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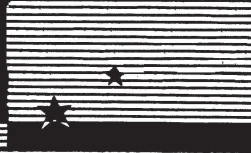
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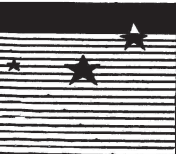
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Dramatic Publishing



the toys take over christmas

BY PATRICIA CLAPP



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

The Toys Take Over Christmas

Drama. By Patricia Clapp.

Cast: 4m., 6w. The hardhearted toymaker refuses to sell any of the dolls he makes, but his magic has made them almost like real children and they want to escape the workshop and have fun with other children. The toys are wonderfully varied. There's prim Tina, the fashion-plate doll; a tomboy clown who is so afraid of the toymaker that she agrees with everything he says; and the rag doll, Sunny, whose legs were badly stuffed so she's always on the verge of falling down and has to be helped up by the gallant wooden soldier. Now the toys are in revolt against the toymaker, and when they find a jar of hearts, they pin one on him. Zowie—the heart does its stuff! *One int. set.*

10 ISBN: 0-87129-545-8

13 ISBN: 978-0-87129545-3



9780871295453 01977

www.dramaticpublishing.com

Code: T-46



printed on recycled paper



A CHRISTMAS PLAY IN ONE ACT

the toys take over christmas

BY
PATRICIA CLAPP



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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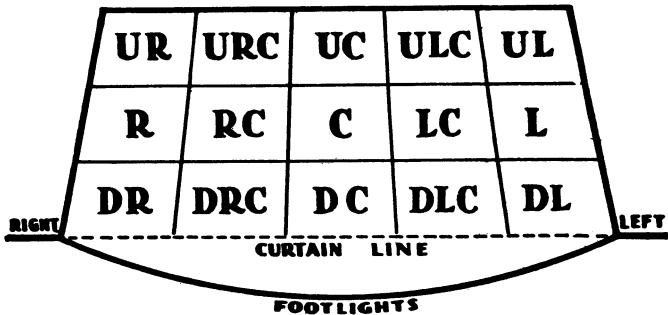
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THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

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(THE TOYS TAKE OVER CHRISTMAS)

ISBN 0-87129-545-8

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

THE TOYS TAKE OVER CHRISTMAS

SCENE: The interior of a toyshop. UC is the outer door, over which hangs a small bell that tinkles when door is opened. UL and R are shelves. On L shelves a variety of stuffed and wooden toys. On R shelves are oversized paint pots, brushes, scissors, spools wound with yarn, boxes and large jars bearing labels that read, "EYES," "STUFFING," "BUTTONS," "TRIM-MINGS," etc. A long work table stands RC. DR is the door to the TOYMAKER's apartment. Between this door and the table is a trunk with a huge padlock. DL is a tall stool.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: Soft strains of Victor Herbert's "Toyland" are heard, which will fade after one or two speeches. SUNNY, the rag doll, lies limply on the work table, completely inanimate. TOYMAKER is putting the last touches of paint on her face. TINA sits in her rather "pose-y" fashion on stool L. COLETTE, the clown, sits cross-legged on top of trunk. The three wooden SOLDIERS stand stiffly at L. All are watching the TOYMAKER.

TOYMAKER. There! She is almost finished! Did you ever see such beautiful work?

DOLLS (in robot-like unison). Never, Master!

TOYMAKER. It is because I am so clever! I took great care making each one of you, and see how well you turned out! Now! A touch more

paint on her smile -- there! What do you think? (TOYMAKER supports SUNNY's head so DOLLS can see her face.)

DOLLS (in unison). Well done, Master.

TOYMAKER (impatiently). Of course it's well done! What else would you expect from the most famous toymaker in the world?

DOLLS (in unison). Nothing else, Master. You are the most famous of all!

TOYMAKER. Cor-rect! And see that you never forget it! Now! Now for the last bit of special magic that no other toymaker know about! Get off that trunk, Clown Doll.

COLETTE (hastily sliding off trunk). Yes, Master!

TOYMAKER. The key. The key. (Feels in his various pockets.) Where did I put the key?

(Finds it -- a huge one.) Ah, here it is.

(Goes to trunk, starts to unlock it.) I'll just get that special bit of magic ---

TINA (sliding off stool, moving closer). What kind of magic is it, Master?

TOYMAKER. It's Magic Doll Dust! My own special, guaranteed, patented brand of Magic Doll Dust! (Lifts lid of trunk, reaches in.)

TINA (a little closer). Magic Doll Dust?

