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Dramatic Publishing

THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL

A Play
by
JAMES DeVITA



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL was originally produced in Wisconsin by First Stage Milwaukee. It premiered December 5, 1997 under the direction of Rob Goodman. The set design and costume design were by Rick Rasmussen, lighting design by Leroy Stoner, sound design by Doug Hillard, and the production stage manager was Bradley Bingheim. The cast was as follows:

Peter	JOEL BAUER
Michele	HENRI BOYD
Aunt Bop	JENNIFER CLARK
Hannah	KATIE GONRING
Russell	DARA KENNAN
Ginny	CONNIE KOWALSKI
Uncle Mike	MICHAEL LAGUE
Grandma	ELAINE REWOLINSKI
Rick	JAMES RIDGE

THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL

A Christmas Play

For 3 men and 4 women, 1 boy and 1 girl

CHARACTERS

GRANDMA (Barbara)

RUSSELL Her son.

RICK Another son.

GINNY Married to Rick.

PETER 10-12, son of Russell.

HANNAH 8-10, daughter of Rick and Ginny.

UNCLE MIKE Brother-in-law to Barbara. A widower.

AUNT BOP Lifelong friend of Barbara.

MICHELE An angel.

TIME: Christmas Eve. The present.

PLACE: An average middle-class home in the suburbs.

For Pop-Pop

THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL

SETTING: *An average middle-class home in the suburbs over-decorated for Christmas. There is a dining room with the table set for dinner. In the living room is a large bay window. An archway UL leads into the kitchen. The kitchen also has access to the dining room on the R side. The actual kitchen is not visible to the audience. There are stairs to the second floor, also stairs or a door to the basement.*

AT RISE: *Christmas Eve. Holiday music is playing. GRANDMA is vacuuming. MIKE is in the kitchen cooking. RUSSELL is downstairs watching a football game, we can hear him at times yelling in response to the game. During the opening dialog, PETER runs down the stairs from the second floor with Grandpa's hat on his head. He bolts across the stage to the dining room. He is searching the house for presents. He reappears through the archway of the kitchen, runs downstairs to the basement, runs back up the stairs. He commando-crawls underneath the cord of the vacuum, and looks under the couch. During this, GRANDMA takes a glass figurine angel off a shelf, cleans it, and puts it back.*

PETER. My mom call yet?

GRANDMA. Not yet, honey. (*Handing him a fishing net.*)

Put this away. (*PETER exits downstairs.*)

RUSS (*from downstairs*). Peter, don't stand in front of the TV!

(*PETER runs up.*)

GRANDMA (*cleaning*). Peter. Get off the floor, honey, there's nothing under there. C'mon, now. (*PETER exits to kitchen.*) Why don't you go downstairs and—

MIKE (*bellowing from kitchen*). Barbara!

GRANDMA (*calling to PETER*). Go watch the game with your father. (*We hear pots and pans as PETER rummages through a cabinet.*)

MIKE (*from kitchen*). Barbara!

GRANDMA. Peter, come out here and leave your Uncle Mike alone. (*GRANDMA exits to kitchen.*)

MIKE (*from kitchen*). Russell!

RUSS (*from basement*). Peter!

(*PETER runs out the opposite side of kitchen that GRANDMA entered. He has wooden spoons. She exits from kitchen.*)

GRANDMA. Don't bother your Uncle Mike when he's cooking. And stop hitting my furniture, I just polished.

PETER. Pop-Pop said it was in the house somewhere.

GRANDMA. Peter, honey, I told you a hundred times, I don't know where it is. I looked everywhere.

(*Over the following dialogue MIKE enters, takes away the wooden spoons from PETER, and exits. He's dressed*

in a sweater and plaid pants. He wears an apron that says "LEAVE ME ALONE." The "O" in the word ALONE is a frowning face. MIKE is gruff and bossy, a curmudgeon; but it is also a bit of an act that the family has come to expect of him, and he enjoys living up to.)

PETER. Where? Where'd you look?

GRANDMA (*vacuuming*). Feet.

PETER (*lifting his feet*). Where'd you look?

GRANDMA. Why don't you go watch the game with your dad. (*Calling out.*) Russell!

RUSS. Peter!

PETER. Pop-Pop said it was here.

