

Christmas Recaptured
by Mildred Hark and Noel McQueen

Characters---

Father, Henry Stevens
Mother, Ethil Stevens
Dave Stevens
Jean Stevens
Bobbie Stevens
Aunt Mathilda
Charlie Cole
Lucille, Charlie's cousin

Time: Christmas Afternoon

Setting: The living room of the Stevens home

At Rise: Dave Stevens, about seventeen years old, is sitting on sofa with the wastebasket between his feet. He is picking up the remaining pieces of paper, examining them one at a time, and stuffing them into the wastebasket. Jean Stevens, about sixteen, is sprawled in chair right with her legs out in front of her.

Jean (Stretching and Yawning) Oh, dear. Christmas comes but once a year and maybe it's a good thing.

Dave: Yes. What do you suppose happened to all our Christmas Spirit?

Jean: I don't know. This morning everything was "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas" (She sighs.) And now it's just Christmas afternoon.

Dave: Kind of like these Christmas wrappings. They all looked so pretty under the tree this morning--and now there're just--well, a lot of waste-paper. (He picks up another piece of paper.)

Jean: Well, why do you keep digging through all that stuff?

Dave: I'm looking for Mom's Christmas present. That was the worst part of all for me, losing that brooch I got her.

Jean: Well, when did you have it last, Dave?

Dave: Last night, I was just going to wrap it when Dad said let's go down and set up Bobbie's electric train, so I shoved it in my shirt pocket.

Jean: Then it's probably in the basement somewhere.

Dave: That's what I thought but I looked all over. Well, it's not in here. (He takes last few scrapes of paper and they won't quite fit in the basket so he bangs it on the floor to pack it down. As the wastebasket hit the floor there is a sound as of needles falling from the tree. (This sound can be made offstage by throwing a handful of gravel onto a sheet of heavy wrapping paper.) At the sound Jean and Dave jump a little and look toward the tree.)

Jean: (Disgustedly): The Needles are falling already. Even the tree seems tonknow Christmas is over.

Dave: Yeah. (He reaches down and picks up a last stray tag from the floor and holds it up, reading it. Merry Christmas. Ha Ha.

Jean rises and goes up stage near tree and looks at the stack of handkerchief boxes, shaking her head, as Father, Henry Stevens, enters left.)

Father: Well, children, your mother is in the kitchen surrounded by dirty dishes. I've been helping her but now it's your turn.

Dave: (Rising with wastebasket) O.K., dad. I'll help her just as soon as I get rid of this stuff. He goes off left carrying wastebasket. Father goes right and sinks into easy chair.)

Jean: (Walking her fingers up the stack of boxes as though counting them) Ugh, to think that all that's left of our beautiful Christmas dinner is dirty greasy dishes. I don't see why mom didn't let some of the company help before they left.

Father: ~~Pat~~ You know your mother. She never does. What are you doing? Counting your blessings?

Jean: No, my handkerchiefs.

Father: Hmm, sort of a blow-by-blow inventory.

Jean: Don't be funny, Dad. I got fourteen handkerchiefs!

Father: Well, a handkerchief is a useful present and if I'm not mistaken you received a great many other lovely things.

Jean: Oh, I don't mind all the cousins giving me handkerchiefs--- (Holding up one box) but this one. I should think Charlie could have done better.

Father: Charlie who?

Jean: You know very well--Charlie Cole. He's been dating me for weeks--- you'd think I was the big moment in his life. And then to get this. And when I think of the keen tie clip I gave him-----

Father: Now, now, Jean. You know what your mother says. It isn't the gift, it's the thought behind it.

Jean: That's all very well, but you wouldn't give Mother a handkerchief, would you?

Father: Jean, I'm never quite sure what to give your mother.

Jean: I saw you writing her a check this morning. Of course, that's not very exciting but at least she can buy what she wants; (She slams box down onto table.) But a handkerchief from the boy friend-----

Father: (Trying to be funny) Well, if your're so upset, perhaps you can use it to cry in.