TOYMAKER (lifting out glass jar filled with gold glitter). There! See? Isn't it beautiful? And nobody has it but me!

TINA. Oh yes, it is beautiful! It shines!

TOYMAKER. That's the magic in it. That's what makes it shine.

TINA (trying to peer into trunk). What else is in that trunk?

TOYMAKER (slamming lid down quickly). Never you mind! What's in that trunk has nothing to do with you! That's a magic trunk, and everything in it is magic! And it's all mine!

TINA (mystified but docile). Yes, Master. As you say, Master.

TOYMAKER (moving to above work table). That's better. You're only a doll, you know. You mustn't try to be too smart -- not any of you!

DOLLS (in unison). Very well, Master.

TOYMAKER (warningly). Just remember! (Opens jar, scoops out a small pinch of Magic Doll Dust and sprinkles it over SUNNY.) This is what makes me the cleverest -- and the greatest! -- toymaker in the whole world! There you are, my pretty -- a little sprinkle of this, and one - two - three - presto! You walk, talk and breathe! (Stands back from table, pleased with himself. TINA moves to Left of table, SOLDIERS and CAPTAIN to LC, COLETTE kneels on top of trunk, all watch closely.)

SUNNY (sitting up rather floppily). I do?

TOYMAKER. Of course.

SUNNY. Are you sure? I walk, talk and breathe?

TOYMAKER. Do you doubt me? Me? The Master Toymaker?

SUNNY (interested but unimpressed). Oh, is that who you are? (Offers her mittened hand.) How do you do, Mr. Toymaker? (Shakes hands.)

TOYMAKER. Just call me Master.

SUNNY. So I walk, talk and breathe! Well, I do seem to be talking, don't I?

COLETTE. A great deal.

SUNNY (experimenting with a deep breath). And look at that! I can breathe!

TOYMAKER (smugly). Naturally!

SUNNY. What fun! (Takes rapid breaths and starts fo cough.)

CAPTAIN (moving in, pounding SUNNY on her back, almost knocking her off the table.) Not so fast! You have to get used to it!

SUNNY. I guess you're right. (Swings her feet over edge of table as CAPTAIN wheels and marches back to his position.) Let's try the walking part. (Slides off table and collapses on floor.) Oops! I don't seem to have the hang of it yet. (SOLDIERS #1 and #2 move to each side of her and haul her to her feet.)

SOLDIER #1. Try it again, now.

SUNNY (happily). Don't let go!

SOLDIER #2. We won't. (Floppily she manages a few steps with SOLDIERS' support.)

SUNNY. Well, I'm not very graceful, but I get there. (To SOLDIERS.) Thank you.

SOLDIER #1. Any time. (SOLDIERS let her go on her rather erratic ramble.)

CAPTAIN (watching SUNNY). I wonder if you put enough stuffing in her legs, Master.

TOYMAKER. You question me? The Master Toymaker?

SUNNY (cheerfully). I do feel as if something was missing, but I'm not about to have my legs restuffed now. I'll just have to wobble.

CAPTAIN (kindly). You'll catch on.

SUNNY (patting TOYMAKER clumsily on the cheek). Stuffing or no stuffing, I do thank you for making me. You're really very clever!

TOYMAKER (strutting). The cleverest! There is no one -- absolutely no one -- who can make dolls as real as the ones I make.

TINA (returning to stool). That is why he won't sell us.

SUNNY (to C). What is why he won't sell us?

COLETTE (getting off trunk). Because we are so wonderful. (Does a somersault.) We really

are. How many dolls do you know who can do that?

SUNNY. I don't know any other dolls. And I still don't see why the toymaker won't sell us.

SOLDIER #2. Tell her, Master.

TOYMAKER (to DRC). One, (Speaks rapidly, ticking off points on his fingers.) you are much too good for clumsy children to play with. Two, I am so proud of my work I want to keep you with me always. Three, if any other toymaker got his hands on you he might copy my magic. Four, since I have made you, and permitted you to walk, talk and breathe, you shouldn't ask personal questions!

SUNNY (mildly). Ther's one finger left over,

TOYMAKER. I can't help it. That's the way I was made.

SUNNY (looking at her mittened hands). It's easier for me. I only have two fingers. I think. (Tries a floppy little dance.) Hey, look, Mr. Toymaker -- I'm getting better!

TOYMAKER (nettled). I told you to call me Master!

SUNNY (honest surprise). Why should I call you Master?

COLETTE (stage whisper). I'm warning you -- don't make him cross!

TOYMAKER. Because I am your master. I made you, didn't I?

SUNNY. Yes, I suppose you did.