GRANDMA. I'm sorry, Peter, I don't know where it is. (*PETER grabs a handful of nuts.*) Put those back. Put them back. Go on, now, go find something to do.

PETER (*at Christmas tree*). Hannah's pile is bigger than mine.

GRANDMA. Don't start that again.

PETER. It is.

GRANDMA. No, it's not.

PETER. I measured it. It's bigger.

GRANDMA. Her boxes are bigger. You have the same number of gifts.

PETER. Why are her boxes bigger?

GRANDMA. Peter, please? Let me just finish this room.

PETER. I'm bored.

GRANDMA. Go find something to do.

PETER. There *is* nothing to do.

GRANDMA. You want me to *find* something for you to do? (*He bolts for the basement.*) I thought so. Peter, be an angel, and clean up while you're down there, OK?

MIKE (*from kitchen*). Barbara!

GRANDMA. Just a minute, Mikey! —Russell? Russell!
Turn off the TV for ten seconds would you, please, and help—

MIKE (*from kitchen*). Barbara?!

GRANDMA. I'm coming! (*Calling down.*) Peter, put those toys away before somebody breaks their neck. (*RICK tries to get in front door. It's locked.*) Russell, would you get that?

(*MIKE enters from kitchen, pan in hand.*)

MIKE. I can't cook with this. Where's the big one?

GRANDMA. I don't know.

MIKE. You don't know?

(*Under this, PETER runs up from basement, grabs a handful of nuts.*)

GRANDMA. I don't know! (*Doorbell.*)

MIKE (*as PETER feints to kitchen*). Stay outta the kitchen.

PETER (*annoying MIKE*). Psych!

GRANDMA (*as PETER runs upstairs*). Stay out of Grandpa's room, OK, sweetie?

MIKE. I can't cook with this.

(*Doorbell. MIKE goes back into kitchen, rummaging through pans. RUSS can be heard in the basement screaming "Go! GO! GO! etc."*)

GRANDMA (*seeing PETER upstairs*). Peter, what did I say?

PETER. What?

GRANDMA. Stay out of there, OK, honey?

PETER. I won't touch anything. (*Doorbell.*)

GRANDMA. Russell would you *please* get the door!?

(A loud crash of pots from the kitchen, MIKE cursing under his breath. RUSSELL screaming downstairs. GRANDMA opens a fuse box which is clearly visible on-stage and flicks a switch. The music/TV goes off.)

RUSS. Mom! I'm watching the game! C'mon, I'm not a kid anymore! Mom!!

GRANDMA. Then stop acting like one. (*Opening door. GRANDMA throws open her arms, cheerfully melodramatic.*) My son! My son!

(RICK, GINNY, and HANNAH are at the door. GINNY is quite pregnant. RICK and GINNY are dressed casual-Christmas. HANNAH has a blue dress on, colorful cowboy boots. She is wearing an authentic-looking Indian headdress and a Walkman. She has also recently decided not to speak, so she communicates with her own sign language that she has invented. RICK is carrying luggage and presents. HANNAH lingers outside.)

MIKE (*from kitchen*). Russell!!

RICK. Hi, Mom. Merry Christmas.

GRANDMA. Russell, come up here, please. (*To RICK.*) Merry Christmas. Where's my favorite-pregnant-daughter-in-law?

RICK (*confidential to GRANDMA*). Tell her she looks good.

GRANDMA (to GINNY). Look at you, how good you look!

GINNY. Hi, Mom.

MIKE (from kitchen). Russell,

GRANDMA (calling). Russell, your brother's here! (To GINNY.) Watch your step, honey.

GINNY. The house looks great this year, Mom.

GRANDMA. You think so? It's not too much?

GINNY. No, Ma, it's...it's great.

(RUSS enters from basement. He is dressed very casual. He looks like he's been watching TV all day.)

RUSS (on his way to the kitchen; to RICK and family). Hi, guys.

RICK (to RUSS). Hey, you, Merry Christmas.

GINNY. Hi, Russell.

RUSS (calling out). Peter, what are you doing?!

PETER (from upstairs). Nothing!

RUSS. Well, do it down here!

MIKE (from kitchen). Russell!

RUSS. I'm coming already! (RUSS exits to kitchen; to MIKE.) What now?

GRANDMA (to RICK). Ooh, I missed you. Come on, come on, get in here. Hannah, honey, close the door, it's freezing. How was your trip?

