A Dickens of A Christmas Tree

By

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Characters:

The 7 Barclays Follow:

**Dad: (John)** (mid 30’s -50s) Loved by wife & Children, smart, good sense of humor.

**Mom: (Fiona)** (mid -30’s- 50’s) Irish to the bone, never lost her brogue, (accent) bright Loving, great Mom, wife, quick sense of humor.

**Brittany:** (Not identical Twins 8-10yrs.) bright, loving and pleasant.

**Bobby:** (Other Twin 8-10 yrs.) bright, loving & pleasant.

**Emma:** (11-13yrs.) Smart, loving, pleasant.

**Rosa:** (Rosa-Lee-Wise Owl) 14-16 yrs. With her loving, warm Mix-Master DNA. Adopted, at 2yrs. because at first they couldn’t have children.

**Nicholas:** (Youngest 4-5 yrs.) Humorous little guy (the baby) bright as a penny.

**Mute Actors: ornaments:** (Fun Small parts) Clown Bobble Head M/F, Elf M/F, Dickens’ Boy/Girl, Barbie/Prom/Girl.

**Enactors** (Mute-Mime-Fun Small Parts)-Anna-sweet, ghostly child F; Leo the Lion M/F

**George:** (Uncle/Georgie) Irish, bright, ex-fisherman and teller of Tall Tales. Older brother to Mom by 5 yrs. Reformed but led a wild life. (Wears a Yarn spinner Hat?)

**Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come:** M/F ageless, officious, (Long cloak, old/pale.)

**Maria:** (Angel) Youthful but very efficient and kind; bold where needed.

**Mary:** 15-19yrs,Loving, intelligent/brave wife to Joseph, and soon to be Mother of Jesus.

**Joseph:** 20’s-40’s, Loving, brave, religious, husband to Mary, carpenter in Nazareth.

**Beelzie:** M/F Devilish youth 10-18 yrs. ragged, smells awful, actually Beelzebub.
**Carolers:** Children, various ages. 4 to a dozen. Sing “O Christmas Tree” (Tannenbaum.)

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**Production Notes:**

**Set:** Maintain a Victorian feel in contemporary time. Living room with fireplace.

- Decorated Christmas Tree, Angel (atop) Center of attraction USC. Prop: Bright Star.
- Small sofa, 2 sm. Sofa chairs, tea table, 6 chairs. Simple backdrop (possibly with a painted hearth & wreath.)

**Costumes:** Family: everyday contemporary wear; Bobble head costume, Barbie Doll/Prom; Elf, Dickens’ B/G, Mary & Joseph/Biblical; Maria-Angelic + disguise, Beelzie-raggedy clothes; Simulated Lion Suit; Anna-waif like. Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (creative.)

**Props:** Ornaments: Bobble head clown, Elf, Dickens’ Boy/girl, Prom/Barbie, 2 Santa candy holders. A small Creche/under the tree with figures. Jesus Doll; **Staffs** for Mary & Joseph, 2 leather Bladders for water, Knapsacks, blanket, gear, food, bread/nuts/dates etc. Cider Bowl cups, paper plates & Treats

**Make up:** mostly contemporary. Creative: Ghost of Christmas, Mutes & Enactors; Anna

- ghostly child, characters, need creative make up.

**Lighting:** Indoor; Star of Bethlehem, outdoor bright sun,

**Affects:** clouds, fog, and lightening,

**Sound:** Lion’s roar! **Thunder.**

**Time:** Christmas, Present

**Place:** Any home anywhere where there is a Christmas tree.
“Dickens of a Christmas Tree

One Act---One Continuous Scene

Setting: Lights up on living room, set with 6 chairs, 1 sm. Couch, 2 sofa chairs, tea table, bowl of cider, cups and treats, plates. A large Christmas Tree, decorated with tree toys new & old, that focus on this Dickens’ story. USL a fireplace with hearth and candles, a wreath over it. And Simple backdrop.

(Segueing smoothly from scenes on apron to cues for dialogue and lighting.)

