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The Last Christmas Tree

A Christmas Play in One Act by
Mike Willis

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The Last Christmas Tree

by Mike Willis

CAST OF CHARACTERS

6F / 7M + Chorus & Extras of Various Ages & Gender

THE CAROLERS: *A singing group of men, women and children dressed for cold weather.*

MR. SIMS: *The choral director of the Carolers.*

JOE WILLIAMS: *A man in his mid-thirties; Maria's father.*

MARIA: *A twelve-year old girl; Joe's daughter.*

SANTA CLAUS: *A man playing Santa Claus.*

MR. DALTON: *A lonely old man who walks with a cane.*

CHARLIE: *An eight-year old boy dressed in ill-fitting clothes.*

MRS. JOHNSON: *A woman in her thirties; Ginger's mother.*

GINGER JOHNSON: *A spoiled teenager; Mrs. Johnson's daughter.*

MISS HARDY: *A young woman; Maria's teacher.*

REV. /FR. FRANK: *A man of the cloth; a jovial man of fifty. He is Irish.*

CHRISTINE: *A twelve-year old girl; Charlie's sister.*

TOWNSPEOPLE: *A young couple and eight or more people of varying ages and gender.*

TIME

The Present: late afternoon or early evening on Christmas Eve

PLACE

An empty lot on a street corner where JOE and MARIA are selling Christmas trees.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The play is easily staged on a bare stage with props. A number of extras can be used as either Carolers or Townspeople. The play is gender flexible with the use of simple name changes. The Carolers can be utilized to prepare the audience by singing carols not used in the show prior to opening curtain and during intermission. Doubling is possible.

The Last Christmas Tree

by Mike Willis

SETTING:

A street corner in a small town where JOE and his daughter MARIA have set up their Christmas tree stand. There are several Christmas trees leaning against a fence up-stage right. A sign by the trees reads: "Christmas Trees for Sale: Small \$10, Large \$20". The tree lot is ringed by hanging Christmas lights. Two old folding lawn chairs sit at the edge of the trees. Stage left of the tree lot is the street corner with a street light and sign indicating this is the corner of Hope and Charity.

AT RISE:

JOE and MARIA are busy straightening up their trees. They are dressed for cold weather and JOE is wearing a cloth carpenter's nail bag around his waist where he keeps his change. MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS enter from stage- left laughing. They begin organizing on the street corner. Some of THE CAROLERS are carrying stools that they arrange on the corner. Everyone is dressed in winter clothing including gloves/mittens. MR. SIMS sees JOE and crosses to him.

MR. SIMS

Merry Christmas, Joe! Hello, Maria. I hope you don't mind if we share your street corner.

MARIA

Hi, Mr. Sims.

MARIA continues to sort trees.

JOE

(Crossing to MR. SIMS)

Not at all. It might just help drum up some business. Things have been kind of slow today.

MR. SIMS

Well, today is Christmas Eve, you know... most folks probably already have their Christmas trees bought and decorated by now.

JOE

I'm sure you're right. I would like to sell the trees I have left though. Seems like such a waste to cut them and not have them find a good home. I can't interest you in a tree, can I?

MR. SIMS

Sorry... my wife has had our tree up for weeks. It's an artificial.

JOE

Aaah.

MR. SIMS

Well, good luck with your trees.

MR. SIMS crosses back to THE CAROLERS and they begin looking through their sheet music.

JOE

Thanks, and Merry Christmas.

JOE crosses back to his trees and MARIA crosses to JOE. She is carrying a small tree that is perfectly shaped.

MARIA

Dad, look at this tree. Isn't he just perfect? No one wants him because he's so small, but I think he's just perfect.

JOE

He? (*MARIA frowns and JOE catches himself*) Yes, he's a very nice tree... just a little puny is all.

MARIA

He's not puny, he's petite. He doesn't have one branch out of place. Can we save him and take him home?

JOE

Maria...

MARIA

Pleeze....

JOE

I don't know... we already have one tree at home.

MARIA

When Mom was alive we used to have a big tree in the living room and a small one out on the porch.

JOE

I know, but...

MARIA

If you don't want a tree on the porch, I could decorate it and put it in my room. I have the perfect spot. Can I keep this one?

JOE

I don't know, Maria... it wouldn't be the same...

MARIA

Without, Mom. I know Dad... but, it's been two years and if Mom were here I just know she would have trees all over the house. Besides, this tree is so perfect.

JOE

Well?

MARIA

Dad....

