, ma'am.

SARA: Smitty, make them stop this!

SMITTY: *(Looking at HIS letter and not really meaning it.)*
Ya'll stop that now, boys, you hear?

SARA: Okay, you three, I've just about had it with the lot of you! I ... *(SHE lets go of BUBBA again. Bubba makes another move to EDDIE, but Sara grabs him again.)* Now, stop it! *(SHE looks down.)* Eddie, will you git up off that filthy floor?

EDDIE: Not until you tie up Bubba. Its gettin' so's I'm getting afraid to sleep in the same room with him.

SARA: I will not tie him up!

BUBBA: What's she gonna use? A calf rope? *(HE giggles but stops the second SARA turns back to him.)* Yes, ma'am.

SARA: I swear, it's all I can say grace over. *(SHE turns to SMITTY.)* Smitty!

(SMITTY gets up and moves to the OTHERS.)

SMITTY: Yessum. I was just writing to ... well, somebody.

End of Freeview

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