Jean: (Starting left): Merry Christmas. (Then he notices the three long boxes on the table next to him and picks one up and opens it. He takes out a loud tie, holds it at arm's length, scowles and puts it back in box. He opens another box, takes another loud tie, rises and goes left, holding tie in front of him as he looks into the mirror. He scowles and shakes his head, returns to chair, puts tie back in box and opens the third box. He barely gets the lid off when he shudders and clamps it back on again. Bobbie, about eight years old, enters 1

left looking dejected.

Bobbie: Dad, why do you suppose my electric train doesn't work?

Father: Bobbie, I've told you, I don't know.

Bobbie: But you said you'd come down in the basement and look at it after the company left.

Father: (Sinking into chair) Son, it is late Christmas afternoon, and I am very tired.

Bobbie: But Dad, what good is a Christmas present if it doesn't work?

Father: No good, son. It's something like a Christmas tie that one cannot wear.

Bobbie: How about Dave? Maybe he could help me fix it.

Father: Your brother is helping your mother with the dishes and I wouldn't disturb him.

Bobbie: But Dad, all year long I've been looking forward to Christmas and thinking maybe I'd get an electric train.

Father: I know, Bobbie, we all look forward to Christmas.

Bobbie: But now, I can't even play with it. (Mother enters left.)

Mother: Henry----

Father: (Trying to be cheerful) Well, Ethel, how are the dishes coming?

Mother: There are all the greasy pans yet, but the children have taken over. And I just thought, Henry----(Taking lid off flat box on table left and picking up pretty, lacy blouse.) Do you suppose Margaret Burk could have sent me this blouse?

Father: Ethel, are you still worrying about that blouse?

Mother: Of course, I'm just sick about it. It's so beautiful and exactly what I needed---but miles too big!

Father: Why can't you take it back?

Mother: Because I don't know where it came from. After this I'm not going to let the children take the outer wrappings off the parcel post packages when they put them under the tree. If people don't have sense enough to enclose a card-----

Father: Maybe it came from someone in town. Lots of stores deliver packages. You could try different ones.

Mother: Henry, I'm sure it must be from someone out of town. Only someone who hadn't seen me in ages would have thought I'd grown this fat. (Holding out blouse) Imagine anyone sending me a size forty!

Father: Well, what size do you wear?

Mother: What size? Why---uh---thirty -eight.

Father: Oh.

Bobbie (who has been waiting patiently): Dad, isn't there anything you can do about my electric train?

Father: No, Bobbie, not until tomorrow, when we can call the store.

Mother: Oh, dear. It still won't work, Bobbie?

Bobbie: No, Mom.

Father: Bobbie, if you want to play with the train now, you'll just have to push it around the track.

Bobbie: Push it? That's no fun.

Father: Well, use your imagination. Pretend you're the engineer of something.

Bobbie: O.K. But it sure is a gyp. (He goes sadly off left.)

Mother: Henry, I must say it's very funny about Bobbie's train. How did you break it?

Father: I didn't break it. When Dave and I set it up last night it ran perfectly. You saw it. You came down in the basement and watched.

Mother: Yes, and I must say it looked rather silly to see the two of you sitting on the floor hypnotized by a toy train.

~~Mother: Yes, and I~~

Father: Now, Ethel, I never had an electric train when I was a boy.

Mother: And I never had a Mama doll and I don't want one now. It's certainly too bad you had to wear the train out before the child had a chance to use it.

Father: Ethel, I don't know what the trouble is but that train is not worn out. There must be some mechanical defect. He can return it in the morning.

Mother: (Dropping blouse back into box without putting cover on it) Well, That's more than I can do with this blouse. (She sits in chair left.)

Father: And more than I can do with these ties.

Father

Mother: What's the matter with your ties, Henry?

Father: (Holding box up and showing ties.) Well, take this one for instance, I can't very well return it because it's from cousin Ezra in Nebraska-----he's been insulted. And I can't wear it either. (Disgustedly) Fishes!

