

FOUR TO GO FOR CHRISTMAS

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FOUR TO GO FOR CHRISTMAS

Santa may have to carry a heavy pack but you certainly don't—at least not with these four short, easy-to-stage plays. They're tailor-made for traveling or performing on less than desirable stages because of the minimal props and scenery. What could be easier for the most hectic time of the year?

In "The Christmas Caper," (8 speaking parts), Santa is kidnapped by a little-known fairy tale character who just wants to be popular.

In "Night of the New and Improved Christmas" (9 speaking parts), a Madison Avenue public relations firm wants to update Santa and the whole holiday tradition.

In "Christmas with the Cratchits," (8 parts), Tiny Tim's family is ecstatic when they think they've won the lottery.

In "Million Dollar Christmas," (11 parts), three of the most miserly people ever known must give away a million dollars by midnight on Christmas Eve. The first three plays each run 15 to 20 minutes while the last runs about 30 minutes.

"THE CHRISTMAS CAPER"

by George Novakov Jr. page 3

"NIGHT OF THE NEW AND IMPROVED CHRISTMAS"

by Christina Hamlett..... page 17

"CHRISTMAS WITH THE CRATCHITS"

by Christina Hamlett page 26

"MILLION DOLLAR CHRISTMAS"

by John DePrine page 37

THE CHRISTMAS CAPER

A Christmas Fantasy

By George J. Novakov, Jr.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SANTA CLAUS

GRETSEL: First cousin of Hansel and Gretel.

THE DEW SPIRIT

ELF #1: The First Noel.

ELF #2: The Second Noel.

ELF #3: Inna.

ELF #4: Peartree.

ELF #5: Partridge.

DEW DROPLETS: Two optional, non-speaking.

REINDEER: Four non-speaking.

EXTRAS: Other Elves, as desired.

SYNOPSIS

Scene 1: Santa's Workshop.

Scene 2: Gretsel's cave (in front of the curtain).

Scene 3: Santa's Workshop.

SETTING: The present; three days before Christmas Eve.

PLAYING TIME: Approximately 20 minutes.

COSTUMES

Traditional costume for Santa; ballerina costumes for Dew Spirit and Droplets; elf costumes for elves; antlers for reindeer; and any colorful, outrageous costume for Gretsel and antlers.

PROPS

Toys; sack; Santa's cap; ransom note; rope and chair; sign reading, "Gretsel's Cave - Keep Out!"; magic wands (2); and sled for Santa to ride on.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: ELF #1 and ELF #2 enter SANTA'S workshop and begin working on toys which are scattered around the room. They do not work very fast; they appear to be very tired.)

ELF #1: Here it is three days before Christmas, and we still haven't finished making all the gifts we need. Everyone is so tired.

ELF #2: I'll say. We all need a good rest. In fact, I'm going to take one now. *(Stops working, relaxes on floor.)* Hope Santa doesn't walk in now.

ELF #1: *(Looks toward door from which THEY entered.)* Where is everybody else?

ELF #2: They're as tired as we are. They'll be in soon. *(Looks on floor, sees SANTA'S cap.)* What's that on the floor over there? *(Both ELVES move towards cap.)*

ELF #1: It's Santa's cap! And...and...a note! *(Hands cap to ELF #2, picks up note.)*

ELF #2: *(Excited.)* Hurry up, read it!

ELF #1: *(Quickly reading note to HIMSELF.)* Oh, no! This is terrible. It's a ransom note.

ELF #2: A ransom note?

ELF #1: *(Reading out loud.)* "Dear funny looking dwarfs..."

ELF #2: Funny looking? Us? *(Looks down at HIMSELF then back up to ELF #1.)*

ELF #1: *(Shrugs and continues reading.)* "Your stupid leader has been kidnapped. By me. If you want him back alive, you must do the following: On Christmas Eve, fill the old man's sleigh with all the gifts for the boys and girls. Harness the reindeer. And then I, Gretsel..."

ELF #2: *(Interrupting.)* Gretsel?

ELF #1: Shh! "And then I, Gretsel, will deliver all the toys and everyone will forget about that dummy of yours and will wait for me, Gretsel, to bring them their gifts next Christmas, and every Christmas from now on! Santa Claus is finished! Of course, if you do as I say, I'll return him to you, mostly unharmed.

Four To Go For Christmas

-5-

ELF #1: *(Cont'd.)* Then you can help him and his old lady pack up and find a place for their retirement. Remember, by midnight Christmas Eve, have everything ready for me, or ELSE! Signed, Gretsel.”

ELF #2: Gretsel?

ELF #1: Yes, he’s the mean old cousin of Hansel and Gretel.

ELF #2: I don’t remember ever hearing anything about any Gretsel.

ELF #1: Mother Goose was probably too busy spinning tales about other weird characters to bother with Gretsel. Remember that young girl who kept kissing that frog?
(ELF #2, remembering, nods.)

ELF #1: Warts all over her lips.

ELF #2: Yech! *(Wipes lips with backs of both hands.)*

ELF #1: And Rapunzel. It took three weeks to get her hair untangled.

ELF #2: They never did find her boyfriend.

ELF #1: We’re wasting time. We have to do something to help Santa.

ELF #2: And in a hurry.

ELF #1: Let’s tell the other elves. Come on.

ELF #2: *(Calling offstage.)* Elves, elves!

(As the two ELVES leave the stage, the LIGHTS black out, then slowly come up again on Scene 2, Gretsel’s Cave.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Scene is played before CURTAIN. Gretsel's sign is to one side of stage. SANTA, dressed as usual in his red suit and white beard, but without his cap, is being tied to a chair by GRETSEL.)

GRETSEL: I've had just about enough of your ho-ho-ho's, Santa-poo. You've had a monopoly on Christmas for too long. Now, with you tied here and out of commission, I can take your place, and all the children of the world will be waiting for Santa Gretsel to deliver their toys and gifts on Christmas morning. Oooh! I can't wait to eat all those cookies and drink all that milk!

SANTA: You'll never get away with this, Gretsel. None of my elves will help in your devilish scheme to take my place, and you can't do it alone without their help. And you certainly won't get my reindeer to help you - they won't let just anybody handle them, you know. (*Thinking.*) Except for Vixen. She sometimes...no, not even Vixen will help you.

GRETSEL: I've already taken care of that. I've sent a ransom note to your funny-looking dwarfs and told them that if they expect to ever see you again, alive that is, they had better have everything ready for me on Christmas Eve. And as for your reindeer - two of my super sugar lumps instead of your tofu chunks and they'll forget there ever was a Santa Claus, Santa-poo.

SANTA: Well, Vixen will be the first to go, all right. She always did love sweets.

GRETSEL: There, (*Finishing tying SANTA.*) that ought to hold you until I've made your, er, I mean my Christmas rounds.

SANTA: Why are you doing this, Gretsel? Why do you want to ruin Christmas?

GRETSEL: Ruin Christmas? Ha! The little boys and girls will still get their presents, won't they? Only they won't be coming from Santa Claus, they'll be coming from Santa Gretsel.

End of Freeview

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