At Rise: Dad Barclay strolls out happily, savoring his favorite scene of the year, inhales the essence of the tree, warms himself at fireplace; cadges a cookie and a cup of cider (guiltily, they’re for later.) Stares lovingly at the tree sipping and dreaming, picks up tree toys...Enjoys them, voicing the sounds they might make... Picks up copy of Dickens’ “A Christmas Tree,” (table.)

Dad: Aah, YES!... My most favorite Dickens’ Story, “A Christmas Tree.” (To the audience and Tree: Warmly, energetically, imaginatively, reads.)

‘I’ve been looking on, this evening, at a merry company of children assembled round that pretty German toy, a Christmas Tree. The tree standing in the middle of the room, seemed to tower high above their heads. And was brilliantly lighted by a multitude of little lights; that everywhere sparkled and glittered with bright objects. There were rosy-cheeked dolls, elves, clowns and Santa, and other beautiful ornaments all with stories to tell. All hanging majestically, some shy ones hiding behind thick green bows. Dramatically erupting into a lively realization of childhood fantasies! Which set me thinking how the Pine and Holly trees, that grow and all the things that come into existence on the earth, seem to present themselves at this well remembered time of the year. And me home alone with, my thoughts drawn back to my childhood, by a fascination, I can’t resist. Begin to consider what
we all remember best upon the branches of the Christmas tree of our own young Christmas days, by which we climbed to Real Life!’

Twins: (The 2 younger children, twins, excited, break-in, Skipping, Singing.) We wish you a Merry Christmas. We wish you a Merry Christmas. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! (Excited Laughter.)

Dad: Whew! Twins you startled me! Woke me right out of my reverie…

I loved it! Sounded great! Must have inherited your talent from your Parents.

Bobby: (Excited) How long now Dad?

Dad: (Kidding,) Before the Whirlwind--- Uncle George arrives?

Bobby: Nooo! Before Santa comes!

Dad: The sun’s barely set. And you’re worried about Santa’s arrival.

Twins: Daaad! We can’t wait! (Teasingly) Can’t! We’ll just bust!

Dad: Relax! Take time to check out our tree and those decorations! Absorb the magic of the ornaments! Some were on the Barclay family tree when I was small. Real Beauties!

(In this sequence as they speak of them the ornaments come alive, full bodied, as mute/miming, animated characters, cross D.S. (on apron.) The family pays the characters no mind, focuses only on the ornaments.)

Bobby: Wow! My favorite clown with the Bobble-head. (Goes to it makes it bobble a bit on the tree---talks to it.) Mr. Bobble head how are you today? (Bobble Head enter DSL animated mime-head keeps bobbing, waves. Crosses off DSR.) Don’t lose your head Mr. Bobble head. Ha Ha Ha!

Dad: It’s one of my favorites too… Drove your grandparents crazy, always playing with the tree toys makin’em come alive. While doing a crazy jig.

I can hear’em now! ‘Johnnie stop that or the tree will fall on you!.

Bobby: And did it Dad?

Dad: Neh-ver! Well almost never. My Dad came to the rescue--- just in time.
Brittany:  *(Spots her favorite.)* Whoa! *(Plays with it.)* Here’s *my* favorite the Elf,

it’s a beauty!... Love it! Dad can I play with it *after* Christmas?

*(Elf enters DSL crosses and pantomimes as any silly elf should do, exits, DSR)*

Dad:  Better ask  Mom, that’s her favorite heirloom.

Brittany:  *(Almost drops it.)* Whoops!

Dad:  *Whoa!* Don’t *Break* it or you’ll be grounded till next Christmas!

Mom:  *(Hears as she enters)* Not to worry! I damaged it when I was Britt’s age.  Twins: Hi! Mom where ya been?

Mom:  *(Speaks with an Irish brogue.)* Doin’ some last minute wrappin’.

    And me favorite thing makin’ Plum pudding. It’s my delicious contribution to

    Christmas. I now weigh an extra 5 pounds to prove it. Samplin’ as I go make’n sure it’s *truly* great!