Mother: Now, Henry, it's natural cousin Ezra should pick a tie with fishes. He's quite a sportsman.

Father: Perhaps so, but there is a time and a place for fishes and I'll not wear them around my neck. (Holding up another box and showing very loud tie) And look at this one from Dave---It's even worse. I suppose the boy meant well-----

Mother: Mean't well? Why, Henry, it's hand painted and Dave was so proud of it. They're all the rage. Don't you dare say a word about that tie? You'll hurt his feelings.

Father: Oh, I won't, but how can I wear such a thing? (Picking up another box and showingg tie) And then this one----

Mother: Henry, that's the one I gave you !

Father: Oh--er--why, yes, so it is. Well--uh--this one is very nice but--

Mother: Henry, your're just saying that. You don't like it. You don't like it at all

Father: Very well, then I don't. ~~And then this one~~ And how many times have I tried to tell this family that I like conservative ties?

Mother: And how many times have I tried to make you see that you're just an old fogey about ties?

Father: (Rising): Old fogey?

Mother: Yes, I've tried and tried to get you to wear something more colorful .

Father: So you choose Christmas to force it upon me!?

Mother: Henry--(She bursts into tears.) If that isn't a nice way to talk about my Christmas present.

Father: (Going to her and patting her shoulder): My, dear, I'm so sorry.

Mother: Henry, were quarreling.

Father: Now--now, don't cry.

Mother: But I just can't understand what's happened. I felt so wonderful last night when we were getting ready--trimming the tree and the children making snow out of soap flakes--and then this morning in church when we were sin ing the carols I was so happy, and now all of a sudden, I---I'm as cross as can be.

Father: My dear, it's been a big day. You're just tired.

Mother: No, it's more than that. I haven't an ounce of Christmas in me. It's all gone.

Father: Mine too, It's funny, isn't it? People are always saying how wonderful it would be if we could keep the Christmas spirit all the year round.

Mother: Yes, and it can't even last through Christmas ~~sp/it/it/it/it/it/it~~ day . We talk about the spirit of giving, Henry but what does it really mean. Even the presents--everyone's disappointed for some reason or other.

- Father: I know. They were all chosen so carefully and wapped so beautifully--
- Mother: And now you don't like your ties.
- Father: Now, Ethel----
- Mother: Well, you don't. And may blouse doesn't fit.
- Father: And Jean got ony a handkerchief from her best beau and Dave's upset because your present is lost.
- Mother: And Bobbie's train won't work.
- Father: And think of the present Aunt Mathilda sent. (He laughs.) We don't even know what that is.
- Mother; Oh, Henry, don't laugh about it. It isn't funny. It's serious---- I feel terrible.
- Dave: Gee, Mon, now what do you suppose happened?
- Mother: No telling.
- Dave: There's no more hot water, and we still have the big greasy roaster to do.
- Mother: Oh dear. Well, you'll just have to let it soak. Tell Jean to fill it with water and leave it in the sink.
- Dave: O.K. Here's the wastebasket. I burned the rubbish. (He drops the wastebasket upstage near the tree and as he does, there is the sound of needles falling again.)
- Mother: What was that?
- Dave: Needles, Mon. The Christmas tree is molting. (He goes off left.)
- Mother: Molting indeed! Henry, do you mean that the needles are falling from that tree already?
- Dave:
- Father: It sounds very much like it my dear.
- Mother: But you said it was the kind that wouldn't drop.
- Father: I thought it was.
- Mother: But I told you to ask for a balsam.
- Father: I did ask for a balsam. The man siad they were all balsams.
- Mother: Well, he cheated you. This must be a spruce or a pine or a cedar or something.
- Father: I wouldn't know. I'm not a horticulturist.
- Mother: Well, you'd think you could pick a Christmas tree that would last through Christmas Day. But it just shows--even about Christmas trees, people are greedy. There's no real Christmas spirit anywhere. That man saw you coming, Henrey.
- Father: Very well, Ethel. Next year you shall buy the Christmas tree while I stuff the turkey.
- Mother: Humph. (The phone rings off left. Mother rises and starts left.) Oh dear, ~~there's~~ there's the phone. Probably someone calling to wish us a Merry Christmas and I don't think I can stand it.
- Father (Sighing) Just tell them they're too late. (Jean enters left sniffing.)
- Jean: Mom.
- Mother: Wasn't that the phone, dear?
- Jean: Yes, Dave's getting it.
- Father: What's the matter with you?
- Jean: Everything. Mon, do you know what Dave's done now? He's invited Charlie Cole over here.
- Father: What's that?
- Jean: Yes, for supper. Ch_arli_e Cole and his cousin, Lucille.
- Mother: Is that the girl who is staying with them for the holidays?
- Jean: Sure, and Dave's been telling about how cute she is.
- Father: Ethel, I can't stand it. We've had enough company for one day.
- Mother: Now, Henry, you've always told the children they could invite their friends e

