

DUST on the CHRISTMAS STAR

By Alberta Hawse

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SETTING

The living room has two exits. One SR, one SL. The furniture is of the heavy, dark type with indications that the room has remained essentially the same for many years. A piano is placed against the back wall in plain view of the audience. There is a long bench in front of it. The room also holds a sofa, several tables, a large old-fashioned rocker and a child's rocker, several out of date lamps, both floor and table. The walls have old-fashioned pictures and there are many photographs sitting around. Pictures of a girl are prominent. An old-fashioned library table and bookcase would add the proper tone to the stage setting. A clothes tree is near L entrance. There is a telephone on a stand. The room looks lived-in, homey, and permanent!

(If it is impossible to have a piano on-stage, suitable changes can be made in the script and another person other than Linda can play off stage. If the piano is not used, there could be a fireplace with a mantle on which the Christmas star is hung, or a window in which the star is put. Either way there should be a sturdy bench in front of fireplace or window on which Tammy can stand, and other characters can sit as play progresses.)

PLACE: Living room of an ordinary family home in a small suburban community any place in the United States.

SYNOPSIS: Act I - Morning of the day before Christmas

Act II - Late afternoon of the same day.

Act III - Early evening of the same day.

PLAYING TIME: Using all music as indicated, the play runs about 90 min.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3m, 4w, 1girl)

KATE SHERMAN
JOHN SHERMAN
TAMMY
LOUIS BAKER
ANDREWS
ED
LINDA
JO

CHARACTER AND COSTUME PLOT

KATE SHERMAN: She is about 50. A settled, sentimental woman whose family "roots" threaten to ruin her. She wears ordinary house dresses and aprons.

JOHN SHERMAN: Kate's husband. He is the salt-of-the-earth type who loves his wife and tries to sympathize with her. Yet he sees beyond their immediate sorrow into eternity. He wears ordinary clothing in first two acts. In third act he has a Biblical shepherd's costume.

TAMMY: The Sherman's granddaughter. She is supposedly about 8 or 9. A small 12 or 13 year-old could take the part - one who could easily learn the lines. *(The younger or smaller the child, the more effective the role.)* She wears ordinary play clothes in first two acts and something dressier in the third act.

LOUIS BAKER: Tammy's other Grandmother. She is about the same age as Kate but perhaps a little better preserved. She is fashionable, well adjusted to life, and a lovely person. She wears beautiful clothes with quiet style.

ANDREWS: Can be an adult of any age. He is the missionary who is working to re-open the old church. He is positive and frank in his approach to the Shermans' family problem. A devout Christian he puts full reliance in the power of prayer. In first act he wears work clothes; in third, he wears Biblical robes with headdress and beard.

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ED: A young minister full of fun and full of the Spirit. He must be able to sing. He has a solo, and a duet with Jo. Ordinary clothes.

LINDA: Ed's young wife. She must be able to play the piano. She wears ordinary clothes in second act and a lovely colorful Biblical costume in third act.

JO: A young girl in late teens or early 20's who is a convert of Ed and Linda. She also sings a solo, and a duet with Ed. She wears ordinary clothes in second act, lovely Biblical robes in third act.

PROPERTIES

(Other than costumes and stage furniture)

A hymn book or two on piano or in bookcase.

A Bible.

Magazines and papers *(scattered about at opening of play.)*

A box of children's paints or crayons.

A fair-sized doll baby with blanket around it.

A home-made Christmas star of good size with bulb behind it.

Sheet music for Jo's and Ed's songs.

Tool box for John.

Trays for cookie, sandwiches and hot chocolate.

Sandwiches, cookies, napkins.

Candy dish with fudge.

Gift box and wrappings.

Wrapped gifts.

Overnight case for Louise.

Bowls of oranges and other fruit in second act.

Few Christmas greens, other decorations such as candles.

Three king-size star shaped cookies.

Needle and thread for Jo's sewing in third act.

Face powder, flour, or cigarette ashes make good dust for the star.

LIGHTING AND SOUND EFFECTS

No special lighting is needed except for the pageant scenes in third act. Here it is suggested the other actors on stage be blanked out and the spotlight used on the singers and the scenes with the doll. A doorbell is used, and the sound of a ringing church bell should be put on tape. A tape recording of the song "Joy to the World" could also be made. Since there are very few changes of the setting and only slight costumes changes, the time between curtains is very short. However, it is suggested that a tape of Christmas music should be made and at least three minutes of music be used between first and second acts. Between second and third acts it is suggested that a live solo be used plus taped music to give actors a chance to get into their Biblical costumes.

SPECIAL MUSIC USED IN THE PREMIERE PRODUCTION OF THIS PLAY:

This is optional, since any familiar carols, may be used.

"Christmas Is coming, Coming, Coming" ... original words to
old nursery tune "Ten Little Indians"

"O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" ... old hymn by John
Wesley

"God Hath Not Promised" ... by Alfred B. Smith

"Come To the Stable with Jesus"

"Sweet Little Jesus Boy"

ACT I

(AT RISE: TAMMY sneaks into the room, looking behind her now and then to be sure she isn't being observed, and reaches under the sofa to get her hidden Christmas star. She dusts it off lovingly. Then carries it to the piano and steps up on the bench to set her star on the piano. She plugs it into an electrical socket and admires it. She sits at the piano and picks out the tune "Away in a Manger." Offstage KATE calls her. Quickly Tammy puts the star under the sofa again, and is back at the piano playing when Kate enters.)

KATE: Tammy, quit pounding the piano and help me get this room cleaned. Here ... put your paints away. *(KATE hands TAMMY a box of paints and Tammy puts them in the piano bench or table drawer.)*

TAMMY: Are we going to put up a Christmas tree, Grandma? *(Wistfully.)* Today's the last day. Tomorrow's Christmas.

KATE: No, honey.

TAMMY: Can we put up some of the other things then? Can I get my star and ...

KATE: *(Patiently.)* Tammy, I explained to you two weeks ago that we are not going to have anything like that for Christmas this year. Now be a good girl and quit plaguing Grandma.

TAMMY: *(Determined.)* Aren't we even going to make any Christmas cookies?

KATE: I suppose we could bake some oatmeal and raisin ones.

TAMMY: *(Disgusted.)* Oatmeal! Can't we have star and trees and reindeers with sugar stuff on them? *(Picks up HER doll from the small rocker and sits down.)*

KATE: No. Look and see if Grandpa left his shoes under the sofa. You know how he's always kicking them off.

TAMMY: There are no shoes under there, Grandma.

KATE: If you aren't going to look ... *(Starts for sofa.)*

End of Freeview

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