Brittany:  *Super!* *But* how about ice cream with it? Then we’ll really think it’s

    *Truly* great!

Mom:  What do ya mean *think*?--- I don’t know, it’s not exactly tradition.

Dad:  *(Humorously)* Lighten up Fiona! It’s Christmas in the USA *not* the UK.

    *Ice Cream* is now an American tradition… Why some folks fry it!

Mom:  Go ahead John make fun of the Irish and our Blarney if ya will… Just remember Tradition is in Transition! Anyway it bein’ Christmas, if you want to put it on your Puddin’ or fry it, be my guest. But not in front of me!

Rosa:  *(Rushes in; overwhelming, sincere.)* Hey! Merry Christmas to *All*! from your very own adopted, Multi–Cultural--- Rosa-Lee-Wise Owl. And a
great big thanks to Mom with her Celtic-Roman-Viking, DNA and Dad who’s is the United Nations!... Will’ ya look at this Tree! Neat! I Love it!

**Emma:** *(Runs in, overhears.)* I love it more’n you do!

*(Both act like they’re hugging it without making contact.)*

**Rosa:** No you don’t! *(Shoves her teasingly. Then bump into Nick.)*

**Nicholas:** Hey watch-it! I’m the smallest an’ don’t wanna get smoooshed before Christmas!

**Rosa:** *(Kibitzing)* Sorreee! I didn’t see youuu!

**Emma:** If we knew it was you, your highness, we’d-a-been more caaareful.

**Rosa:** And smoo-ooshed you after Christmas!

*(Both laugh hysterically, excitement is high.)*

**Nicholas:** *(Mimics)* Thaaank Youuu!

**Mom:** Clowns, stop clowning! And stand with your lovin’ parents… Enjoy the beauty of this ‘Tree.’ Or else I shall turn you all, inta’ Sugar Canes!

John

I’m totally mesmerized by this tree. It’s the nicest we’ve ever had and beautifully decorated by all of us. If I do say so me’self.

**Dad:** You’re right, and say that every year.

**Mom:** It gets better and better.

**Dad:** Just like our love Darlin’! *(They embrace.)* Thanks Kids! *(They come over to get a group hug.)*

**Mom:** Now that was nice.

*(All stare, at the tree, spellbound.)*

**Dad:** Everyone *(in turn takes their favorite toy in hand still attached to tree.)* See this ruddy faced child, notice the Dickens’ look, with round belly. cheeks cherry red, and a bright cheery cap upon its head. I can see the child

*(as child crosses DSR;)* happily skipping home, whistling a Christmas tune. It’s an oldie that was my Mom’s. I loved it… Fed my imagination like
crazy. I could envision the family, their tree, the hearth; even taste their plum pudding. Why he coulda’ been a Cratchit. One of my favorites!

(Child Exits DSL.)

Bobby: Mom what’s yours?

Mom: The Elf; I love angels too which as you may have noticed are all over the house. And a coupla real ones that are hard to see in daylight.

Bobby: Which one do you specially like, Ma?

Mom: The one on the treetop. Who looks over but never down on us.

Brittany: But does look down on us Mom.

Emma: (Impishly) Especially Rosa!

Mom: Now behave Darlin’ or you’ll wind up with coal in yer stocking! What I’m tryin’ to get across here is the angel is without an attitude. And children she is no snob but here keep’n an eye on all of us.

Emma: She? You mean angels come in different sexes?

Dad: I suppose and in small, medium and large. No one really knows, but I believe; and your Mom can back me on this; that an angel can assume whatever shape and gender when necessary.

Mom: After all they’re spirits on a much higher plane.

Emma: I think I understand.

Rosa: Yeah me too--- sorta.

Twins: Yeah us too!

Nicholas: I’m not sure.

Mom: Kids, what are your favorites?

Rosa: Barbie, with her Prom dress, and neat Hairdo. (She goes to it plays with it and very slowly puts it back.)