TOYMAKER. And I sprinkled you with Magic Doll Dust so you can walk, talk and breathe, didn't I?

SUNNY. Oh, is that what did it? Magic Doll Dust?

TOYMAKER. My very own special, guaranteed, patented Magic Doll Dust! It makes you almost as real as real people!

CAPTAIN. Only almost as real? What do real people have that we don't have?

TOYMAKER. Never you mind! It doesn't concern you. You are perfectly happy just as you are! (Threateningly.) Aren't you?

ALL DOLLS (except SUNNY). Yes, Master!

TOYMAKER (eyeing SUNNY). What about you? Aren't you happy?

SUNNY (sidling up to him). What's "happy"?

TOYMAKER. Well -- it's -- it's -- it's not sad!

SUNNY (nodding wisely). Oh! (Beat.) What's "sad"?

TOYMAKER. Stop asking question! Just do as you're told! You're a happy rag doll! Do you understand?

SUNNY (diverted). Is that my name? Happy Rag Doll?

TOYMAKER. Name. Hmmm. Let me see. I suppose you ought to have a name -- I think I'll call you -- Sunny.

CAPTAIN. But boys are called "Sonny" -- not girls.

TOYMAKER. Not that kind of "Sonny," woodenhead! "Sunny" -- like the sun. Because I made her look so bright and happy.

SUNNY (trying it out). Sunny. Sunny. Well, that's all right, I guess --

TINA (rising from stool, crossing to SUNNY). And my name is Tina. I'm a fashion doll.

SUNNY (offering her hand). How do you do?

COLETTE (with an exaggerated bow). And I, as you might have guessed, am a clown doll.

SUNNY. I might have guessed, but I didn't. I don't think I'm very clever. (Turns to SOLDIERS.) But I bet I know what you are -- soldiers!

SOLDIERS (in unison). Right!

SUNNY. Wooden soldiers!

SOLDIERS (in unison). Right!

SUNNY. But which is which?

SOLDIER #1. I am Soldier #1.

SOLDIER #2. And I am Soldier #2.

SUNNY (quickly). Don't tell me, let me guess!

(Turns to CAPTAIN.) You are Soldier #3!

Right?

CAPTAIN. Wrong! I am the Captain! (Clicks heels, bows.)

SUNNY. Well, I can't win them all. (Returns bow, falls over.) Oops, there I go again. (SOLDIERS haul her to her feet.) Mr. Master Toymaker, maybe you did leave some stuffing out of my legs!

TOYMAKER. Nonsense! I would never make a silly mistake like that -- you're just clumsy. (Picks up jar of Magic Doll Dust, starts for trunk.) Out of the way now, while I put this away.

TINA. What else is in that trunk, Master? I saw other things in there.

TOYMAKER (opens trunk, pops the jar in, slaps the lid down). You saw nothing! Nothing at all!

TINA. But I'm sure --- (Bell on the shop door tinkles as door opens.)

TOYMAKER. Ah, a customer! (Turns to door, does not lock trunk.) Some silly person who thinks there are toys for sale in this shop! Watch how clever I am! Not one of you will be sold!

(OLD WOMAN enters. She is bent over, her face almost hidden by a shawl.)

TOYMAKER. Good day, madam. What can I do for you?

OLD WOMAN (a thin quavering voice). A toy. I want to buy a toy.

TOYMAKER (briskly). No toys for sale here.

OLD WOMAN (it doesn't penetrate). It is almost Christmas, and my little grandchild -- I should like to give my grandchild a toy for Christmas.

TOYMAKER (as before). No toys for sale here.

OLD WOMAN (not hearing). Something to play with -- something bright and shining and wonderful. I have saved my pennies all year long, now I can give my grandchild a Christmas toy!

TOYMAKER. No toys for sale here.

OLD WOMAN. I think perhaps -- (Looks around at dolls.) -- perhaps a doll. Yes, a lovely big doll would do nicely.

TOYMAKER. No dolls for sale, either.

OLD WOMAN (pointing to SUNNY). Perhaps that one. Yes, I think I should like -- (Stops, turning to TOYMAKER.) -- what did you say?

TOYMAKER. I said "No toys for sale here," and then I said "No dolls for sale, either."

OLD WOMAN. But this is the toyshop, isn't it?

TOYMAKER (enjoying himself). In a manner of speaking, yes.

OLD WOMAN. Then how much is that rag doll?

TOYMAKER (rattling it off with fiendish pleasure). Five trillion, seventy-three billion, six million, thirty thousand, fifty-one hundred and two dollars, and six cents.