JOE

It is a cute tree.

MARIA

Handsome. He's handsome.

JOE

Right, handsome. All right, we can take that one tree home... I don't expect anyone to want to buy him anyway, but just in case, you had better take him out and put him in the back of the truck.

MARIA

(Kissing JOE on the cheek)

Thanks, Dad! It'll be great, you'll see.

MARIA exits carrying the small tree.

JOE

Yeah, we'll see.

JOE resumes straightening his trees as MR. SIMS brings out a pitch pipe and gives THE CAROLERS a note. THE CAROLERS begin singing "Jingle Bells".

THE CAROLERS

Verse #1

*Dashing through the snow
In a one-horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go
Laughing all the way
Bells on bobtail ring
Making spirits bright
What fun it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight!*

Verse #2

*A day or two ago
I thought I'd take a ride
And soon, Miss Fanny Bright
Was seated by my side,
The horse was lean and lank
Misfortune seemed his lot
He got into a drifted bank
And then we got upsoot.*

Chorus

*Jingle Bells, jingle Bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh.
Jingle Bells, jingle Bells,
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh.*

While THE CAROLERS are singing, several TOWNSPEOPLE hurry by all bundled up, ignoring both JOE and THE CAROLERS. A YOUNG COUPLE enters holding hands and listens politely to THE CAROLERS. As THE CAROLERS start the second verse, THE YOUNG COUPLE crosses to JOE'S trees.

JOE

(To the YOUNG COUPLE while the singing continues)

Hello there, can I interest you in a Christmas tree? Fresh cut.

THE YOUNG COUPLE

No, thank you. They are beautiful though. Sorry.

JOE

Well, Merry Christmas to you.

THE YOUNG COUPLE

Merry Christmas.

THE YOUNG COUPLE exits as THE CAROLERS finish Jingle Bells.

MR. SIMS

(To THE CAROLERS)

Let's walk down the street and sing in front of some of the houses. You can leave your stools here and we'll come back. *(To JOE)* Hey Joe, we're going to wander down the street and sing for some of the people who live on this block. Can you keep an eye on our things for us?

JOE

Sure, no problem.

MR. SIMS

Thanks, Joe. We'll be back.

JOE

I'll be here.

MR. SIMS

(To CAROLERS)

Let's go, gang.

THE CAROLERS and MR. SIMS exit.

MR. SIMS and CAROLERS

(Ad Lib) Maybe someone will give us cookies. I want some egg-nog. Hot chocolate for me. *(Etc.)*

MARIA enters.

MARIA

I put my tree back on the truck. How many trees did you sell while I was gone?

JOE

None. Sorry, maybe trying to sell trees on Christmas Eve was a bad idea. I'm beginning to think we should just load up what's left and head on home.

MARIA

Not yet. We'll sell them, you'll see.

JOE

Well, aren't you the little optimist. All right, but I'm not so sure.

From offstage, THE CAROLERS begin singing "Here Comes Santa Claus".

THE CAROLERS, *Offstage*

*Here comes Santa Claus,
Here comes Santa Claus,
Right down Santa Claus lane.
Vixen and Blitzen all his reindeer
Pullin' on the reins.*

THE CAROLERS cut the song short and begin laughing.

SANTA

(Laughing offstage)

Ho, Ho, Ho... Merry Christmas!

THE CAROLERS

(Offstage)

Merry Christmas, Santa!

SANTA

Merry Christmas, everyone! Ho, Ho Ho.

SANTA CLAUS enters.

MARIA

Hey Santa, wanna' buy a Christmas tree?

SANTA

Well, now I don't know, Maria.

MARIA

How do you know my name?

SANTA

How do I know your name? Why I know everything, I'm Santa Claus.

MARIA

Yeah, right. So, if you know everything, do you know if you want to buy a tree or not?

SANTA

Well...

MARIA

C'mon Santa. They're great trees.

SANTA

Yes, they certainly are. I'm just not sure what I would do with another tree. Mrs. Claus and I already have one in the house.

MARIA

You could put one out in your yard.

SANTA

My yard?

MARIA

Sure, string it with some lights, then plop it in a snowdrift in front of your workshop where your elves can enjoy it.

SANTA

Ho, Ho, Ho... you think they'd like that, do you? *(To JOE)* You have quite the young salesperson here, Joe.

JOE

She can be quite convincing.

SANTA

Well, she convinced me. That sounds like a great idea. *(To MARIA)* All right Maria, I'll take that one over there.

