The Christmas Café

A comedy in three scenes

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

"The Christmas Café" is set in a restaurant at an undisclosed location. Betty, the waitress and cook, serves customers from three different familiar holiday stories: "The Night Before Christmas" by Clemet Clarke Moore, "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, and "The Nutcracker" by E.T.A. Hoffman.

In "All of the Other Reindeer," Blitzen is burned out and upset that he's always last on the team. The other reindeer have suggestions: Cupid thinks he needs a love life; Donder suggests a good stock portfolio, Prancer thinks an exercise regime is the answer. Baffled, the other reindeer call in Santa's newest hire, a reindeer called Freud. They tell her Blitzen has jealousy and anger issues. Finally, the waitress Betty simply suggests another reindeer take a turn being last. Finally Blitzen has a better outlook.

In "Bah! Humbug!" Marley's Ghost goes to Scrooge's house, but a century and a half too late! The Spirits of Past, Present and Future confront him, but everything's messed up. Now Tiny Tim is a football player.

In "Nutcrackered," E.T.A Hoffman is struggling with writer's block. Young Clara and her brother Fritz give him inspiration when they tell him a wild story about a magical nutcracker.

The play may be performed on a bare stage with café tables and chairs. The genders of some of the characters may be altered to fit the director's needs.

Scene 1: "All of the Other Reindeer"

(4 m, 6 w)

BETTY: A waitress.
BLITZEN: A reindeer, burned out, male.
DONDER: Another, an investment broker.
DASHER: A reindeer, hyper, male.
DANCER: A reindeer, a dancer, female.
CUPID: A reindeer, matchmaker, female.
PRANCER: A reindeer, a gymnast, female.
VIXEN: A reindeer, glamorous and stylish, female.
COMET: A reindeer, an astronomer, intelligent, male.
FREUD: A reindeer, psychologist, female.

Scene 2: "Bah! Humbug!"

(8 m, 5 w, 2 flexible)

BETTY: A waitress.
MARLEY'S GHOST: A ghost, male.
CHRISTMAS PAST: A spirit, female.
CHRISTMAS PRESENT: A spirit and a glutton, male.
CHRISTMAS FUTURE: A spirit, speaks no lines, flexible.
BOBBY: A child, flexible.
MOMMY: Bobby's mother.
DADDY: Bobby's father.
BIG TIM: Formerly Tiny Tim.
COACH: Tim's football coach.
FAN: Scrooge's sister, a lawyer.
BELLE: The love of Scrooge's life, a lawyer.
FEZZIWIG: A former employer of Scrooge's.
BOB CRATCHIT: An employee of Scrooge's, Tim's father.
SCROOGE: A very happy and generous man.

Scene 3: "Nutcrackered"

(6 m, 3 w, 3 flexible)

BETTY: A waitress.
E.T.A. HOFFMAN: A lawyer who wants to be a writer.
FRITZ: A bratty boy, Clara's brother.
CLARA: A young girl, Fritz' sister.
THEODORE: Cousin of Fritz and Clara.
ERNST: Cousin of Fritz and Clara.
THREE MICE: Male or female.
DROSSELMEYER: Clara's godfather.
NUTCRACKER: A handsome prince.
OFFICER JANE: A police officer.

Costumes

Scene 1: The reindeer costumes should be simple cardboard antlers and dress to reflect each character. Blitzen wears jeans and a sweater or dress shirt. He carries a newspaper. *Donder, as a stockbroker, wears a business suit and carries a briefcase. Dasher, who is very hyper and speaks his lines quickly, wears a jogging suit and sneakers. Dancer wears a leotard and dance shoes. Cupid, a matchmaker, wears a tacky dress with hearts and carries a bow and a quiver of arrows. Prancer, a gymnast, wears a leotard or warm-up suit. Vixen, glamorous and alluring, should wear stylish clothes, perhaps a fur piece. Comet, the scientific type, wears a lab coat and horn-rimmed glasses. Freud, the newest reindeer, is a psychologist. She wears glasses, a business suit and carries a clipboard, or wears a medical coat with a stethoscope around her neck.

