

The Twelve Months of Christmas

By Scott Icenhower

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DEDICATED

To my wife, my muse, my friend – Katie Jo

STORY OF THE PLAY

Ray awakens from a coma to learn that the country is celebrating Christmas every month, (Hanukkah every quarter), in order to stimulate the economy. "A Christmas Carol" is constantly playing at the local community theatre, Christmas lights blaze all night, and there's enough fruitcake to choke a camel. And this is just October!

Ray himself is different. He's angry with the drunk driver who put him in the hospital and his attitude is affecting his relationship with his friends and fiancée, Mary. When she expresses her frustration with not being able to stop the multiple Christmases, and more importantly, with Ray's behavior, he pulls a stunt that lands him in jail. There he is visited by the mother of the young man who caused his accident. He also discovers why Mary can't make any progress in protesting Christmas—a spy!

At home Mary quickly enlists the help of her parents and a few family friends such as a Jewish business lady, a bad community theatre actor, and a psychic to find a hidden microphone. They come up with a scheme to catch the spy.

Finally the government realizes that Christmas every month won't work. Charges against Ray are dropped, relationships are healed and ultimately Ray learns forgiveness.

A perfect Christmas comedy for theatres or churches.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

"The Twelve Months of Christmas" premiered in December, 2008, with The Presby Players in Greensboro, NC. Cast included:

Terri Strausbaugh: Mildred Richardson
Stephen Hale: Clarence Richardson
Ron Pelky: Frank
Pam Murphy: Mrs. Murray
Mandy Ryan: Delores
Laura Strausbaugh: Mary Richardson
Chip Barnette: Ray Collins
Joe Sandoval: Bob the Electrician
Paul Weaver: Officer Will Stapleton
April Marshall: Rebecca Fuller
Mack McClain: Radio DJ voice

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 5 w, extra children and adults)

MARY RICHARDSON: Frustrated activist who is confused about her engagement with Ray. 20s to 30s.

RAY COLLINS: After awakening from a coma, he is trying to deal with his philosophy of life, his religion, his fiancée and the world. 20s to 30s.

MILDRED RICHARDSON: Mother of Mary, wife of Clarence. Long-suffering with a touch of worry, 40s to 60s.

CLARENCE RICHARDSON: Father of Mary, husband of Mildred. Down-to-earth, practical, 40s to 60s.

FRANK: Friend of the family, involved with community theatre; not the brightest bulb on the tree. 40s to 70s.

MRS. MURRAY: Friend of the family, Jewish business-woman. 40s to 70s.

DELORES: Friend of the family, psychic, but really more practical. 40s to 70s.

BOB: An electrician who really enjoys Christmas; hides a dark secret.

OFFICER WILL STAPLETON: Easy-going, good, solid public servant who likes bad jokes. 30s to 60s.

REBECCA FULLER: Mother of drunk driver who seeks forgiveness. 40s to 60s.

EXTRAS:

VOICES of RADIO DJ and CALLER: Male or female.

EXTRA CHILDREN: As trick-or-treaters.

EXTRA ADULTS: Non-speaking radio station employees.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

Scene 1: Halloween. (Living room)

Scene 2: The next morning. (Living room)

Scene 3: Later that afternoon. (Radio station)

Act II

Scene 1: Two weeks before Thanksgiving. (County jail)

Scene 2: Later that same day. (Living room)

Scene 3: Thanksgiving/Xmas Eve. (Outside the jail)

Scene 4: The actual Christmas Eve. (Living room)

SETTINGS

There is one main set and several simple playing areas.

The main set is the living room of Clarence and Mildred Richardson. It is warm and homey, and covered with Christmas decorations. A large "WELCOME HOME, RAY" banner is prominently displayed.

Off to one side of the stage is the set for WXMS, the radio station that plays the music, commercials and reminders of Christmas. During the pre-show a spot is on the call letters while Christmas music and commercials are played.

Off to the other side is a solitary jail cell in the county courthouse. There is a cot and a chair inside the cell for Ray and a stool and small table outside for Officer Stapleton and the chess set.

The scene outside the jailhouse can be played before the curtain.

ACT I

Scene I

(AT RISE: Christmas MUSIC continues as lights fade on radio station and come up on the living room. MILDRED and CLARENCE enter from kitchen with plates of finger food for party.)

DJ VOICE: *(As Christmas music fades out.)* Those three hours of solid Yuletide melodies were brought to you by Sally's Small and Petite Shop. Have yourself a merry little Christmas at Sally's. Coming up, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sings, "I Saw My Mommies Kissing Santa Claus"...

