A MERRY OLDE CHRISTMAS

By Bruce Kunkle, Ruth Nagy
and Susie Kunkle

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy this script in any way or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information.

On all programs and advertising the author's name must appear as well as this notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Co."

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
www.histage.com

© 2001 By Bruce Kunkle, Ruth Nagy
and Susie Kunkle

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/merry-olde-christmas

STORY OF THE PLAY

Emily Ainsley, an idealistic young lady, is trying to provide a home to young orphans. She rents space from a greedy businessman, Aloysius Penningham, but gets behind in the payments. He proposes marriage to her (so that he can manage her future inheritance) or threatens eviction if she refuses. Penningham is visited by Harrold, an angel in the guise of a gentleman, while other well-meaning folk attempt to help Emily. A ragtag band of pickpockets creates havoc and humor as Penningham is forced to confront the consequences of his sins. Desperate, Penningham is forced to follow Harrold's advice which results in a profound change of heart and a truly merry Christmas for all.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 6 w, 6 boys, 4 girls)

ALOYSIUS PENNINGHAM: Greedy businessman.
HARROLD: Angel. Also plays part of Fergus, the chimney sweep.
EMILY AINSLEY: Young woman running orphanage.
CATHERINE FITZROY-PALMER: Daughter of Isabella.
EDMUND LOCKHART: Solicitor to Penningham.
ALBERT HAZLETT: Penningham's clerk.
ISABELLA FITZROY-PALMER: Catherine and Charlotte's mother.
FREDDY: Head pickpocket.
MRS. GOULDSBERRY: Penningham's housekeeper.
MAJOR GEORGE FITZROY-PALMER: Isabella's second husband.
PRUDENCE HOLBART: Emily's friend.
CATHERINE: As a child.
CHARLOTTE: As a child, Catherine's younger sister.
PICKPOCKET 1: Young street thief.
PICKPOCKET 2: Another.
PICKPOCKET 3: Another.
AMY: The oldest orphan.
MARGARET: An orphan.
PETER: Another orphan.
ERIC: The youngest orphan.
NURSE: At the old orphanage. (Part can be doubled by the actress playing Prudence.)

See back of playbook for production notes.

SYNOPSIS

Act I, Scene 1: December 10, 1867. A foggy London street.
Scene 2: Penningham's office.
Scene 3: The Fitzroy-Palmer home.
Scene 4: Penningham's office.
Scene 5: The street.
Scene 6: Penningham's house.
Act II, Scene 1: Penningham's house.
Scene 2: The Fitzroy-Palmer home.
Scene 3: The street.
Scene 4: Outside Penningham's office.
Scene 5: Outside Penningham's office.
Scene 6: Albert's office.
Scene 7: The orphanage.
Act III, Scene 1: Later the same day in the street.
Scene 2: The Fitzroy-Palmer home.
Scene 3: Penningham's office.
Scene 4: The street.
Scene 5: Penningham's house.
Scene 6: The orphanage, Christmas day.

SET LIST

London street: Houses painted on backdrop, benches (1-2), lamppost.
Penningham's office: Outer office has a desk, stool, coat rack, chair. Inner office has a desk, 2 chairs.
Fitzroy-Palmer house: Table with cloth, 3 nice chairs.
Catherine's Orphanage: One old chair.
Penningham's house: Table, bench.
Emily's Orphanage: Small, simply decorated Christmas tree, benches and stools.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: A foggy London street. LIGHTS fade to SPOT on HARROLD. Optional: fog during the monologue.)

HARROLD: Hello. I'm glad you're all here. My name is Harrold and I'm what some of you call an angel. I'm on an assignment. I've had better ones, but this one looks like it might be rather challenging. *(Walks towards Penningham's office.)* In this office works the man who is the subject of my mission. He's not a very popular fellow these days. Though he works hard, he has never made enough money to suit him. Of course, he never will - greed is his god and what a demanding god it is. He does not treat his fellow man well, and he has a dark secret or two.

I know who you're thinking of and <u>his</u> office is farther down the street, that way. <u>My</u> assignment's name is Aloysius Penningham and you're right to think that he's not a very nice fellow, but the Boss is very concerned about him anyway.

Penningham grew up in a loving family; at least he was once close to his sister, Isabella. But since she married her first husband, their relationship has grown cold. You might even say, non-existent. He rejected her for marrying someone he felt didn't have enough of what it takes. *(Tosses a coin in the air a few times.)* After all, supporting his sister was not what Aloysius had in mind to do with his money. So when her husband died, Aloysius turned his back on her and her two small daughters. Even now, just a few days before we celebrate Christmas, the joy of the season is absent from ... *(Sarcasm.*) dear Aloysius' heart. *(Pause.)* My assignment is to try to redeem his soul.

(PENNINGHAM enters DR; ORPHANS approach from UL and ask for donation, HARROLD sits on bench SR.)

ERIC: *(Looks up at PENNINGHAM.*) Excuse me, sir, but could you spare a coin for the orphans' 'ome? It is almost Christmas, after all.

PENN: Bah! Christmas? Christmas, you say? Yes, I suppose it is. But Christmas will be here and gone, and if I give you a coin, I'll be out a coin and you'll still be begging in the streets. No, find some other fool to give you a coin. You'll not get a brass farthing from Aloysius Penningham!

(PENNINGHAM stomps off SR. EMILY and PRUDENCE enter from UL. ORPHANS look at one another, several give him the raspberries after his exit.)

ERIC: *(Runs to EMILY.)* Miss Ainsley! Miss Ainsley! Look 'ow much we got! *(THEY thrust rag with money inside at HER face.)*

EMILY: *(SHE takes money, hugs THEM.)* Oh, children, that's wonderful.

ERIC: We even asked mean old Mr. Penningham.

EMILY: That was very brave of you.

ERIC: But he told us he wouldn't *(Imitates Penningham.)* "give us a brass farthing." He kind of scared me.

EMILY: Oh, don't let Mr. Penningham frighten you. Remember, he doesn't have the joy of Christmas in his heart.

MARG: Do you want us to be nice to him?

EMILY: That's the spirit, Margaret. Besides, Christmas is a time to make wonderful memories, not to be unhappy and miserable.

MARG: Make memories? What do you mean?

EMILY: Well, you know. What do you think of when you remember Christmas? I think of lots of wonderful things.

AMY: Really? Like what?

EMILY: *(Caught off guard.)* Well, uh. Let me think. Uh ... well, there are so many things. *(Looks around for help.)*

MARG: Oh?

EMILY: Right. At our house, there always were such delicious smells at Christmas time.

AMY: You mean like, *(Excited.)* plum pudding?

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/merry-olde-christmas

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!