

Excerpt Terms & Conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity of scripts.

Family Plays

THE RUNAWAY PRESENTS

A Contemporary Christmas Play
from
THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS



Book by

JUDITH MARTIN

Music by

DONALD ASHWANDER

THE RUNAWAY PRESENTS

The Runaway Presents was developed in rehearsal with Irving Burton and Pilar Garcia. The play is a Christmas fantasy of runaway presents, from the uniquely creative Paper BagPlayers of New York. The characters wear modern clothes; the actors playing the presents are gift-wrapped.



Christmas fantasy. Book by Judith Martin. Music by Donald Ashwander. Cast: 2m., 2w., 2 either gender, plus as many presents as you wish. To the tune of Donald Ashwander's song "Wrap and Tie," the play traces the wonderfully unlikely adventures of a group of runaway Christmas presents. The entire town pursues them in vain. Sadly, everyone goes to a party without presents, where they discover that Christmas is beautiful without expensive gifts. Astonished, the dizzy, hide-away presents return to share the fun in a singing, dancing finale for everyone. *Ideal for touring and in-school performances. Music in book. Approximate running time: 15 minutes. Code: RA9.*

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

www.FamilyPlays.com

ISBN-13 978-0-87602-197-2



9 780876 021972 >

The Runaway Presents

THE RUNAWAY PRESENTS

A Contemporary Christmas Play

from

THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

by

JUDITH MARTIN

Music by

DONALD ASHWANDER

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by FAMILY PLAYS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website www.FamilyPlays.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: FAMILY PLAYS, 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

© 1977 by
ANCHORAGE PRESS, INC.

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(THE RUNAWAY PRESENTS)

ISBN: 978-0-87602-197-2

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MRS. HURRYUP

A very busy lady

PRESENTS

A tall skinny one, a wide one, and as many more as there are children to play the parts

TICKET SELLER

PIZZA MAN

DELIVERY MAN

One quick-change artist inside a box

OL' PAL

BESS FRIEND

MRS. HURRYUP's guests

The cast of characters may be expanded if one has more actors than required above. Presents, separate roles for each character now suggested for one actor, etc.

SETTING

MRS. HURRYUP'S HOUSE

A BOX FOR THE PRESENTS

A MOVIE THEATRE

PIZZA STAND

WAREHOUSE

COSTUMES

The PRESENTS are cardboard boxes with no bottoms and a hole cut out of the top or side for the head. Use paper bags for the TICKET SELLER'S cap and the PIZZA MAN'S hat. An old newspaper makes a good shawl for BESS FRIEND, and an egg carton serves as a handbag.

SCENERY

In this play, changes in scenes are represented by a large cardboard carton — with top and bottom removed — that is turned by the TICKET-PIZZA-DELIVERY Man who performs inside it. On one side of the carton is painted a Christmas tree for the opening scene in MRS. HURRYUP'S House. Another side is a movie theatre with a cut-out window for a ticket booth. The third side is painted to look like the front of a pizza store. It also has a cut-out window. The fourth side is a warehouse window with lots of Christmas packages painted beneath it. MRS. HURRYUP'S table is also a cardboard box with legs and maybe a tablecloth painted on it.

(The scene opens in MRS. HURRYUP's home – the Christmas tree side of the box. She stands at her table surrounded by PRESENTS. Each present is a child standing in a painted box.)

MRS. HURRYUP: Now for the part I like best about Christmas – wrapping presents. I'm so famous for making beautiful packages that I wrap presents for all my friends. We have a Christmas party at my house every year. It's lots of work, but I just love it. Now, here's the paper. Here's the string. Here are the stickers and seals. And here are the presents.

(MRS. HURRYUP sings as she decorates and ties up each package.)

Wrap and tie. Wrap and tie.
I should have started in July.

Knotting, cutting,
Smoothing, closing,
Sealing, Gluing.
Pile 'em up.

Fold it right. Tie it tight.
It's got to hold
Till Christmas night.

Knotting, cutting,
Smoothing, closing,
Sealing, gluing.
Christmas time!

Oh dear, I've wrapped my foot. I'll just get it out carefully – smooth out this wrinkle and cover this bulge – and everything's fine.

(She touches one present and it walks away towards the Christmas tree.)