SANTA points at one of the small trees.

MARIA

I don't know Santa, that tree is awful small. *(Looking at JOE)* Downright puny in fact.

SANTA

You think?

MARIA

If you put it outside and we get a lot of snow, it may cover it up. I think you would be better off with one of the big trees. I wouldn't want you to be disappointed once you got your tree home and found out it was too small.

SANTA

(Laughing)

But, a big tree is twenty dollars.

MARIA

That's right.... and worth every penny of it.

SANTA

All right, tis the season, you talked me into it. (*Pointing at a big tree*) I'll take that one over there.

MARIA

(*Smiling*)

An excellent choice. That will be twenty dollars, please.

JOE crosses and gets the tree as SANTA hands MARIA twenty dollars.

MARIA, *Continued*

Thanks, Mr. Jackson...uh, I mean Santa.

SANTA

Ho, Ho, Ho... Merry Christmas, Maria! Joe.

MARIA and JOE

Merry Christmas!

SANTA exits with tree.

MARIA

(*To JOE*)

See, that wasn't so hard.

JOE

Nice, work.

MARIA

Thanks, Dad. (*Calling out*) Christmas trees for sale! Don't spend Christmas without a tree.

MR. DALTON enters. HE walks with a cane and is in a hurry. MARIA crosses to MR. DALTON.

MARIA, *Continued*

Excuse me, Mister. Would you like to buy a Christmas tree?

MR. DALTON

(*Ornery*)

What!?

MARIA

A tree. Would you like to buy a tree?

MR. DALTON

No, I do not want to buy a Christmas tree!

MR. Dalton continues on and MARIA runs after him.

MARIA

But, we have some really nice ones left.

MR. DALTON

Young lady, I do not wish to buy a Christmas tree.

MARIA

Why not?

MR. DALTON

Because I do not celebrate Christmas. Therefore, I do not need a tree. I believe the true meaning of Christmas has been lost and the whole thing turned into a merchandizing frenzy... a time for merchants like you and your father to make a fast dollar.

MARIA

It hasn't been very fast. In fact business has actually been really slow.

MR. DALTON

Hmmph!

JOE crosses to MARIA and MR. DALTON.

JOE

Maria, let Mr. Dalton be on his way. *(To MR. DALTON)* I'm sorry about that, Mr. Dalton. Maria gets a little excited when it comes to Christmas and selling our trees.

MR. DALTON

Yes, I can certainly see that. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll be on my way.

JOE

Sure. We're sorry to have troubled you, Mr. Dalton. Merry Christmas.

MR. DALTON

Humph.

MR. DALTON starts to exit. JOE crosses to speak to MARIA.

JOE

Maria, you mustn't push our trees on people.

MARIA

I didn't mean to be pushy. He looked so sad; I thought a tree might...

MR. DALTON overhears and stops.

MR. DALTON

What's that? What did you say young lady?

JOE

Mr. Dalton, I...

MARIA

You looked sad... when you walked by. I thought maybe a Christmas tree might cheer you up. I didn't know that you didn't believe in Christmas. I'm sorry.

MR. DALTON

I do believe in Christmas. I just don't believe in spending money frivolously.

JOE

She really is sorry, Mr. Dalton.

MR. DALTON

(To MARIA)

Come here young lady.

MARIA crosses to MR. DALTON.

MR. DALTON, *Continued*

So, you think I look sad, do you?

MARIA

And lonely.

JOE

Maria...

MR. DALTON

And you think parting with some of my hard-earned money to purchase a foolish Christmas tree will make me happy?

MARIA

Yes, sir. Well... maybe.

MR. DALTON

Well, I don't. I think I will be much happier saving my ten or twenty dollars than wasting it on a silly Christmas tree. Now, I really must be going, I am much too busy to be bothered by nonsense.

MR. DALTON starts to exit.

MARIA

But, Christmas trees aren't...

JOE

(Cautioning)

Maria.... *(Calling after MR. DALTON)* Good evening to you, Mr. Dalton, and I hope you have a pleasant holiday.

MR. DALTON

Joseph.

MR. DALTON exits.

MARIA

Mr. Dalton seemed a little grumpy.

JOE

Now Maria, be nice. I believe you may have been right though, I think Mr. Dalton is just a little lonely and the Christmas season makes being alone even harder for him.

MARIA

Are you sure he isn't like Mr. Scrooge and just too cheap to buy a tree?

