

AND CHRISTMAS CAME

A Pantomime

by
Kate Alice White



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

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SCENE: The stage is set to resemble a humble home. The table is propped up to keep it from falling over. The chairs have lost their legs or backs. There are several wooden boxes for seats. The room is lighted by a candle, which is stuck in a bottle. There is an old clock of some sort in the room. There is a screen at back of stage.

CHARACTERS:

Reader

Gwendolyn, the beautiful maiden.

Mrs. Smith, Gwendolyn's widowed mother.

Ebenezer Grab-em, the villain who would marry Gwendolyn.

Miles Mintern, a Hollywood photographer.

Chorus, off stage. (A record player may be used.)

PROPERTIES FOR USE ON STAGE:

Piece of burlap and darning needle threaded with cord	Mrs. Smith	In hand
Large red letter "I"	Mrs. Smith	On table
Newspaper and knotted cord	Mrs. Smith	On table
Large, full handbag	Gwendolyn	Hidden on stage
Hat and cane	Ebenezer	On stage
Map roll	Ebenezer	On table
Teapot, two cups and saucers	Ebenezer	On table
Cardboard with "CLAIM" printed on it	Ebenezer	On table
Flatiron	Ebenezer	On table
Camera	Miles	Carried in
Two marbles	Gwendolyn	In pocket
Daily calendar	Gwendolyn	On table
Old book with loose leaves	Gwendolyn	On table
Large red paper heart, torn in two	Gwendolyn	In front of dress
Beads, earrings, rings, brooches	Miles	In pockets
Lighted candle in candlestick	Mrs. Smith	Carried in

PROPERTIES OFF STAGE:

Gong	Scraps of white paper
Two large paper suns	Large envelope containing mail order catalog
Paper sacks to blow up	Curtain to hold before group on stage

AT RISE: Widow Smith is discovered seated near table, sewing. Reader stands at one side of stage, away from the action.

READER: (Reads slowly, giving actors plenty of time.) It is the hour of six (GONG RINGS SIX TIMES) on a beautiful evening in early fall at the Smith home. The Widow Smith, whose poverty compels her to toil for her daily bread, is working at her beautiful embroidery. (SEWS ON A PIECE OF BURLAP. USES LARGE DARNING NEEDLE, THREADED WITH CORD.) She needs must toil from sun (LARGE YELLOW PAPER SUN IS HELD ABOVE ONE END OF SCREEN AT BACK OF STAGE) to sun (ANOTHER YELLOW PAPER SUN IS HELD ABOVE OTHER END OF SCREEN AT BACK OF STAGE) to make a livelihood for herself and her beautiful daughter, Gwendolyn, who is the apple of her eye. The hour for the beautiful Gwendolyn's return is approaching. The Widow Smith quickly rises from

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her chair (GETS UP SLOWLY) and rushes to the window. (WALKS LEISURELY TO WINDOW.) She would see her darling ere she enters the house. She would not have her daughter know how she yearns to keep her in her home, away from the cold, cruel world, so she dashes to her chair. (WALKS SLOWLY TO CHAIR AND SITS.) Then at last the beautiful Gwendolyn trips into the room. (TUMBLES OVER HER OWN FEET, SPRAWLS ON FLOOR.)

Very graceful and charming is Gwendolyn. (TRIES TO GET UP SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE SHE IS SUCCESSFUL.) Her mother eyes her (PICKS UP LARGE RED LETTER "I" FROM TABLE AND PEERS AROUND IT) child fondly. Gwendolyn takes a chair. (PICKS UP A CHAIR; TAKES IT OUT.) She has been down town slaving in an office all day long when she would feign have stayed at home with her beloved mother; but it is not for the poor to spend the day in idleness, for they needs must work, if the wolves are to be kept from the door. (BOYS BEHIND SCREEN HOWL LIKE WOLVES.)

The mother works feverishly at her embroidery for it must be finished if they are to have food for their supper. She puts in the last stitch. (PUTS IN A VERY LONG STITCH.) She wraps the delicate pieces of handiwork in the daintiest of wrappings. (WRAPS IT IN NEWSPAPERS, AND TIES WITH A KNOTTED PIECE OF CORD. GWENDOLYN RE-ENTERS.)

"I go to take this to Mrs. Very Rich." (MOTHER PRETENDS TO TALK.) "I shall be back ere long and then we shall have food."

Saying this, the mother races from the room. (GETS READY AS THOUGH FOR A FOOTRACE. RUNS OUT OF ROOM.) Far down the street, the gentle Gwendolyn hears the soft patter, patter of her mother's footsteps (LOUD, RAPID STAMPING OUTSIDE) as she walks silently on her way to the home of wealth where she will take her beautiful specimen of the embroiderer's art.

The lovely Gwendolyn looks around her humble home. It is her own home--but only so long as the miserly Ebenezer Grab-em allows her and her beloved mother to stay. She thinks of Ebenezer--she shivers. (SHAKES VIOLENTLY.) Too many times has she seen the old man looking at her--looking at her with his eyes. (EBENEZER STARES OVER SCREEN, UNSEEN BY GWENDOLYN.) Again she shivers. (SHAKES HARDER THAN BEFORE.)

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---