OLD WOMAN (stares at him a moment, stunned). What is the six cents for?

TOYMAKER. That's tax.

- OLD WOMAN. Oh. (A beat.) Would you mind repeating that figure? I don't think I heard you correctly. It sounded as though you said five trillion, seventy-three billion --
- TOYMAKER. Six million, thirty thousand, fifty-one hundred and two dollars.
- COLETTE. And six cents.
- TOYMAKER. And six cents.
- OLD WOMAN (hopefully). I have the six cents.
- TOYMAKER (bringing things to a close). Sorry, madam. I told you the price. I also told you there are no toys for sale here.
- OLD WOMAN. But my grandchild -- Christmas is coming, and what is Christmas without a toy?
- TOYMAKER (sneering). You had better write a letter to Santa Claus. I hear that silly old man gives his toys away! The more fool he!
- OLD WOMAN. Santa Claus a fool? What are you saying? Santa Claus is the greatest toymaker in the world!
- TOYMAKER (angered). Bosh and nonsense! I make better toys than Santa Claus does!
- OLD WOMAN. No one makes better toys than Santa Claus.
- TOYMAKER. Do his toys talk?
- OLD WOMAN. Some of them. You pull a string and the dolls say things.
- TOYMAKER. Aha! With my dolls you don't have to pull a string! (Snaps his fingers.) Dolls, say something!
- DOLLS (in unison). Yes, Master!
- TOYMAKER. There! Can Santa Claus's dolls do that?
- OLD WOMAN (unhappily). I don't think so.
- TOYMAKER. And my dolls breathe! (Snaps fingers.) Breathe for the lady! (DOLLS all

breathe rapidly and heavily. SUNNY gets a coughing fit, SOLDIERS #1 and #2 slap her on the back, catching her as she starts to fall over.)

SUNNY (to SOLDIERS). Thank you.

TOYMAKER. And my dolls walk! Do Santa Claus's dolls walk?

OLD WOMAN (loyally). Some of them -- if you hold their hands --

TOYMAKER. No one needs to hold the hands of my dolls! (Snaps fingers.) Walk for the lady! (DOLLS walk round and round and in and out.

SUNNY lurches along, aided by SOLDIERS when she stumbles.)

SUNNY. Oops, that was a close one.

TOYMAKER (an aside to SUNNY). Clumsy! (To OLD WOMAN.) Now who makes better toys, Santa Claus or I?

OLD WOMAN (angry, but dignified). Your toys may walk, and talk and breathe, but what use is that if no child can ever love them? Christmas is a time for giving, Mr. Toymaker, but you ask prices for your toys that no one can ever pay, so they will never belong to anyone but you. Toys were made to be loved -- given to children and loved! But there is no giving and no love in your shop, Mr. Toymaker -- and so, good day to you! (Decisively, OLD WOMAN exits.)

TOYMAKER. Silly old woman! Santa Claus the Master Toymaker, indeed! He sits up there in the frozen north making toys that he gives away -- making dolls that are just dolls! Stiff, stuffed, staring creatures! They can't compare with the dolls I make!

CAPTAIN. Because of the Magic Doll Dust?

TOYMAKER. Egg-zactly! My special, guaranteed, patented Magic Doll Dust! If Santa Claus had that, he might -- just might, mind you -- be almost as good as I am. But without it, I am certainly the greatest toymaker who ever lived! Am I not right?

DOLLS (in unison). Yes, Master.

TOYMAKER. Of course I am! Silly old woman! Wanting to give one of you to her grandchild! You'd be hugged, and cuddled, and mused and crushed -- no! I will never let any of you go! I am the Master Toymaker, the greatest in the world, and I have a headache! I must lie down. Don't make too much noise.

DOLLS. No, Master. (TOYMAKER exits R. DOLLS gaze after him in silence for a moment.)

SUNNY (loudly and cheerfully). Well! Now that he's gone --

DOLLS (in unison, finger to lips). Ssssh! (They move toward SUNNY.)

SUNNY. Why should I ssssh?

TINA. Didn't you hear the Master tell us to be quiet?

SOLDIER #1. Actually, what he said was, "Don't make too much noise."

TINA. It's the same thing.

CAPTAIN. Not exactly. Making "too much noise" is shooting our guns, or marching around very loud -- like this. (Starts to march, stamping heavily. Other two SOLDIERS fall in step behind him.)

COLETTE (pleading). Oh, please be quiet! The Master will be angry with us again! (SOLDIERS stop marching.)

SUNNY. Does he get angry often?