JOE

Well, maybe a little of that too. Now, how about you and me spreading a little Christmas cheer along with selling the rest of these trees. *(Calling)* Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas, trees for sale! Get your Christmas tree here.

MARIA

(Calling)

Christmas trees for sale! Only a few left.

CHARLIE enters. HE is eight years old and his boots and clothes are way too big for him and he has smudges on his face. He crosses to the trees and admires them. MARIA crosses to CHARLIE.

CHARLIE

I know you. You're Maria. You're in my sister's class.

MARIA

Christine. That's right and you're her little brother, Charlie.

I'm not little. CHARLIE

Sure, you are. MARIA

No, I'm not. I'm the man in our family. CHARLIE

If you say so. Are you looking for a Christmas tree? MARIA

Are these your trees? CHARLIE

Mine and my dad's. We cut them and sell them here on this corner every year. MARIA

You sure got some nice ones. CHARLIE

You got that right. Ya want to buy one? MARIA

How much are they? CHARLIE

(*Pointing*)
There's the sign over there. The big ones are twenty dollars and the little ones, ten. MARIA

Wow, that's a lot of money. CHARLIE

Not for trees like these. So, ya wanna buy one? MARIA

I can't. CHARLIE

Why not? MARIA

CHARLIE pulls a dollar bill out of his pocket.

I only have a dollar. CHARLIE

MARIA

Well run home and ask your mom for more money.

CHARLIE

Can't. I wanted to get a tree for my Mom... as a surprise. We've never had a Christmas tree before.

MARIA

Never?

CHARLIE

Not a real one. My Mom and my sister and me, we made one out of some old cardboard boxes.

MARIA

I can't believe you never had a real Christmas tree before.

CHARLIE

I ain't lyin'.

MARIA

I'm not sayin' you are. I just thought everyone had a Christmas tree at some time.

CHARLIE

My brother said he was going to get us one this year, but then he got sent away?

MARIA

I didn't know you had a brother.

CHARLIE

Well, I do. He's older. He's in the army. He gave me these boots.

CHARLIE shows off the boots he is wearing that are too big for him.

MARIA

Nice boots. A little big, aren't they?

CHARLIE

So?

MARIA

So, aren't they hard to walk in?

CHARLIE

A little... but I'll grow into 'em.

MARIA

If you don't wear them out first.

A TOWNSPERSON enters and grabs a Christmas tree and crosses to JOE with it. CHRISTINE enters and sees CHARLIE and crosses to CHARLIE and MARIA.

CHRISTINE

(To CHARLIE)

There you are. Mom told me to come find you, dinner's ready. Hi Maria.

MARIA

Hi Christine.

CHRISTINE

I hope he hasn't been bothering you. He's such a pest.

CHARLIE

I'm not a pest.

CHRISTINE

Sure you are, you just don't know it.

CHARLIE

I know lotsa things.

CHRISTINE

Well know this, Mom wants us home for dinner. What are you doing hanging around here anyway?

MARIA

He was just asking me about our Christmas trees.

CHARLIE

They got some nice ones.

CHRISTINE

(Looking at trees)

Yes, I see that. Now, let's head home before we get in trouble. Bye, Maria.

MARIA

Bye.

CHRISTINE and CHARLIE start to exit.

CHARLIE

(*To MARIA*)
So long, tree girl.

MARIA

Tree girl?

CHRISTINE

(*To MARIA*)
Don't mind him. I told you he was a pest.

MARIA

No, that's okay... I guess I am the tree girl.

CHARLIE exits and CHRISTINE starts to follow when MARIA calls after her. The TOWNSPERSON with JOE pays for the tree he is holding and exits. JOE tends to the trees.

MARIA, *Continued*

Hey, Christine.

CHRISTINE

What?

MARIA

Do you have an older brother?

CHRISTINE

No. Why?

MARIA

I just heard that you had an older brother who is in the army is all.

CHRISTINE

Who told you that? (*Suddenly realizing*) Oh, no... let me guess, Charlie told you he had an older brother.

MARIA

(*Reluctantly*)
Well, yeah.

CHRISTINE

My Mom thought Charlie needed a male influence in his life so she signed him up for the Big Brother Program. It's this program that pairs up older guys with a kid who doesn't have a father at home. This guy Jack was assigned to Charlie and he comes around a couple of times a week and the two of them do things together. They call them big brothers, but they're not really related. Jack is pretty cool though. Charlie loves him.

MARIA

Charlie said he got sent away.

CHRISTINE

Jack is in the army. His National Guard unit got sent overseas. He'll be gone for a year.