- Mother:- Now, Henry, you've al ways told thechildren they could invite their friends over, and Jean, I don't see why you should be so upset. Jean(almost crying) Because I'll have to be nice to Charlie and I feel so embarrassed--I'll have to pretend that I likē his handerchief. (Dave enters left.)
- Dave: Well, folks, now we've got real troubles.
- Mother; What is it, Dave? Who was on the phone?
- Dave: Aunt Matilda.
- Father: Matilda.
- Mother: (Starting left): My goodness, long distance. Does **she** want to talk to me?
- Dave: It wasn't longdistance. She's here. She's at the sation. She got a sudden idea to visit us and took the train early this morning. She's getting a cab and coming right over.
- Mother: Oh dear--oh dear me.
- Father: I think I'm getting ill. Ethel, you'll have to entertain her.
- Mother: No, Henry, we can't be like that. Matilda is all alone and she always said she'd like to comeand enjoy a real homey Christmas. We'll have to make things nice for her.
- Jean: But Mom, how can we? Our Christmas spirit is all gone.
- Mother: Then we must try and get it back somehow. You children can help.
- Dave: ~~But Mom, I'll have company of my own to entertain. Charlie and Lucille are coming.~~ But Mom, I'll have company of my own to entertain. Charlie and Lucille are coming.
- Jean: You'd better call them right up and tell them wh at's happened. Tell them to stay home.
- Dave: I will not.
- Fahter: Son, how did you ever happen to invite them in the first place?
- Dave: Why, I--I just said nothing--why not come over for a snack of turkey?
- Jean: All you wanted was for him to bring Lucille along.
- Dave: Well, she's staying with them.
- Mother: Now, children, stop you squabbling at once. What are we going to do for Aunt Matilda? We mustn't let her know how ~~wetell~~ we feel. She always writes how she pictures us all so happy and merry at Christmas time. Maybe if we all practice saying Merry Christmas again. (Weakly) Merry Christmas, Henry.
- Father: No, Ethel, It can't be done. You can't warm over Christmas spirit like left over turkey.
- Jean: (Sinking onto sofa:) I feel ab out as Christmasy as the Fourth of July.
- Mother (Looking around) Well, we look Christmasy enough if only the tree will hold together. We can show her our present and--
- Dave: Say, where's the presents she sent us? We don't even know what ~~it~~ it is.
- Mother: Oh, my, I'd forgotten th~~at~~. Well, get it out quickly, Dave. It's under the tree. We must find out what it is before Aunt Matilda~~y~~ gets here.
- Father: But how can we, Ethel? We all tried to guess this morning. -(Dave goes to tree a nd fishes gadget from under it. It is a cube shaped Box about six inches wide and high with a small crank sticking out of one side. This can be made.)
- Dave: Well, here it is. (He peers at gadget.) I said maybe a coffee grinder but no one ever grinds coffee any more. You've got me.
- Bobbie: Listen, Dave, can't you fix my train?
- Dave: Don't bother me now.
- Mother: Bobbie, Aunt Mathilda is coming an we've got to find out what her present is.