Scene 2: The characters should dress as close to the Dickens' characters as possible, with the exceptions of Fan and Belle, who are modern-day attorneys. Past wears a white dress and has a garland of flowers in her hair. Present wears a colorful robe and is draped with strands of artificial greenery. Christmas Future wears the traditional black robe and may have his/her face hidden beneath a hood. The robe covers the arms so that a bare tree branch can be used for pointing. The family living in Scrooge's old house (Mommy, Daddy and Child), should wear modern-day pj's and bathrobes.

Scene 3: Hoffman wears a winter coat, gloves, a scarf and hat, and carries a briefcase. Clara and Fritz should resemble characters from the ballet and wear robes and pj's. The mice costumes can be simple ears of cardboard and painted whiskers on their faces. Soldiers could wear band jackets. Officer Jane is in a police uniform and winter jacket.

** "Donner" is often used for "Donder." Either name would be acceptable for this play.*

Scene 1
"All of the Other Reindeer"

(AT RISE: The Christmas Café. BETTY is wiping tables. BLITZEN enters. He has a newspaper under his arm. He crosses to a table, sits, picks up a menu and studies it. Betty exits, then returns with a glass of water. She prepares to take Blitzen's order.)

BETTY: Okay. What ya want? I ain't got all night.
BLITZEN: *(Annoyed.)* I just sat down. Will you give me a minute?
BETTY: I'll give you twenty seconds. *(Looking closer at BLITZEN.)* Hey, you look familiar. *(Cautiously.)* Would you happen to be ... a reindeer?
BLITZEN: *(Sarcastic.)* A reindeer? Well, let's see. Reindeer have antlers. Do I have antlers?
BETTY: Uh huh.
BLITZEN: Reindeer have hooves. Do I have hooves? *(BETTY bends over and looks under the table.)*
BETTY: I can't tell. You're wearing boots.
BLITZEN: It's cold outside!
BETTY: We get lots of reindeers in here.
BLITZEN: Anything wrong with reindeer?
BETTY: Well, they're kind of messy. And they aren't very good tippers.
BLITZEN: Maybe you're not a very good waitress!
BETTY: You don't need to get nasty! Say, would you happen to be one of the famous reindeers?
BLITZEN: It's rein-DEER. There's no "s" on the end of the word.
BETTY: What if there's more than one of you?
BLITZEN: It's rein-DEER! Singular and plural!
BETTY: Oh. Singular and plural, huh? *(BLITZEN nods.)* Well, that's good to know. Same thing either way.
BLITZEN: Right.
BETTY: So, are you one of those famous reindeers?
BLITZEN: *(Preens.)* Well ... I don't want to attract a lot of attention ... *(BETTY bends over and looks at HIS face.)* What are you doing?

BETTY: Checking out your nose. Does it light up?
BLITZEN: NO!
BETTY: It isn't red either. You're not him. *(BLITZEN registers offense.)*
BLITZEN: *(Aside.)* Of course I'm not him! I hate that guy!
BETTY: Since you're not the guy with the red nose, I'm not wasting any more time on you. What'd you want?
BLITZEN: I'll have the chef's special bark and berry plate. And maybe a rosebush salad.
BETTY: To drink?
BLITZEN: Coffee. Make sure it's decaf. *(BETTY takes down his order.)*
BETTY: I heard on TV there's a new reindeer on the team. Everybody's excited about it. *(SHE looks at BLITZEN.)*
BLITZEN: *(Sarcastic.)* Whoopie.
BETTY: I guess that's not you either.
BLITZEN: You got that one right.
BETTY: I really liked the one with the red nose.
BLITZEN: That guy was a fraud!
BETTY: How do you fake being a reindeer? Either you are one, or you aren't. It's not like a polar bear can put on some fake antlers and pass himself off as a reindeer.

(BLITZEN sighs deeply and counts to ten. SHE exits. He reads his paper.)

BLITZEN: *(Reading.)* "New Reindeer Joins Sleigh. The charisma of a rock star and the brains of a Rhodes scholar." And there's a photo of her. Isn't she lovely? *(Throws down the paper.)* I can't stand this!

(DONDER enters carrying a briefcase.)

DONDER: Hey! Blitzen! How's it going? *(HE crosses to the table and sits. BLITZEN is not happy to see him.)*
BLITZEN: *(Sarcastic, aside.)* Great. It's Donder. It just keeps getting better. *(To DONDER.)* I thought you'd be watching over your Wall Street investments.

End of Freeview

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