MARIA

That's a bummer.

CHRISTINE

Yeah, tell me about it. Charlie is taking it pretty hard. He insists on wearing those old boots that Jack gave him. My Mom has trouble getting him to take them off even to go to bed. Well, I had better get going. See ya.

MARIA

Bye, Christine. Merry Christmas.

CHRISTINE

Yeah, you too.

CHRISTINE exits and MARIA crosses to JOE.

JOE

Who was that?

MARIA

That was Christine. She's in my class at school.

JOE

And the boy with the big boots?

MARIA

That was Charlie, her little brother. The boots belonged to a friend of his who is in the army.

JOE

Were they looking for a tree?

MARIA

Charlie was, but he didn't have enough money for one.

JOE

Aaah... I see.

MARIA

Dad?

JOE

What?

MARIA

Do you think there are a lot of families out there that want a Christmas tree, but just can't afford one?

JOE

Yes, I'm sure there are. Times are tough for a lot of people and it seems even more so at Christmas time.

MARIA

We're lucky.

JOE

Yes... yes we are.

MARIA

Charlie has this friend Jack... he calls him his brother but he's really not. Anyway, Jack was going to get a tree for Charlie's family for Christmas, but then the army sent him away.

JOE

Things like that happen.

MARIA

That doesn't seem fair.

JOE

No, it doesn't.

THE CAROLERS enter and assemble on the corner.

MR. SIMS

Hi Joe, we're back.

JOE

I see that.

MR. SIMS

Thanks for watching our stuff.

No, problem.

JOE

MR. SIMS gets out his pitch pipe and gives a note to THE CAROLERS who begin to sing "Joy to the World".

THE CAROLERS, *Singing*

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

Four or more TOWNSPEOPLE enter and listen to THE CAROLERS. Two of the TOWNSPEOPLE leave the group listening to THE CAROLERS and cross to the Christmas trees. While THE CAROLERS are singing, JOE and MARIA sell two more trees. The TOWNSPEOPLE who purchased the trees exit. After THE CAROLERS finish singing. The remaining TOWNSPEOPLE applaud and then begin to exit.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Ad Lib as exiting)

Merry Christmas! Very Nice. Thank You!

MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS

Merry Christmas!

MARIA

(To JOE)

Maybe Mr. Sims and the carolers are good for business.

JOE

Sure, looks that way.

MRS. JOHNSON and her daughter GINGER enter in a hurry.

MRS. JOHNSON

(To JOE)

Hi Joe. Oh good, you still have some trees left. You're a lifesaver.

JOE

Hello, Mrs. Johnson. Yes, we still have a few left.

MRS. JOHNSON

Great. My husband and I have been so busy, we just never found the time to get a tree this year. We were going to go without, but Ginger positively insists that we have one. I think she is just being difficult. You know kids.

JOE

I'm not sure that I do...

MRS. JOHNSON

(Pointing at one of the small trees)

I'll take that one.

MARIA crosses to get the tree.

GINGER

I don't want that one. It's too small. Put it back, Maria.

MRS. JOHNSON

All right. You pick, but don't take too long; your father and I have plans for dinner so I need to get home and change clothes.

GINGER

What about decorating the tree? Who's going to do that?

MRS. JOHNSON

You can do that while your father and I are at dinner.

GINGER

But...

MRS. JOHNSON

No buts, young lady. You're the one who insisted that we get a Christmas tree, so you can do the decorating. Your father and I are very busy these days. Now—

GINGER

You're always busy.

MRS. JOHNSON

Never mind. Now go over there and pick out a tree and let's get on our way.

MARIA returns the small tree and follows GINGER to the larger trees. There are only two larger trees left.

MRS. JOHNSON

(To JOE)

Kids! What's a parent to do, right Joe?

JOE

Uh, I don't know... uh, love them, guide them?

MRS. JOHNSON

(Only half listening)

What? Oh, yes of course. *(Calling)* Hurry up, will you Ginger?

GINGER

Are these the only two large trees you have?

MARIA

Yes, I'm sorry, but we're almost sold out it being this close to....

GINGER

You should cut more trees.

MARIA

My Dad tries not to cut more than he thinks we can sell so as not to waste any.

GINGER

Well, he should cut more. I don't have any selection.

MARIA

You don't want a tree then?

MRS. JOHNSON

(Calling)

Hurry up, Ginger!

MARIA

(Pointing at a tree)

I guess I'll take that one then. But, you really should have more trees.