(While Barbie walks on DSL slowly, carefully, proudly, does a couple of dance moves and exits DSR.)
Emma: Oh you’re so today Rosa, my favorite’s always been Grandma’s Crèche.

Brittany: Yeah neato!

Emma: The stable and figures give me a shimmery feeling up and down my spine… I can actually see Sheppard’s gathered round them.

Nicholas: Baby Jesus, is my favorite!

Rosa: What I like the most is the family scene, the animals helping them stay warm. If I were there I’d cuddle up with a big hairy sheep dog, fleas and all, and keep toasty warm.

Mom: Scratch that idea! My favorite is of the whole family together with the Angels watching over them.

Dad: Nicholas what do you think of the Star of Bethlehem?

Nicholas: I like it. It’s big an’ beautiful.

George: (Lets himself in cheerfully, like a thunder clap! Nothing shy about him as he bellows out a sampling of,) Oh Christmas Tree! Oh Christmas Tree! (Speaks with an Irish Brogue) Christmas Greetings to the marvelous Barclay Family from Ireland! I let myself in, ahem!... Quietly, see’n as your Uncle George didn’t wanna overwhelm everyone with the extreme joy at the sight of himself and the sound of me mellow voice.

Dad: Merry Christmas George! You are a welcome sight brother-in-law! Apparently you made it safely all the way from (wise) what’s the name of that place?

Mom: Dublin Ireland, John! Georgie Darlin! Is it really you, Brother? This is a surprise, your plan to fly sounded iffy! Come over here an’ Give yer Darlin’ sister and all of us Darlins’ a gah-rate Big hug! (All hug, a bone-crusher.)

All: And a Merry Christmas!

George: Yes! But Iffy it was and iffy it ain’t! Drove up from the airport in a borrowed sleigh gotten from the some kindly old gent in a red suit with a Kettle, at the airport. Said he had a layover and had to go to the men’s room real bad, the cold ya know. So I said I’d keep an eye on it, for the poor man.
Dad: Well I hope he doesn’t come after you in a squad car, with lights flashing, red suit, beard and all, looking for his sled.

George: But not me. Second class citizen that I may be--- And I might add Mom and Dad’s least favorite offspring. I was always the neglected child. The child that wasn’t planned on. But here I am nonetheless. While Sis got everything, the best toys, the first hand clothes. All I ever got, wuz the oversized hand-me-downs from cousins, with the patches.

Mom: Better over-sized clothes, with patches than holes. All the better to grow into.

George: Easy fer you ta say.

Mom: Stop all this bickerin! You know you’re me favorite brother.

George: Your only Brother!

Mom: But always me favorite. That never changed. And best teller of yarns in the whole of Ireland.

George: And full-a-surprises like me thinkin’ of droppin’ in by parachute, compliments of Air Lingus. With me--- a blessed stowaway in the frigid luggage compartment in the belly of the plane. Wasn’t easy bein’ jammed in with the luggage fer 8 hours. It’s a wonder I’m here at all. And lucky you are I didn’t skydive in; but couldn’t find an open hatch, that I might jump out of and into your nice warm living room! Or I’da been here sooner.

Mom: And Welcome! As usual George you’re full of the Blarney, all the way from...

George: And don’t say Kilarney!

Mom: Kilarney!

George: Darn! You said it, now I have to dance me infamous Irish Jig. And at the same time greet all me Nieces and Nephews. (As he hums and sings bits of ‘Christmas in Kilarney,’ improvises, Jigs, dances, round and hugs all the children in turn, then hugs John (Dad) and quickly dances away before he irritates his Brother-in-Law.)

Dad: Well Mr. Jigs! You must be dry after all your hard traveling, so pour yourself a spicy cup of cider.
George: How’bout a spiked, spicy cupa cider?

Dad: Not in this house, no more, it’s against (mimics him,) me constitution.

Mom: And mine too, nary a drop for you John, nary a drop!

George: Why don’t we amend your constitution then! In that case I hope ya went easy on the cinnamon; makes me tipsy.

