Christmas at the Library

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the library was quiet, until Tom and Huck wander from their book seeking a new adventure! Opening the cover of "Alice in Wonderland," the boys are shocked by a rabbit hopping out, quickly followed by Alice. Trying to catch the rabbit leads to more books being knocked open, and they are soon joined by Dorothy Gale from "The Wizard of Oz," St. Nicholas from "'T'was the Night Before Christmas," Mrs. March from "Little Women" and old Scrooge with Marley from "A Christmas Carol." The confused characters try to make sense of where they are, what they are missing, and the meaning of Christmas. Unfortunately, no one can agree. Finally, the Angel Gabriel joins the group and teaches them all the true meaning of Christmas and how the holiday is based on God's love and His story of redemption. Enlightened and transformed, the characters return to their books. An optional Nativity scene creates a blessed ending.

SETTING

A library with oversized books. There should be at least six oversized appliance boxes. A board should be bolted to the bottom of the three of the boxes: "Little Women," "Alice in Wonderland," "The Wizard of Oz." This will give the appearance of a library shelf as well as give stability to the boxes. This board should have tinsel or garland attached to it to denote Christmas decorations. "A Christmas Carol" and "T'was the Night Before Christmas" should be left free as they need to be jarred together later. "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," should be flat on the floor on the left side of the stage. It is opened with its spine down on the floor. The top of the box should be painted white to denote the pages.

To give the appearance of numerous books, each box "spine" should be painted and stamped with two different titles such as: "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Treasure Island," "Little Men," "Peter Pan," and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Make sure that the side opening on each of the boxes is the right title for the character.

An optional Nativity scene should remain curtained off until the end.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 - 11 m, 3 - 4 w, 1 flexible, doubling possible)

TOM SAWYER
HUCKLEBERRY FINN
WHITE RABBIT
ALICE
DOROTHY
SCROOGE
MARLEY
ST. NICHOLAS
MRS. MARCH
THE ANGEL GABRIEL
SHEPHERD #1
SHEPHERD #2
EXTRAS: MARY, JOSEPH, BABY JESUS, and KINGS

COSTUMES / PROPS

Tom and Huck - in cutoff trousers, loose shirts, barefoot.
Alice - Blue dress with pinafore.
Dorothy - White blouse with blue gingham jumper, basket with Toto.
Rabbit - White shorts, red vest, ears and tail, painted face, and a pocket watch.
St. Nicholas - Traditional Santa suit and sack of toys.
Scrooge - 18th-century nightgown with robe and a nightcap.
Marley -18th-century all grey clothing. Chains draped over him attached to books, ledgers and money chest.
Mrs. March - Traditional 18th century dress with apron.
Gabriel - Angel costume.
Shepherds - Shepherd's costumes.
Extras - Nativity costumes.

SOUND EFFECTS

Wind
Books crashing to floor
Running footsteps

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(AT RISE: Scene opens on the empty library. After a few moments, a head pops up out of one side of the open book on the floor. TOM SAWYER looks around cautiously and then starts to climb out.)

TOM: Come on, Huck. It's all clear.

(TOM finishes climbing out of the book and jumps to the floor HUCKLEBERRY FINN'S head now pops out of the book.)

HUCK: Hold yer horses there, Tom. I'm coming. *(Pops out of the book and looks around at all the decorations on the shelves.)* What's with that shiny stuff on the shelf? Weren't like this when we came out last time.
TOM: Yeah, I know. Not sure what it is.
HUCK: Reckon it might be some kind of holiday?
TOM: Most likely. That would explain why they didn't put us up properly. Jest in too big a hurry to git home.
HUCK: *(Finishes climbing out of the book and hops down to join TOM.)* Lucky fer us though. Otherwise, we'd be shet up on the shelf like the rest of these here books.
TOM: Yer right. But we gotta be careful not to get caught. Somebody might come 'round to tidy up the place and shet the book. We don't want that to happen agin.
HUCK: That's fer sure. Took us 'bout a week of sneaking around 'til we could get back in.
TOM: Yeah, and when we did, we almost landed on Muff and the Doc in the old graveyard. Don't want that to happen agin. Not with ole Joe sneaking around.
HUCK: So what do you reckon we should do? Hide the book?
TOM: Nah. I reckon we jest need to shet the book ourselves so as they won't notice it so much. *(Looks around the room.)* But first we need to mark our place. Wonder what we kin use as a marker?
HUCK: How about this? *(Walks over to the shelf where a tinsel garland has been pinned as a decoration. Pulls one side loose.)*

TOM: Plumb perfect.

(TOM joins HUCK. He pulls the other end of the tinsel loose and together they walk back to the book. They drape the tinsel across the open book and then lift one side of the book to close it.)