RICK. Fine. Long. Would you grab that, Ma?

GRANDMA. Russell, come give your brother a hand!

GINNY (to HANNAH, still outside). Come on, Hannah. (Confidential to GRANDMA of headdress.) Don't say anything about the—you know—she still doesn't want to take it off.

(*RUSS enters from kitchen.*)

RUSS. Now he wants me to go buy him a *frying pan*.

GRANDMA. Help your brother. (*To GINNY.*) How you feeling, honey? You eating enough?

GINNY. I feel pretty good.

GRANDMA. Well, you carry all that weight very well.

GINNY. Thanks, Mom.

RUSS (*calling out*). PETER!

GRANDMA. I'm not just saying that. Look how skinny your face is.

RUSS (*helping RICK with luggage, etc.*). I got that.

GRANDMA (*still to GINNY*). Such a pretty girl. Peter! Your cousin's here!

RICK (*to RUSS*). Thanks. (*Stopping RUSS.*) Hey. It's good to see you. How you doing?

RUSS. Oh, I'm fine. My son's driving me up a wall, but I'm fine.

RICK. You look good.

RUSS. Yeah, right. (*Of luggage.*) Mom, where?

GRANDMA. Up in my room. (*RUSS goes upstairs.*)

RICK. Why don't we put it downstairs, Mom.

GRANDMA. Ginny's not sleeping on the couch in that state.

GINNY. I'll be fine downstairs.

GRANDMA. You sleep in my room. Where is my Hannah? (*Steps outside.*) Where's my little Hannah-Banana?

GINNY (*privately*). I am not sleeping in your mother's bed!

RICK. Well, you tell her no.

GINNY. We have already had this conversation!

RICK. You know how my mother—

GRANDMA (*enters with HANNAH*). What were you doing out there?

RICK. I'll get the rest. (*Exits outside.*)

RUSS (*from upstairs, as PETER comes down the stairs*). Go say hello.

(*PETER has a photo album that he took from Grandpa's room. He enters the living room and tosses it on the couch.*)

GRANDMA (*to GINNY and HANNAH*). Come on, now, take your coats off and stay awhile. Peter, be an angel, take their coats.

PETER. Can we open a present now?

GRANDMA. In a minute, honey.

PETER. You said when Hannah got here we could open one!

GRANDMA. Can she take her coat off first?

PETER (*taking HANNAH's coat*). Nice hat, birdbrain. (*HANNAH signs in response to PETER*) What are you supposed to be, a turkey?

GRANDMA. Be nice. Get Aunt Ginny's, too.

PETER (*softly*). Gobble, gobble, gobble.

GRANDMA. That's a pretty dress, Hannah.

GINNY (*as PETER takes her coat*). Thank you, Peter.

PETER. Wow! Look how fat you are!

GINNY. Thanks, Peter.

GRANDMA. Peter, she's pregnant.

PETER. I know that. She's still fat.

GRANDMA. Enough.

PETER. That's incredible.

GRANDMA. Enough.

PETER. Wow.

GRANDMA. Go help your Uncle Ricky. Now.

PETER (*in mock excitement*). Sure, Grandma, I'd love to!
Not.

GRANDMA. Go.

(*MIKE enters, frying pan in hand.*)

MIKE. Hey, cloud o' doom, listen to your grandmother.

PETER. Very funny. Ho, ho, ho.

(*RICK enters, dropping off a bag of presents.*)

RICK. Hi, Uncle Mike.

MIKE. Hi, Rick, Merry Christmas. Ginny.

GINNY. Hi, Mikey.

MIKE. Merry Christmas. Hope you guys are hungry.

RICK. I could eat.

GRANDMA (*confidential to MIKE*). Tell her she looks
good.

MIKE (*without missing a beat*). You look good. Very
good.

GINNY. You too, Uncle Mike.

MIKE. Ah, me, I'm getting old—but *you*. Look at you.

PETER (*annoying*). What'd you say? What'd he just say?

MIKE. Go away.

PETER. Why?

MIKE (*calling out*). Russell!

PETER (*to MIKE*). Knock, knock.

MIKE. Go away.

PETER. Knock, knock.

MIKE. Get outta here, already.

PETER. Knock, knock!

MIKE. Oh, for—*who's there!?*

PETER. Nobody who'd want to play knock-knock with you! Nailed!