Dad: Times-a-Wastin’ and we’re waiting for a Tale!

George: Of course I’m always ready with a bevy of true tales at family functions...And if I don’t know any, I’ll make’m up.

Rosa: You can’t make’m up Uncle; they wouldn’t be true.

George: Hmmm... Here I am caught with me tongue flappin’ in the breeze and by me own niece, who is destined to become a lawyer no doubt. (Spots his ornament on the tree,) Aah! The boat ornament me favorite that I carved while workin’ on a fishing boat on the Bearing Sea, when still a young and hearty lad. Which brings ta mind.....

Emma: Your greatest Sea Yarn of all time, Uncle...

Rosa: The tale of the “Mystical, Magical, Merry Giant Squid!”

All Kids: We want the Squid--- Tale! We want the Squid--- Tale!. Etc....

George: You’re a lovely spoiled bunch ya are and it makes me proud ta be yer Uncle...Though I had nuthin to do with it!

Mom: Let’s face it Georgie you were born lucky. Lucky to be my brother...

Dad: Lucky to have me as your brother-in-law.

All Kids: And lucky to have such a fine bunch of nieces and nephews!

Mom: And never change a diaper!

George: And proud as I can be of all-a -that! Let me tell ya it fills me chest with pride to be the kids, finest, boldest and proudest Uncle.

Mom: Only Uncle.

George: True! But ya can’t fault me for braggin.’
Mom: Get on with it George, yer wearin’ out (mimics him,) me ears.

George: Now are ya ready fer me to pour into your little, cauliflower ears the Tale of the Giant Squid that was so huge it like ta drown us all!

All: (Emphatically) YES!!!

Dad: Why not make it a Christmas story while you’re at it!

George: Tis! As I recall, it happened a few days before Christmas and all through our ship not a creature was stirring not even a Snow-crab--- Only a 30 foot, 1000 lb Giant Squid, nicknamed Tiny.

Rosa: Amazing!

George: Now this is the weird part for after we’d caught it and figured it for dead. We began to hear thumpin’ an’ moanin’ as if the creature was wantin’ to be fed. Needless to say the crew and Captain were all filled with dread! Then what should we hear but the singing of Christmas carols, bringin’ joy and at the same time trepidation to our pointy little ears. Then ‘Tiny’ picks up the tempo and we hear, (demonstrates) the rump, thump, thump of Madame Squid’s ‘Tentacle Serenade,’ keepin’ time on the bulkhead, beatin’ out ‘Jingle Bells. Jingle Bells.’

Bobby: You’re joking, right Unc?

George: Tis true!... Now fully awake, she crawled her way to the crew’s galley with all of us sittin’ around eating. Then suddenly grabs the nearest thing handy which happened to be the neck of a crewman.

Emma: Oh no! Tiny didn’t kill him? Did he?

George: Did she--- NO!

Brittany: What then?

George: Naturally we began singing ‘Silent Night” to calm her down at which point she released the poor screamin’ seaman from her deadly suction cup grip.

Rosa: Didn’t you once tell us Unc that you planned to take the Squid ashore to a Marine Research Lab and notify the Media?
George: I’m comin’ to that Darlin,’ after we calmed Tiny down we all gathered round and tried to communicate with her. Even gave her a little rum to revitalize her. Then to our amazement she kept us up all night while we all sang with her doin’ the harmony to every Christmas carol known to Man and Squid. While we fed her shrimp cocktail.

Mom: My favorite brother you’re sure pourin’ it on thick aren’t ya?

George: I swear this to be the truest Christmas Squid story ever told. We decided finally the proper thing to do was to put her back in the Ocean where the sweet Darlin’ belonged. And as she went over the side we sang, ‘We wish you a Merry Christmas.’ While she smiled her beautiful squid smile as she slid, singin’ all the while right back into Davie Jones’ locker.

Bobby: Wow, I hope you took pictures of her, we’d like to see’em.

George: Sure we took pictures of her and recorded the voice of this marvelous Christmas Squid as it gurgled Merry Christmas while being released into the depths of the frigid Bearing Sea. Thumping the side of the boat for good luck!