HUCK: *(Dusting off his hands.)* Now what?
TOM: I reckon we need to pick a book to go exploring in. Git over here and see what we got.
HUCK: Now, Tom, you know I hain't got no proper schooling. You'll jest have to pick one out for us.
TOM: Okay. I'll read them off and you can decide.
HUCK: That'd a work. *(Points to a book.)* What's this one here say?
TOM: *(Studies the title.)* "Jack and the Beanstalk."
HUCK: Beanstalk? You mean working in a garden or sumthin'?
TOM: I don't know. Maybe?
HUCK: Then no. I ain't doing no chores. This is supposed to be an adventure. Try sumthin' else.
TOM: Okay. This'n here says "Treasure Island." You got a hankering to go looking for a treasure?
HUCK: Nah. We gotta a treasure in our own book. Keep going.
TOM: *(Walks over to another book.)* Hey, this one looks interesting. "Alice in Wonderland."
HUCK: *(Walks over to join TOM.)* Well now, the Wonderland part sounds purdy interesting, but I ain't fer sure 'bout that gal part. They ain't no fun.
TOM: Hey, I like girls. Becky is mighty nice. Not to mention she's awfully purty.
HUCK: Maybe so. But she sure ain't going to like you hanging around with another gal, now is she?
TOM: *(Starts pulling the book open.)* Who's going to tell her? Come on, give me a hand.

(HUCK shakes his head but proceeds to help TOM push the book open. Immediately, the WHITE RABBIT pops out,

dressed in a red vest and holding a pocket watch. Tom and Huck both fall back startled.)

HUCK: What the…
RABBIT: *(Checking his watch.)* Oh, me…oh my. I'm late… so very, very late. No time to talk. No time to lose. I'm late. I'm late. I'm late. *(Checks watch again and then hops off SL.)*
TOM: Did you see that? That critter was all dressed up.
HUCK: Not only that, it talked.
TOM: Must be a trick of some sort.

(TOM and HUCK walk over to the book's opening and peer in. They are both knocked backwards when ALICE stumbles out.)

ALICE: Did you see a rabbit come this way?
HUCK: Sure did. Is it yer'ns?
ALICE: Not exactly. I just followed it down a hole and now I'm lost. I was hoping he could lead me back out.
HUCK: You went and followed a rabbit down its hole? What did you do such a fool thing fer?
TOM: Aw leave her be, Huck. We'd a done the same thing.
HUCK: Maybe so. But we wouldn't have gotten lost, that's fer sure.
ALICE: *(Huffy.)* Well then, go ahead and try it. I dare you. Wonderland is not to be messed with.
TOM: How 'bout that, Huck? You fancy chasing rabbits down a hole.
HUCK: Could be? What else is in there?
TOM: Yeah. *(To ALICE.)* What else you got in there?
ALICE: In Wonderland? Why, there are lots of things in there! Let's see, *(Starts listing on her fingers.)* I've met a Cheshire cat that turns invisible, a caterpillar that smokes a pipe, a Mad Hatter and a March hare who drink tea—
TOM: Okay, okay we get it. What do you think, Huck? Want to try it out?
ALICE: Like I said, go ahead. But also, be aware that there's also a wicked queen in there that will cut off your head. Not to mention a Bandersnatch and that nasty Jabberwocky.

TOM: A what?

(Before ALICE can answer, the RABBIT comes back from SL.)

RABBIT: Make way…make way…I'm late…I'm late… I'm late….
ALICE: Catch him!

(TOM, HUCK and ALICE give chase. The RABBIT weaves among the books to get away. He knocks against "The Wizard of Oz" as he scoots around it. The cover blows open and DOROTHY stumbles out holding her basket with Toto. SFX: A roaring wind is heard. NOTE: If safety permits, a large fan can also be hidden in the box to assist in blowing brown confetti debris onto the stage. Dorothy grabs the cover of the book and tries to close it. Tom and Huck join her in the struggle. As the cover closes, the sound of the wind ceases. During this, this RABBIT runs off SR. All three slump against the book's cover.)

DOROTHY: *(Hugging the basket with Toto against her.)* Jiminy Crickets. That was some twister.
TOM: Is that what it was?
DOROTHY: *(Surprised.)* Oh, who are you?
TOM: My name is Tom. And this here is Huck. *(Points to HUCK.)* And over yonder is Alice. *(Points to ALICE.)* Who might you be?
DOROTHY: I'm Dorothy Gale. And this is my dog, Toto. *(Steps away from the book.)* But where am I? This doesn't look like Kansas anymore.
TOM: It ain't. This here is what they call a library. It's a place they keep books. We're here in the classic section.
DOROTHY: I know what a library is. I come from a book you know. What I want to know is how did I get here? I was trying to get back home to Aunt Em.
HUCK: It's her fault. *(Points to ALICE.)* She brought a rabbit with her, and he knocked yer cover open.