MIKE. You wonder why I never had kids.

PETER. Nailed you to *the* wall! Backwards!

MIKE. Hey! What'd Grandma ask you to do?

PETER. What?

MIKE. Don't you give me that look; I'm not your father. Go do what she said.

PETER. Yeah, right.

MIKE. I'm sorry, what'd you say? (*MIKE grabs PETER and marches him to the door.*)

PETER. Leave me alone! Dad!

MIKE (*mocking*). What's that? I can't hear you.

PETER. Dad!

MIKE. You'd love to help your uncle? Well, isn't that nice.

PETER. Dad, get him off me.

(*RUSS comes down the stairs.*)

RUSS (*to PETER*). You started it.

MIKE. Hi ya, Hannah. (*Grabs PETER's coat and gives it to him.*) Don't catch cold, now. (*He tosses PETER out the door.*) Who says I'm not good with kids? (*PETER kicks the door.*) HEY! Cut it out!

GRANDMA. Ginny, sit. You must be exhausted.

GINNY. I'm fine, Ma.

MIKE (*as PETER bangs the door*). I said cut it out! (*Doorbell.*) Russell, would you do something?

RUSS. He's just playing, Uncle Mike. (*HANNAH gestures heavenward.*)

MIKE. He doesn't play, he terrorizes. (*Doorbell.*) Enough!

Are you gonna tell him to stop?

RUSS. You started it. (*Doorbell.*)

MIKE (*storms to the door and opens it*). I said cut it out, you little—oh, hi.

(*MICHELE is at the door as a delivery person.*)

MICHELE. Merry Christmas. Is this—?

MIKE (*taking a fruit basket from her*). Yes, it is. Thanks.

(*Shuts the door on her.*)

GRANDMA. What's that, Mikey?

MIKE. Another fruit basket. (*GRANDMA goes for purse.*

Doorbell. MIKE answers it.) What?

MICHELE. I'm sorry, but you need to sign for it. (*Gives MIKE clipboard.*) Boy, it's cold out here. (*HANNAH watches MICHELE closely.*)

MIKE (*signing*). Uh, huh.

MICHELE (*to HANNAH*). Hi, there. (*To MIKE.*) Could I, maybe, step inside while you—?

MIKE (*handing back clipboard*). There you go. Good-bye.

(*Shuts the door.*)

GRANDMA. Mikey, did you tip her?

MIKE. If you sign for the slip you don't have to tip.

GRANDMA. Mikey, it's Christmas, not a business deal.

(*Doorbell.*) See. Give her a buck or two. Here.

MIKE. Oh, for—gimme. (*Opens door, handing out the money.*) Here.

(*PETER is at the door.*)

PETER (*grabbing the money*). Thanks, Uncle Mike! (*RUSS laughs a bit and grabs another piece of luggage and takes it upstairs.*)

MIKE (*to RUSS*). Yeah, you laugh. (*Exits to kitchen.*)

GINNY (*reads the card on the basket*). It's for you, Mom.

GRANDMA. Isn't that sweet. Who's it from?

GINNY. Doesn't say.

GRANDMA. I've been getting fruit for six months.

GINNY. It's beautiful.

GRANDMA. I don't like fruit. (*To HANNAH.*) Hey, Banana, why so quiet? (*HANNAH signs.*) What are you trying to say, honey? You want something to eat? You have a headache? You—

GINNY. Hannah.

GRANDMA. Your feathers...fly like a bird...in the kitchen?

GINNY. Sorry, Mom. Since, uh...you know, since we were last here, she's decided to be an Indian. She just started this not talking thing. I have no idea why.

GRANDMA. That's OK, honey, you can be an Indian if you want.

GINNY. She refuses to talk to the *White Man*—says they're all liars—and wants to be called *Hanahita*. The last thing she said was, "I will speak no more forever." That was in Pennsylvania. I've had it up to here today.

GRANDMA (*to HANNAH*). Don't you want to say hi to your grandma? (*HANNAH signs.*) Are you sure you're not hungry? (*HANNAH throws up her arms in frustration.*) I think she's hungry. (*HANNAH puts her ear to the ground, listens, and crawls about the house.*). Ginny, sit already, relax. I'll go get some snacks.

GINNY. This is beautiful, Mom. Dad give you this?