Emma: Is that really a true story Uncle George?

George: Truth is in the ear and mind of the beholder, Darlin.

Dad: Well put for an ex-sailor.

George: What’s this I see? A beautiful Crèche under the tree, is there none of youse here that’ll tell the tale of the journey of Joseph and Mary?

Rosa: (The family joins in for this. As they spin the tale of the journey. Joseph and Mary begin to take stage.) I never thought about their journey Uncle... Well... they started out from Nazareth to travel a well traveled spice route to Bethlehem............

Nicholas: Walking all the way...........

Brittany: Were very poor so they carried all their possessions with them......

Bobby: Water, food, gear........

Brittany: On their backs--- in knapsacks........
Emma: The Angel Gabriel gave them directions on which way to go…..
Nicholas: Said follow the STAR!.......... 
Dad: That Spice Route was dusty, gritty and well traveled and not like today with Motels and Mac Donald’s; with only the Star as their guide……
Bobby: They had road signs--- didn’t they?........
Dad: Few! But they had Maria the littlest Angel of all and Gabriel’s assistant to guide and protect them………
Brittany: On a long trip.........
Rosa: Exhausting too............... 
Nicholas: It wasn’t easy........
Mom: Hot in the daytime, freezin’ at night.........
Brittany: Very dry--- water was scarce.........
Emma: No Starbucks!.......... 
Nicholas: (Can’t believe she said that.) Oh No!--- Or water fountains……
Brittany: You can say that again........
Nicholas: Or water fountains.......... 
Bobby: (Stops Nicholas by holding up his hand.) How about sandstorms? (Suddenly the stage darkens. SFX: strong wind sounds along with thunder and lightening. Joseph and Mary are seen on the apron covering themselves with their cloaks while traveling through the storm, have them mimic walking.)
Brittany: Someone help them! Look how they struggle!...........
Bobby: On the ground close to each other, totally covered with their cloaks……
Rose: Can they even breathe?........
Emma: You gotta breathe!.......
Brittany: Aah! Finally the storm is over; they get up and dust themselves off…….

Rosa: (Could sing it.) ‘And start all over again!’…………

Emma: You’re so clever Rosa-Lee-Wise Owl………..

Rosa: Jealous because you’re humor-less, multi-cultural-less and not adopted? Did I leave anything out?.......... 

Dad: Knock it off girls! And you were doing so well…………

Nicholas: They keep going………….

Mary: (The Star appears.) Ooh Joseph look! There’s the Star of Bethlehem shining so brightly! We can’t get lost!…………

Emma: Why don’t they follow signs, like we do?……

Mom: Not too many signs around but you’ve the right idea and have brought their journey to life…………

(Affects: Mist up the area Mary and Joseph are in.)

Emma: See’em tiredly walking along...And look how eerie it is. Uh oh! They’re going by that dark old cemetery……..

Brittany: Oh no! And there’s a heavy mist over it too. Spookeeeeee!........

Bobby: (Chills.) Now I’m really scared!…………

(SFX: Eerie sounds from the cemetery.)

Mary: What are those strange sounds Joseph?…………

Joseph: Just the wind not to worry my love! But it stirs the imagination…….

Maria: (Suddenly the littlest Angel of all appears.) Not to worry! It’s only the uneasy souls in torment here, seeking peace; who on windy nights ride the wind and cause travelers to fear. (Addresses souls, raises arms.) OH! Souls in the wind as you do drift, your eyes and souls to Heaven lift. He does forgive, you’re not forgotten. Sends his love forgives your sin. Let pass Joseph and Mary full of love. She soon to birth a child that will help you find salvation from above! (Raises her arms. SFX: The Sound of Silence.)……. 

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Dad: Shaken by that eerie encounter, manage to go on a few more miles before settling in for the night. *(Quick Blackout only on Mary & Joseph <> After a few beats--- Early morning light.)* .................

Please purchase to read the rest