MILDRED: Clarence, turn that radio off. I want us to be able to talk to Ray undistracted.

CLARENCE: He'll remember us, won't he?

MILDRED: Of course he will. It was a coma, not amnesia. *(Doorbell.)* Will you get the door? *(MILDRED goes back into the kitchen.)*

CLARENCE: Sure.

(As HE opens the door we hear CHILDREN say "Trick of Treat." Clarence takes a bowl of candy canes off of a small table by the door and hands out the candy.)

CLARENCE: *(Cont'd.)* Here you go. Trick or Treat, Merry Christmas. *(KIDS exit.)*

MILDRED: *(Entering with more snacks.)* More trick-or-treaters?

CLARENCE: Yeah, I hope the candy canes hold out. When did Mary say they were going to get here?

MILDRED: She said Ray would get out from rehab around 6:30 tonight. And then who knows with the holiday traffic. *(SFX: Doorbell.)* I'll get it.

(As MILDRED opens the door, FRANK dressed as the Grim Reaper or Christmas Future, silently steps into the living room.)

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MILDRED: *(Cont'd.)* ...Clarence, it's for you. Hello Frank.
FRANK: Hello Mildred. Hey, Clarence. What do you think?

(FRANK, with hood still up, walks across the room and returns like a high fashion model, then silently stands by Clarence while CLARENCE speaks.)

CLARENCE: *(Alters his posture and voice to affect Ebenezer Scrooge.)* You are, are you not, the Spirit of Christmas Yet to come? And you are about to show me the shadows of the things that have not yet happened, but will happen in time before us. Is that not so, Spirit?

(FRANK slowly nods his head and raises his arm pointing downstage.)

CLARENCE: *(Cont'd. Quickly returns to his old self.)* Frank! Are you off book already?

(FRANK pulls his hood back and sheepishly nods yes.)

CLARENCE: *(Cont'd.)* How about that, Mildred? We got a natural actor on our hands. That's great, Frank. Oh, and a wonderful costume.

FRANK: Thanks. Mrs. Murray didn't have any so my sister made this one. I already had the sickle. It feels so good I wore it to the grocery store this afternoon.

MILDRED: That's nice, Frank. Why don't you put it in the back bedroom? You don't want to spill any food on it. Ray and Mary should be here any minute. And don't scratch the furniture with that sickle.

FRANK: OK. *(Starts to exit to back bedroom.)* I just love how it feels.

CLARENCE: You are wearing something under that, aren't you, Frank?

FRANK: Well, yeah, after they threw me out of the grocery store. *(Exits.)*

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(SFX: Doorbell rings. CLARENCE goes to the door. MRS. MURRAY enters.)

CLARENCE: What a scary costume. And who are you supposed to be?

MRS. MURRAY: Don't try to charm your way back into my good graces. You missed my Hanukkah party. We only have them once a quarter. You'd think you'd take the time to attend.

CLARENCE: I told you we had play rehearsal that night.

MRS. MURRAY: Oh that interminable play. Every month it's *(SHE tries to affect the voices of the characters.)* "God bless us everyone," "Is the prize turkey still in the butcher's window? What, the one as big as me?" *(Back to her normal voice.)* Oy vay, thank God I'm old and won't be around much longer. Mildred, are Ray and Mary here yet?

MILDRED: Not yet. I'll bet it's the traffic. There's not a Christmas parade today is there?

MRS. MURRAY: No, that's next Thursday. *(To CLARENCE.)* And why can't that community theatre of yours do other Christmas plays? "It's a Wonderful Life," "The Grinch," "The Rudolph," or how about "Fiddler on the Roof Meets Santa Claus." They can fight it out among the chimneys. I'd pay to see that.

CLARENCE: I know you're not that upset. You're making money on this gentile holiday. I understand your store now has a website to sell Christmas decorations?

MRS. MURRAY: It makes me kvell. [www dot Drek the halls dot com](http://www.dotDrekthehalls.com). And we're planning to sell more than just decorations. I'm venturing into costumes. It was...Frank, I believe, who gave me the idea. He called the other day and asked if we had a Ghost of Christmas Future robe and I thought – costumes, of course. You've got your plays; you've got your nativity scenes, your Halloweens ...

MILDRED: You do have a head for business.

MRS. MURRAY: Thank you, dear. Oh, that reminds me. There's a flasher on the loose. I was at the grocery store this afternoon and saw what I thought was some sort of priest. He was wearing a robe and hood and all.

End of Freeview

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