- Bobbie: That's easy. I said this morning. It's an egg beater.
- Mother: No, I don't think so, Bobbie.
- Bobbie: Well, it's as good a guess as anybody's. (And he goes off left).
- Mother: Henry, what in the world are you doing?
- Father (Pouring some tobacco from large jar into box) I think I've solved it, Ethel. Aunt Mathilda knows I like to mix my tobacco. (He tries to turn crank but it sticks).
- Dave: A good idea, Dad, but it doesn't seem to work.
- Father: No, it just jams up inside. (He dumps tobacco from box back into jar.) Well, I give up.
- Mother: Maybe it's just meant to be ornamental--
- Jean: (Rising and coming to look at gadget) No, Mom, there's nothing ornamental about it and why the crank and all those funny wheels inside?
- Mother: Oh dear, I don't know. What'll we say? What'll we do?
- Father: Nothing. We'll just have to leave it here on the table in a prominent place, thank her for it and then say nothing about it. Nothing. (The door bell rings)
- Mother: Here she is. (Bobbie runs in left with an egg in each hand.)
- Bobbie: Mom, I know it's an egg beater. I'll show you. (He runs upstage from table, faces downstage and is about to smash eggs together over the gadget.)
- Mother: Bobbie, for goodness' sakes, don't break those eggs in there (Father reaches over and grabs both of Bobbie's wrists just in time.) Take them back to the kitchen quickly. Oh dear--now all try and look happy. I'll go to the door. (Mother goes out right and Bobbie goes out left with eggs.)
- Father (Sinking back in easy chair): Happy!
- Jean (Going to sofa): Merry, Merry Christmas!
- Dave: Boy, is this going to be an ordeal!
- Father: Son, when your company comes, take them in the dining room. ~~Enough with~~ We'll have enough with Aunt Mathilda.
- Dave: I'll be glad to Dad.
- Jean: Well, I won't. I don't want to have anything to do with Charlie Cole.
- Father: Children, stop quarreling. We got to help your mother. (Mother enters right with Aunt Mathilda, a little old fashioned looking lady who is beaming all over. She wears a hat and coat and carries purse. Mother carries Aunt Mathilda's small bag which she sets down near door. Father and Jean rise. Jean stands near Dave.)
- Mathilda: Merry, Merry Christmas all! Oh, Henry, hope you don't mind my coming in on you unexpectedly like this.
- Father (Kissing her cheek): No, of course not, Aunt Mathilda. It's delightful--delightful.
- Mathilda: And here you are looking just as honey and happy as can be. Family Christmases are wonderful. (Going to Jean and Dave).
- Jean and Dave--how you've grown.
- Jean and Dave: Merry Christmas, Aunt Mathilda.
- Mathilda: And where's the little fellow?
- Mother: Bobbie? Oh, he's down--uh--playing with his electric train, I guess.
- Mathilda: A boy and his train. That's part of Christmas, isn't it? Oh, I may spend most of my Christmases alone, but I know how it is with a family. There's nothing like a real family Christmas and this year I just made up my mind I'd have a share in it.
- Mother: Do let me take your things, Aunt Mathilda.
- Mathilda: (As mother takes her coat and hat and places them upstage over chair) Thank you, Ethel.

Father (Offering easy chair) And do sit down, Aunt Mathilda.

Mathilda: Not just yet, Henry. I want to look around. Take in everything. My, what beautiful tree. (She starts toward it)

Dave (Taking her arm): I--I wouldn't get too close, Aunt Mathilda.

Mathilda: Why ever not?

Dave: It's just that--well--it looks better at a distance.

Jean (Trying to help out) The effect, Aunt Mathilda. You get the effect of the lights better.

Mathilda: Well, A Christmas tree looks good to me at any distance.

(looking about) My, it's homes like this having Christmas that means so much. Oh, it's so good to be here--it's in a home like yours that one finds the real Christmas spirit. Isn't that right Henry?

