

# **A HAPPY CHRISTMAS**

A CURTAIN RAISER

by **Bill Connolley**

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

BLUSHES  
and  
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

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**SchoolPlay Productions Limited,**  
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CAST

**Joe**

**Mary**

**George**

**Amy**

**Ray**

**Ted**

**Martin**

**Rita**

**Priest**

**Black man**

**Untidy youth**



## HAPPY CHRISTMAS

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### SCENE 1

*(December 23rd. A bed-sit with an old settee, a chair, a table, a bed and a small cooker).*

*(JOE is sitting in the chair. MARY, very pregnant, is lying on the settee).*

**Joe:** Fancy a cup of tea, love?

**Mary:** No, love, I'll have one later. It's not much like Christmas is it?

**Joe:** I think we'll forget Christmas this year. It's only cards and presents anyway, and you can't buy many of those on the dole.

**Mary:** Don't worry, you'll find work soon. The new factory is opening in January.

**Joe:** That's not much help now, is it?

**Mary:** No, but next year should be better.

**Joe:** I suppose so. It can't get much worse, can it?

**Mary:** It could. At least we've got each other and there'll be the baby too. We'll be a proper family. I wish we could get married. That would make everything complete. It must be nice to be a Mrs.

**Joe:** We will get married as soon as I get that job. My mum's been nagging at me, for the kid's sake, you know, and I suppose she's right really.

**Mary:** My mum and dad don't care. I'm not sure that they really wanted me. At least we want ours, don't we?

**Joe:** Yeah. He may go short of some things but he won't want for love.

**Mary:** What makes you so sure it'll be a boy. It might be a girl, you know.

**Joe:** It'll be a boy all right. How could Joe and Mary not have a boy when it's a Christmas baby?

**Mary:** Oh Joe, you'll be going to church next.

**Joe:** Not me. They only want you for your money, just like everybody else. Remember that first flat we had? That was owned by the church and it was more expensive than this place. No, we can do without the church. Their stories and their miracles are all right for kids, but we live in the real world....

**Mary:** All right.... Are we going to your mum's to watch telly tonight?

**Joe:** Yes. Dad said he'd pick us up at seven. He's treating me to a couple of pints at the Lamb.

**Mary:** Good. We can have an hour's peace then. It's nearly seven, I'd better get ready. *(MARY, back to the audience, slips off housecoat and puts on a maternity dress).*

**Joe:** *(looking out of the window)* Dad's car's outside. You ready?

**Mary:** Yes. *(They exit, turning out the light)*

SCENE 2

*(The same bed-sit).*

**Amy:** *(offstage)* Hurry up our Joe, open the door. *(Enter JOE, MARY, AMY and GEORGE. GEORGE is carrying a baby).*

**Amy:** *(to MARY)* Lie down on the bed, dear, you need to rest. *(to GEORGE)* It's a disgrace. Her first baby and not a hospital bed to be had. It's a good job the baby's all right. *(JOE empties a drawer, puts it on the floor, lays some clean towels in it to make a cot. GEORGE puts the baby in the drawer)*

**Joe:** *(moves to sit on the bed)* Are you all right, love?

**Mary:** I think so. Anyway the midwife will be calling tomorrow.

**Joe:** Make a pot of tea, mum.

**George:** I could do with something stronger. I'll go across to the Lamb and get a bottle of scotch.

**Amy:** Don't be long. You know what you're like when you get nattering.

**George:** See you in a couple of minutes. *(Exits)*

**Mary:** *(crying quietly)*

**Joe:** What's wrong, love?

**Mary:** It's nothing really. I was just hoping he'd be born on Christmas Day. I suppose I'm silly.

**Joe:** You are. Anyway, he is a boy. I told you he would be.

**Amy:** What will you call him?

**Mary:** I don't know. We haven't really discussed names.

**Joe:** Well, it won't be Jesus, you can be sure of that. Has the water boiled?

**Amy:** Yes, the tea will be ready in a minute.

**Mary:** I'm glad there was no room at the hospital. I did want our first Christmas to be in our own home.

**Amy:** You'll have to come to us for Christmas dinner. You won't be able to cook and Joe can scarcely boil an egg.

**Mary:** That will be nice.

**Joe:** Thanks mum, what do you want us to bring?

**Amy:** Just yourself and the baby. *(AMY pours out three cups of tea).*

**Joe:** *(looks out of the window)* Dad's back, and there's someone with him. *(GEORGE enters with RAY, TED, MARTIN and RITA)*

**Ray:** *(23, pleasant)* Hi, Mary. We thought you could do with a bit of the Christmas spirit. George told us you were skint so we had a whip round at the Lamb and the lads came up good. We've got fifty quid's worth of booze and Len Barker said he can send you a turkey. It's the first time he's given

anything free.

