

BE DECKIN' THE HALLS

By R. G. Orth

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Accident-prone Arnold is so big and awkward that when accidents happen, they happen big. When Carol asks him over for Christmas Eve, her family is in a panic, not knowing whether their liability insurance will cover everything. His run-in with Miss Gertrude, the choir director, and her carolers brings misery to all. Dianne and Carol get their heads together along with Jack and decide that Constance, a psychology major, is the answer. She helps Arnold - until he happily gets into his car. Laugh your way into the Christmas spirit with this one!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 M, 6 W)

DIANNE: Attractive girl of about 18. Wears pretty dress and heels.

MOTHER: Understanding, tries to give Arnold benefit of the doubt.

FATHER: Victim!

CAROL: About 15 or 16, spunky with a vibrant personality. Also dressed up for Christmas.

JACK: A tall, good-looking boy of about 18. Wears an overcoat and a new suit.

ARNOLD: A very large boy of about 17. Immensely strong and awkward. It is undoubtedly his large size and awkwardness that accounts for his shy personality.

MISS GERTRUDE: A no-nonsense lady. Wears a tailored suit and carries an umbrella.

CONSTANCE: An erect, prim, proper, studious girl about 18. Wears glasses, a severe hair-do, severe clothes and low heels

7 CAROLERS: *(Including one with bandage on head.)*

MR. & MRS. RAWLINGS

SETTING

A modern, attractive living room which literally sparkles with Christmas atmosphere. A large, gaily-decorated Christmas tree is USR. USC is a door leading outside. Hung on the door is a Santa Claus full of Christmas cards. USL a few feet away is a closet with Christmas cards taped to the door. A straight-back chair, a table with a phone on it, and stereo are USL. DSL is a door which leads to the bedrooms. LSC, a sofa which faces right stage. End tables, with appropriate Christmas decorations on each, are on either end of the sofa. RSC is another sofa. It faces left stage and also has end tables. DSR is a swinging door which leads to the kitchen.

PROPS

Wrapped presents under the tree including one containing card about dance lesson and one with 5 men's ties; overcoats for all; watches for Father and Arnold; mistletoe and tack; small, small wrapped present containing bracelet; 4 punch glasses and bowl; two wrapped presents containing old jersey and one with numerals 5 and 0; popcorn balls on tree; ice pack; aspirins and glass of water; large book; notebook and pencil.

SOUND EFFECTS

Christmas music; approaching and receding car sounds; caroling offstage; knock on door; phone ringing.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: DIANNE is briskly moving about tidying up. From the way she is straightening things, it is obvious she is expecting company.)

MOTHER: *(Offstage.)* Dianne !!

DIANNE: *(As SHE straightens the pillows on the sofa RSC.)*
Yes, Mother?

MOTHER: How soon is Jack coming over?

DIANNE: Any minute. *(Notices the Christmas tree lights are not turned on.)* Oops! *(Dashes behind tree and plugs lights in.)* There, that's better.

MOTHER: You make sure you take care of Carol.

DIANNE: *(Absent-mindedly as SHE picks up a beautifully wrapped present from beneath the tree and adjusts the bow.)* Yes, Mother.

FATHER: *(Offstage.)* I think Carol said that Arnold was coming over, too.

DIANNE: Arnold! *(Puts package back under tree and crosses toward CS.)*

(MOTHER and FATHER enter from DSL door. They have their coats on and are ready to go out.)

MOTHER: Yes ... Arnold. I see nothing wrong with him coming over to see Carol on Christmas Eve.

DIANNE: But Mother -

FATHER: Your mother and I are going to do some last minute Christmas shopping. We shouldn't be gone *(Looking at HIS watch.)* more than an hour.

DIANNE: *(Dejectedly.)* OK.

MOTHER: Don't be upset, dear.

DIANNE: How can you say that, Mother? Don't you remember the last time Arnold came to see Carol? He almost destroyed our house. Oh, it was all an accident, but he's accident-prone!

MOTHER: Now, I don't think it's that bad.

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DIANNE: Mother ... he accidentally ruined half the junior varsity football team before they ever got on the field!

FATHER: *(Near the USC door.)* Come to think of it, last time he was here, I had to replace this door.

MOTHER: Now, don't you agree with her! Arnold is a nice boy.

DIANNE: Oh, I like him, too. It's just that you have to like him from a distance.

MOTHER: Well, stop your worrying.

FATHER: *(Dryly.)* How about Carol and Arnold exchanging presents in the front yard?

MOTHER: For heaven sakes!

DIANNE: He is an accident looking for a place to happen. Don't you remember when he accidentally blew up the chemistry lab at school?

MOTHER: Did he do that?

DIANNE: And he wasn't even a member of the class!

MOTHER: Well, enough of this. We've got some shopping to do. We'll be back in an hour or so and he can't do too much damage in that time.

DIANNE: Famous last words.

MOTHER: *(As SHE starts to exit USC.)* Cheer up, dear ... and say hello to Jack.

FATHER: *(Pausing at USC door.)* Don't let him get too close to this door, will you?

DIANNE: *(Laughing a little.)* No, I won't. Good-bye. *(THEY exit. SHE wanders CS, then talking to herself.)* This is Christmas Eve and I'm not going to let this get me down. Besides, Carol can take care of him. *(Breaking the moody spell.)* Now, let's see ... Christmas music! *(Crosses to stereo and starts it. The MUSIC should be light and cheerful and softly played without interruption for 15 or 20 minutes.)*

CAROL: *(Enters from DSR door.)* Gee, the place looks nice!

DIANNE: *(Leaving the stereo as the MUSIC starts.)* Are we missing anything?

CAROL: Where's the mistletoe?

DIANNE: Mistletoe! Oh, we've forgotten it! Where is it?

End of Freeview

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