Father: Oh, Yes. Yes, indeed, Aunt Mathilda.

Mathilda: My, so many presents. I can just picture you all sitting about this morning opening them. Such a happy family. (Spotting the gadget) And why, there's the gadget I gave you. You did like it then?

Father: Why of course. Thank you very much, Aunt Mathilda.

Mother: Thank you very much indeed.

Mathilda: Have you tried it out yet?

Dave: Well--er--not exactly.

Jean: We--we've been so busy all day.

Mathilda: Then let's try it out now. (She sits down in easy chair, takes the gadget in her lap and smiles at all of them.)

Father: Yes, let's. (They all stand around Aunt Mathilda looking blank)

Mathilda: (Taking deck of card from purse) I forgot to put in part of the present and to bring them in my purse. A nice new canasta deck. (She slips the deck into the box and turns the crank.) (See it's so easy and it shuffles them beautifully.

Dave: An automatic card shuffler.

Mother: (Looking into the box) Well, so it is. I mean isn't that ingenious?

Mathilda: I thought you'd like it. I knew you all enjoyed canasta. Maybe we can play some later on.

Father: Why, yes--yes, of course.

Mathilda: Putting gadget back on table and rising. And now do show me some of your other presents. I want to share in everything. What did you get, Henry.

Father: Why--er--several things, mostly ties.

Dave: Show her the one I gave you, Dad.

Father: (Picking up tie and exhibiting it) Here it is. Quite--well, quite something, don't you think?

Mathilda: Yes, indeed.

Dave: Why don't you let me try it on, Dad. Then you can really see what it looks like.

Father: Why, certainly, son, help yourself. (He hands tie to Dave)

Dave: (Pulling off tie he is wearing) Gee, Thanks. (He steps in front of mirror and quickly ties tie, turning) Boy, how's that?

POp: Remarkable!

Dave: Say, Dad, you--you wouldn't let me wear it this evening, would you?

Pop: Why, I don't know why not, son. In fact you're growing--you feel free to wear my ties whenever you want. Family ties we'll call them.

Dave: (Very pleased) Gee, thanks, Dad. I-I kind of--well, I wanted to look sharp this evening.

Jean: Indian giver. He borrows your new tie just to impress Lucille.

- Dave: I did not!
- Pop: Uh--Jean and Dave have invited some of their friends over this evening, Aunt Mathilda.
- Jean: It has nothing to do with me. I didn't invite them.
- Mom: ~~She-ah!~~ I hope you don't mind more young people, Aunt Mathilda.
- Aunt: Mind? I should say not. (Walking toward left looking at everything) Now, let me see the rest of the presents. (Picking up blouse from table left) Isn't this a pretty blouse? Is it yours, Ethel?
- Mom: Why--uh, yes, that's mine.
- Aunt: (holding it up) But isn't it too large for you?
- Mom: Yes, as a matter of fact it is.
- Jean: And it's such a shame. Mother can't return it. There was no card--she doesn't know who sent it.
- Aunt: But that's nonsense. You can find out somehow, Ethel. My goodness, it is strange. (Looking inside collar) Size forty. No one in his right mind would send you a size 40.
- Mom: That's what I thought.
- Dave: (With a big grin) Say Mom, I have an idea. Do you suppose someone asked for a size 14 and the clerk misunderstood?
- Mom: No dear, blouses don't come in size 14. Dresses do.
- Aunt: And any woman would know that. Ethel, this blouse must have come from a man.
- Dave: Ah-ha, so there's a man in the case. A man who asked for a size 14.
- Pop: That's exactly what happened, Ethel. The clerk did make a mistake.
- Mom: But how do you know, Henry?
- Pop: Because I'm the man. I bought that blouse.
- Mom: You?
- Pop: Yes, and then when you carried on so about who could think you were so fat, I was afraid to admit it. I wrote you a check instead.
- Mother: (Rushing to him) Henry, you old darling.
- Father: You mean you aren't angry?
- Mother: Angry? To think that you really asked for a size 14. You thought that I was that slender. How wonderful? (Bobbie rushes in left)
- Bobbie: Say listen, Dad, my train-----
- Father: Now, now, son. Aunt Mathilda's here. Say Merry Christmas to Aunt Mathilda.
- Bobbie: Hello Aunt Mathilda, Merry Christmas.
- Mathilda: Merry Christmas, boy, how you've grown. I hear you have an electric train and I suppose you've been running it all day.
- Father: Well, he hasn't been exactly running it, Aunt Mathilda.
- Mathilda: Why not?
- Bobbie: But I have, Dad. That's what I came up to tell you. It's all fixed.
- Father: Fixed?
- Mother: That's wonderful, Bobbie. What did you do.
- Bobbie: Nothing much. I was pushing the train around the tracks, when I saw a little spark between the rails--then I fished this thing out-- (Holding up a small object) and right away my train started running its own power.
- Father: Well, well, a short circuit. What was causing it, Bobbie.
- Bobbie: I don't know, This thing, it's a pin or something.
- Father: (Reaching for it) A silver brooch.
- Dave: (Grabbing) Hey, that's mine, I mean, it's Mom's. It's Mom's brooch.
- Bobbie: Gee, isn't it wonderful my train will run?
- Dave: (Going to Mother) Mom, it's your Christmas present. (Handing brooch to her) Here--Merry Christmas, mother.