**Rita:** (22, *Ray's girlfriend*) That's right. He said, tell them it's Christmas and it made me feel good for the first time in years. He really meant it too.

**Martin:** (17, *lively*) I'm like you, I don't have much. But I am having a party. I've got friends coming. We'll come over here for an hour and bring what we can.... Mary, the baby's just great.... Good job he don't look like Joe.

**Ted:** (28 *serious*) Things aren't easy these days, Joe. Don't upset anyone until you're sure of that job at the new factory, it's just what you need now. You've always been good with your hands. (*turns to MARY*) Our Tracey's grown out of her baby clothes. Helen will bring them round next week.

**Mary:** Thanks, Ted. Tell Helen to bring Tracey round, I could learn something.

**Ted:** I will. Look, we have to go now. Take care and have a merry Christmas.

**Mary:** We will. And thanks for everything. (*exit TED, RITA, MARTIN and RAY*).

**Joe:** Well, things aren't too bad at all. It's good to have friends.

**Mary:** Very good friends. How do we pay them back?

**Joe:** I don't know. I doubt if they want us to pay anything back. (*Lights dim*).

### SCENE 3

(*The same bed-sit. MARY is drowsing on the bed. JOE is in deep conversation with AMY and GEORGE. A knock on the door. JOE moves to open the door*)

**Joe:** Yes, what can I do for you?

**Voice off stage:** It's what we can do for you. May we come in?

**Joe:** I suppose so. Okay, come in. (*Enter a PRIEST, a large BLACK MAN and an untidy YOUTH*)

**Priest:** We were collecting for the 'Save the Children Fund' in the Lamb and Packet and we were told that you had just had a baby. We thought that we would come and see if there was any help we could offer.

**Joe:** That's very kind, but we are making out all right.

**Amy:** Now, Joe, they're only trying to be friendly.

**Black Man:** (*looking at baby*) He's a nice little boy. (*takes a large gold medallion from round his neck and dangles it over the makeshift cot*) Here baby a shiny toy for you. (*plays some more then drops it onto the blanket*).

**Amy:** (*looking at the medallion*) This is beautiful. What is it?

**Black Man:** It's a gold token of kingship from my tribe. Since we moved into the cities and got jobs in banks and offices, it seems to have lost its deeper meaning. The baby can have it as a present. You never know, it may be valuable one day.

**Mary:** (*looking up*) What's happening? Who are these people?

**George:** Just visitors, Mary, come to see the little 'un.

**Mary:** That's nice.

**Priest:** I'd like to bless the child and say a prayer for the family. Do you mind?

**Mary:** That would be nice, yes, please do.

**Priest:** *(taking out a bottle of holy water which he sprinkles over the baby and then prays silently)* I have a gift for the boy also. *(He gives an envelope to MARY).*

**Untidy Youth:** *(with humour)* I haven't any gold and I can't anoint the boy, but I do have this. *(He takes a silver cross and chain from around his neck and hands it to MARY)* Give him this when he is old enough to wear it. It's not much, but I'd like him to have it.

**Mary:** Thank you.

**Black Man:** We must be going, but I think I ought to warn you: a sly looking guy in an old grey suit and a trilby hat was muttering something about no pets and no babies. I hope that it isn't trouble for you.

**Joe:** Thanks, that sounds like our landlord.

**Priest:** Well, happy Christmas all of you.

**Untidy Youth:** And a happy New Year. *(The THREE MEN leave).*

**Joe:** This is getting out of hand. I didn't even know those blokes.

**George:** That doesn't matter. You heard what they said about old Herd. He'll be round next, to evict you.

**Amy:** No grandson of mine is going to be evicted at Christmas.. You're leaving, right now. You can live with us until you find somewhere else.

**George:** That's right, start packing.

**Mary:** That won't take long. We don't have that much.

**Joe:** Okay, let's get on with it

**Amy:** I'd love to see old Herd's face when he finds this place empty.

**Joe:** So would I, but I'm not staying for the privilege. Let's go.

#### SCENE 4

*(A comfortable sitting-room. JOE, MARY, AMY and GEORGE are sitting enjoying a drink. There is a Christmas Tree in the corner and cards on the sideboard).*

**Joe:** Thanks, mum. I'm glad Mary and the baby are out of that draughty flat.

**Mary:** The midwife was pleased too. She said that the flat was not really suitable for a baby.

**George:** Well, you're all right here. I had a word with Mellor this morning. There's a job for you at the factory when they open next month, Joe.

**Joe:** Thanks, dad.

**Mary:** This is the nicest Christmas I've ever had. Funny how things turn out, isn't it?

**Amy:** I'm glad. Joe, have you decided on a name for the baby? We can't keep calling the poor child 'him'.

**Joe:** Yes, mum. We decided to call him Christopher.

**Amy:** That's nice, dear. Isn't it, George?

**George:** Yes, dear, that's nice.

THE END