ALICE: Now wait a minute. I was just chasing the rabbit. You're the ones that opened the book and let him escape.
TOM: She's right. I guess me and Huck are to blame. We wuz just looking for a new adventure and thought Wonderland seemed as good a place as any to get one.
DOROTHY: Wonderland?
ALICE: That's where I'm supposed to be. *(Glares at the two BOYS.)* Until these two decided to meddle in my story.
TOM: Aw, we don't mean no harm. Just seeing what else is out here. It gets kinda boring back in Hannibal doing the same old thing.
ALICE: Well, it's certainly not boring in Wonderland. You never know what you'll run across next.
DOROTHY: Same goes for Oz. We have flying monkeys, talking trees, wicked witches, and a wizard.
HUCK: That sounds purty good, Tom. What do you think? We hain't ever tangled with a witch a'fore.

(Just then the RABBIT runs in from SR.)

RABBIT: Oh dear, oh dear, I'm lost, I'm lost, I'm lost. What to do? Where to go? I'm lost. I'm lost. I'm lost.
ALICE: Catch him!

(The RABBIT starts weaving between the books again, followed by the OTHERS. This time two books, "T'was the Night Before Christmas" and "A Christmas Carol," are knocked together and start to fall. The characters rush to stabilize the books while the Rabbit makes a getaway off SL. Both books come open. SCROOGE falls out, followed by MARLEY. ST. NICHOLAS becomes wedged in the opening of his. He struggles to exit as Scrooge and Marley argue.)

SCROOGE: Get off of me, you bag of bones! *(Pushes MARLEY off and rises to his feet. He looks around.)* What is the meaning of this?
MARLEY: Do tell. *(Getting to his feet, he shakes his chains to straighten them out.)* One minute I'm rattling my chains at this ole curmudgeon and the next I'm flying out the door.

How dare you interrupt my mission? It's going to be hard enough as it is, without all this unnecessary interference.

SCROOGE: Bah…humbug. You're not real. Just a figment of my imagination. Get off with you, you undone potato.

MARLEY: *(Incensed.)* Undone potato, you say?

(MARLEY draws himself up and begins to moan and wave his chains when he is interrupted by ST. NICHOLAS pushing his sack out of the book. His glasses and hat are askew, his beard is ruffled and his rotund belly is caught between the edges of the book.)

ST. NICHOLAS: Hey there. Can somebody help me? Seems like I'm stuck.

(MARLEY relaxes his stance as TOM and HUCK go over and pull ST. NICHOLAS out.)

ST. NICHOLAS: *(Cont'd.)* Thank you, young fellers. *(Straightens his eyeglasses, beard, etc.)* That was quite a spill. *(HE picks up his sack and peers back into it.)* Sure hope nothing is broken. What happened anyway?

(EVERYONE points to TOM and HUCK.)

ALICE: They're what happened! They've dragged us all here without so much as a by your leave.

TOM: We didn't drag you nowhere. We just opened the book. You came out on your own.

HUCK: Yeah. You should have watched where you was a'going.

ALICE: My story says to follow the rabbit. So that's what I was doing. It's your fault that he got out.

ST. NICHOLAS: *(Soothing.)* Now, now. I'm sure they didn't mean any harm. Boys will be boys, you know. *(Laughing.)* Ho… ho… ho… ho.

SCROOGE: Why are you laughing? I do not find anything amusing. Getting a man out of his bed in the middle of the night on 24th of December is scandalous.

MARLEY: You were already out of your bed, Ebenezer. I had just arrived, and we were having a discussion about—
SCROOGE: *(Interrupts.)* It doesn't matter whether or not I was in bed or out. The fact remains we're not supposed to be here.
MARLEY: Oh, calm down, Scrooge. Accidents happen. We'll get it sorted out.
SCROOGE: Oh, calm yourself. Don't you have someone to haunt?
MARLEY: Sure do. And he's right here.
HUCK: You a ghost?
MARLEY: I am. I'm the ghost of Jacob Marley.
HUCK: *(Turns to TOM.)* Hear that, Tom? This here book has ghosts in it. We ain't ever tackled any ghosts a'fore, either.
TOM: *(Smiles and joins HUCK at the book.)* We ain't, have we? 'Bout how many ghosts are in there?
MARLEY: Including myself, four. But it's not what you think.
HUCK: Now don't tell us. We want to be surprised. What do you think, Tom? Want to give it a try?
DOROTHY: Now wait just a minute. You can't just leave us here like this. I've got to get back to Kansas. Aunt Em is sick and needs me.
HUCK: Well, that ain't no trouble. Jest climb back in and we'll shet the book behind you.
TOM: Gotta find where you were in the book though. Don't go back in the wrong place or you might meet yourself.
HUCK: Yep, and when that happens, you don't know whether yer coming or going and things get all twisted up.
DOROTHY: Oh my. How do we stop that from happening?
TOM: Just have to have the right pages marked.
DOROTHY: But I didn't have time to mark anything. Everything happened so fast.
TOM: Well, in yer case, it should be purty simple. You came here in a middle of a twister. Shouldn't be hard to find. What with all the wind and such. We'll just toss you right back in it at the same place.
DOROTHY: I'm not sure about that. That storm was pretty rough. How do I know I won't get hurt?

End of Freeview

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