'Tis the Season

Two Short One-Act Plays

By

Linda Berry

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STORY OF THE PLAYS

Celebrate the holiday season in a new way this year! These two short plays provide a fresh alternative to traditional holiday dramas.

'Tis the Season

The Scheduler has called a meeting of representatives of major winter festivals and holidays because the "people upstairs" have decided December is too cluttered with similar events. The group, including Santa, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Festivus, and Solstice discuss who could retire, merge, or relocate, but they cannot agree. When the Scheduler is called away, the discussion escalates into combat! Festivus seems to emerge the winner, but at his moment of triumph the Scheduler appears with the replacement holiday: Winterval. The others finally unite--to oust the newcomer!

Frostymas

A host family, Pop, Sorbet, and their teens Neapolitan and Suzi, welcome guests to their Frostymas celebration. The Frostymas faith, of course, honors the timeless snowman, Frosty, and all things snowman-related. As the family explains the meaning of the various elements and traditions, they lead up to the most sacred observance of all -- the eating of the traditional snow cones!

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'Tis the Season was premiered by Vintage Theatre, Denver, Colorado, on December 21, 2010. The cast included:

Kwanzaa - Sam Gilstrap
Solstice - Stanna Bippus
Hannukah - Steven Guntli
Winterval - Nancy Thomas
Festivus - Bonnie Greene
Santa - Tim Campbell
Scheduler - Sarah MacMillan

‘TIS THE SEASON

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 2 w, 2 flexible)

SCHEDULER: Male or female; a harried civil servant.

SANTA: A big male; wears a Santa suit, or part of one -- he's off duty at the moment.

HANUKKAH: A small, nervous, self-effacing male; carries a menorah.

KWANZAA: A female with a lot of attitude; wears black, red, and green, with a wrapped headdress in those colors.

FESTIVUS: An average, not-festive-looking guy, carrying a plain aluminum pole.

SOLSTICE: A mature female wearing a loose white robe and a crown of mistletoe.

WINTERVAL: Male or female; costume *(the uglier the better)* seems made from scraps of the other holidays' traditions and includes a superhero cape of some sort, possibly red with white fur trim.

Setting: A boardroom or cluttered office with a desk and several chairs.

Note: Because most of the action takes place during a meeting around a table or desk, directors may have characters stand or move about as desired.

'Tis the Season

(AT RISE: SCHEDULER is seated at the desk which is cluttered with, among other things, a calendar and his clipboard, which he consults in moments of stress. The OTHERS filter in, acknowledging each other in a mildly friendly way as any group of slightly-acquainted business competitors might.)

SCHEDULER: Okay. Okay. Okay. Fine. Good. Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Solstice, Festivus. Yes. I see all the important ones managed to get here. Gives you a clue why Saturnalia and Yule and those guys don't amount to much, doesn't it? They just can't manage to take care of business. Well, ladies and gentlemen -- and, uh, sources of light -- I know you're all busy this time of year, so I'll get right to the reason I've called this meeting. This shouldn't take long. It's mostly a briefing. We've had an application for another winter festival this month.

KWANZAA: Who do you mean, "we"?

SCHEDULER: *(Uncomfortably.)* Well, of course, I mean the powers that be.

FESTIVUS: And you're one of those powers that be? Is that what you're telling us?

SCHEDULER: I am their agent, so in all practical matters, yes. I am one of them.

SOLSTICE: Oh, leave him alone. He's just a government lackey trying to do his job.

SCHEDULER: Thank you.

FESTIVUS: Okay, so you've got an application. You called a meeting for that? What's that got to do with us? We're all registered. Got our paperwork in and up-to-date. Well, I have, anyway. I don't know about the rest of you guys.

KWANZAA: Guys?

SCHEDULER: Well, Festivus, what it has to do with the rest of you guys and gals is that the application has pushed forward an issue that's been simmering for a while and that we…that can no longer be left on the back burner.

KWANZAA: Dig the groovy metaphor, and the switch to the passive voice. This boy is distancing himself.

HANUKKAH: A simmering issue. That issue is…?

SCHEDULER: The overwhelming number of holiday events and festivals in December.

KWANZAA: Yeah, baby! Lots going on. Creates good energy.

SCHEDULER: You may be right up to a point, Kwanzaa, but only up to a point. The situation has gotten out of hand. As you know better than most, a number of December holidays have appeared in the relatively near past. Kwanzaa isn't the newest by any measure. There's the Burning of the Clocks, established in the UK in 1993. *(Consults his clipboard.)* Well, now that I look, I see that one may have died a natural death. Good. Still, I think you all can appreciate the problem.

KWANZAA: So deny the application. We've got the season covered. What's the big deal?

SCHEDULER: The big deal is that there are major changes in the works. We're getting ready to roll out a new campaign that will revolutionize the season. Inviting you to this meeting was mostly just a courtesy, but those of you who did manage to show up will be glad you did. You will have some say in how the shakeout affects you.

KWANZAA: Am I the only one who's noticed how nervous and shifty this white-faced pencil pusher is acting all of a sudden?

FESTIVUS: You're right. *(Turns to SCHEDULER.)* Come on. What's up?

SCHEDULER: *(Reluctantly.)* Since the number of winter festivals has reached unsustainable levels, some of you are being let go. We're downsizing. Right-sizing.

SANTA: You've let things get out of hand, and we have to pay the price for your lack of oversight?

FESTIVUS: Wait a minute! Can they do that? What about our contracts?

KWANZAA: Does the ACLU know about this?

SCHEDULER: I know this is a shock and it comes when you are all in the middle of gearing up for your big seasonal push, but putting things off will only make it worse. They felt it would be better for all concerned to deal with the issue head on and all at once.

FESTIVUS: So you're just the hatchet man.

KWANZAA: Yeah! Notice how he's not saying "we" anymore? Now it's all "they."

SOLSTICE: When you say you're letting "some" of us go, uh, young, uh, man, I assume you're talking about the others. If that's what this meeting is about, I don't know why you bothered to summon me. I assume you will grandmother me in. I have more seniority than anybody here.

SCHEDULER: That may be true, Solstice, and I'm not saying it isn't, but even if it is, it's irrelevant. The guys upstairs in the big corner offices are looking at charts, public opinion polls, that kind of thing, and the facts show that you, Solstice, don't have much of a market share these days. You are mostly taken for granted.

SANTA: You want to talk about market share? Let me tell you about my market share!

FESTIVUS: Oh, yeah, market share. Big deal.

SCHEDULER: Okay, everybody, settle down and listen up. We're downsizing. Fact. But you do still have some options. One idea you ought to consider is finding a way to work together. *(As the OTHERS eye each other warily, SCHEDULER continues.)* You could take the Pastafarians' approach and adopt an all-purpose holiday, they call it Holiday, incidentally, without -- what's their phrase? -- *(Consults notes.)* without dogma and formalism.

SANTA: What does that mean?

HANUKKAH: It means they're putting the worshippers of the flying spaghetti monster on a par with the rest of us. I resent it.

FESTIVUS: Yeah. Me, too! What's a festival without dogma and formalism, anyway?

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