that record player going you can expect almost anything. We don't always agree their choice.

Mother: Now, Henry, let them have their fun. If it gets too loud we'll ask them to turn it down. We can sit here and enjoy our Christmas.

Father: That suits me. (He settles back)

Matilda: (Sighing happily) My, I'm so glad I came. Everything is so--well, just the way I imagined it would be. (Looking toward tree) And that beautiful tree--I can't get over it. There's nothing as beautiful as a balsam.

Mother: A balsam?

Father: We're--we're not sure it is a balsam, Aunt Matilda.

Matilda: But it must be (Rising and going to tree) The needles aren't dropping.

Mother: They're not?

Matilda: No, the tree is just as fresh and green as can be. (She touches a branch and hear sounds of falling needles again.)

Father: Then what's all that noise?

Matilda: Why, it's this artificial snow you have on the tree.

Mother: (Rising and going to tree) Why so it is. My goodness. The children made it out of soapflakes. They must have mixed it too dry.

Matilda: (Touching branch) Look, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ everytime you touch it, the snow falls.

Mother: Well, isn't that pretty? Like a miniature snowstorm. And look under the tree. Without even planning it we have a snow covered Christmas scene. (Music starts off left., a familiar Christmas Carol.)

Father: Ethel, listen--the music!

Mother: Why it's the children. They're not dancing. They're playing Christmas carols.

Matilda: Isn't that sweet? It all you this house is full of Christmas spirit.

Mother: Yes, I don't know what's happened, but I've never felt so full of Christmas spirit in all my life. I wish I could keep it all year.

Matilda: You know, my dear, I think some things are too precious to hang onto every moment. But just the same, it's at times like this that we glimpse the true meaning of Christmas, and that gives us strength to carry on all year. I'll remember this Christmas as long as I live.

Mother: (Going to Matilda) You won't have to remember it that long, Aunt Matilda. Just till next Christmas/ You have no idea how much you've helped us to enjoy this one, and we want you every year.

Matilda: (Beaming) Do you really mean that?

Father: (Rising) Of course, she does. We've had a Merry Christmas this year

Father: (Rising) Of course, she does. "e've had a Merry Christmas this year and we'll have another one next year. (Putting an arm around each of them) and in between a Happy New Year for us all ! (Music up Curtain)

The End

Dec 23 Sun 7⁰⁰ 447 Teragen

Dec 24 Salvation Army
7⁰⁰

caroling

Dec 29 Ice skating

Fri - M.E. 7⁰⁰
Sat - play 7⁰⁰
practice