My, this one moves easily. It must have batteries. Uh-oh. I'm getting caught in the string again. Where are those scissors? That one is straightened out. Now for the rest.

(She continues to sing the song until all the presents are wrapped. Each present then joins the others by the tree.)

Phew! All done! Now to put them around the tree. They look

absolutely beautiful. Well, I'd better keep moving. I still have to bake my famous fruitcake.

(She arranges the presents in front of the tree and takes the things for the cake from behind the table and puts them on top.)

Here's my large bowl and my wooden spoon. I know the recipe by heart: one bag of flour, one box of sugar, three oranges, two bananas, a handful of nuts . . . *(She throws everything into the bowl: unpeeled bananas, whole oranges; nuts in their shells.)*

And mix well. The secret of a good cake is plenty of good mixing.

(While MRS. HURRYUP stirs her cake, the PRESENTS look more and more uncomfortable.)

PRESENTS: *(Whispering among themselves)*

You're leaning on me.

I can't help it.

How long do we have to stay here?

Till Christmas.

When's that?

I dunno.

(MRS. HURRYUP is so busy mixing she doesn't hear the PRESENTS.)

MRS. HURRYUP: This cake is still lumpy. I just have to keep on mixing.

PRESENTS:

Now someone is leaning on my box.

I'm getting wrinkled.

Can't you move over just a little?

I can't. My knot's too tight.

Well, I've got to move.

Me too.

Be careful. *I'll* slip if *you* move.

Well, hold on.

Whoops!

(They fall over, making a great commotion.)

MRS. HURRYUP: My nice presents have fallen all over the floor! I'd better arrange them more carefully. *(She puts them back into a pile.)* Now, to get back to my cake and get the rest of those lumps out.

PRESENTS:

I don't want to stay in this pile.
I'm cramped.
I'm squashed.
I've got to get out.
Watch where you're going.
There's the door.
Follow me.
Wait. I'm coming too.

(The PRESENTS run behind the box on which the tree is painted.)

MRS. HURRYUP: E E E E K ! Those presents rolled right out the door. I've got to get them. Help! Stop! Runaway presents!

(MRS. HURRYUP runs after them. The box whirls around, turned by the person inside. Then it stops with another side showing: a ticket window of a movie theater. Neither MRS. HURRYUP nor the PRESENTS are to be seen.)

TICKET SELLER: Hardly anyone is coming to see the movie today. I guess everybody is shopping. That's what I should be doing. I still have so many things to buy and all my presents to wrap!

PRESENTS: *(stopping as they run past)*
Say, here's a movie house.
Let's go to the movies.
May we have three tickets, please?

TICKET SELLER: Children or adults?

PRESENTS: *(looking at each other)* I dunno.

TICKET SELLER: Say, who are you?

PRESENTS: I dunno.

TICKET SELLER: Where's your mother?

PRESENTS: I dunno.

TICKET SELLER: I can't sell you a ticket! You wouldn't even fit in a seat.

PRESENTS: Can we go in, and just buy popcorn?

TICKET SELLER: No.

PRESENTS:

I don't want to go to the movies, anyway.
How about a pizza?

TICKET SELLER: There's a very good pizza place three blocks down.

PRESENTS:

Thanks.
Let's Go.

TICKET SELLER: Merry Christmas.

PRESENTS: Merry Christmas.

(The PRESENTS run behind the box. In comes MRS. HURRYUP.)

MRS. HURRYUP: Did you see some things whirling by?

TICKET SELLER: Did they look like presents?

MRS. HURRYUP: They are presents and they belong to me!
They're runaways!

TICKET SELLER: They went that way looking for pizza! They were very nice-looking presents.

MRS. HURRYUP: I know. I wrapped them. Help! Stop!
Runaway presents!

(MRS. HURRYUP pursues PRESENTS. Movie theater turns around again and this time becomes a pizza stand. The person inside the box takes off his TICKET SELLER's cap and puts on a white hat and a mustache and becomes the PIZZA MAN, tossing his dough in the air.)

PIZZA MAN: Roll it. Whirl it. Throw it. Catch it. Flip it. Slap it.

(The PRESENTS run out from behind the box.)

PRESENTS: It's real pizza.