MARIA crosses to the tree that GINGER pointed at, gets the tree and tries to hand it to GINGER.

GINGER

What do you want me to do with that?

MARIA

It's the tree you wanted.

GINGER

You don't expect me to carry it, do you? You do deliver, right?

MARIA

Well, uh, not ...

JOE who had been listening to the exchange between GINGER and MARIA interrupts.

JOE

Yes! I'll take care of it. *(To MRS. JOHNSON)* I'll toss the tree on my truck and drop it at your house, Mrs. Johnson.

MARIA

Huh?

MRS. JOHNSON

Thanks, Joe. How much is the tree?

JOE

Twenty dollars.

MRS. JOHNSON

And delivery?

JOE

No charge.

MRS. JOHNSON

Really?

JOE

It's Christmas.

MRS. JOHNSON

Yes, I suppose it is. Well, thank you. Come on Ginger we need to get going.

GINGER and MRS. JOHNSON exit. JOE calls after them.

JOE

I'll bring that tree right over, Mrs. Johnson. Merry Christmas!

MRS. JOHNSON does not answer and JOE crosses to MARIA.

MARIA

I didn't know we delivered.

JOE

(Smiling)

Neither did I.

MARIA

Then how come you're taking that tree over to the Johnsons?

JOE

It's Christmas, it seemed like the right thing to do.

MARIA

I hope they appreciate it.

JOE

Listen to me Maria. It's not a matter of being appreciated. It's a matter of feeling good about myself. Knowing that I have the means to perform a favor for someone and then not doing it, I would feel guilty. But, if I lend a hand, help someone out, then I can feel good knowing I did the right thing.

MARIA

Even if the person you are doing the favor for doesn't seem to appreciate it?

JOE

Even then. Do you understand?

MARIA

I think so.

JOE

Now, you mind the store, while I deliver this tree over to the Johnsons. Can you do that?

MARIA

Sure.

JOE

I'll be right back.

JOE takes the JOHNSON'S Christmas tree and exits. THE CAROLERS start to sing "Deck the Halls". MISS HARDY and a group of TOWNSPEOPLE gather to listen to THE CAROLERS. MISS HARDY is carrying a thermos of hot chocolate and some foam cups.

THE CAROLERS, *Singing*

*Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la la la la!
Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la la la la la la!
Don we now our gay apparel, Fa la la la la la la la!
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, Fa la la la la la la la!*

*See the blazing yule before us, Fa la la la la la la la!
Strike the harp and join the chorus, Fa la la la la la la la!*

*Follow me in merry measure, Fa la la la la la la la!
While I tell of Yuletide treasure, Fa la la la la la la la!*

*Fast away the old year passes, Fa la la la la la la la!
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses, Fa la la la la la la la!*

*Sing we joyous all together! Fa la la la la la la la!
Heedless of the wind and weather, Fala la la la la la la!*

MARIA

(Calling)
Christmas trees for Sale!

Two of the TOWNSPEOPLE leave the group listening to THE CAROLERS and cross to MARIA. As the caroling continues, the two TOWNSPEOPLE each purchase a tree from MARIA and then exit. MARIA is left with only two trees left to sell. THE CAROLERS finish singing. THE TOWNSPEOPLE applaud and then exit.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Ad Lib as exiting)
Excellent! Bravo. Thank You. Merry Christmas!

MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS

(Ad Lib)
Thank you. Merry Christmas!

MISS HARDY hands foam cups to THE CAROLERS and begins filling them with hot chocolate from the thermos.

MISS HARDY

Drink up.

THE CAROLERS

(To MISS HARDY)

Thank you. Boy, this hits the spot. You got that right.

MR. SIMS

Thanks, Miss Hardy.

MISS HARDY

You're welcome, Mr. Sims... and thank you for sharing your music with everyone.

MR. SIMS

Our pleasure. *(To CAROLERS)* Right, every one?

THE CAROLERS

Right!

MISS HARDY fills a cup from the thermos and crosses to MARIA. MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS gather by their stools and drink their hot chocolate.

MISS HARDY

Hi Maria. Would you like a cup of hot chocolate?

MARIA

Hi, Miss Hardy. Sure, some hot chocolate would be great.

MISS HARDY hands the cup of hot chocolate to MARIA.

MISS HARDY

Here you go.

MARIA

Thank you. *(Drinking)* This is really good. I was getting a little chilly.

MISS HARDY

Well, hopefully this will help warm you up a little bit. It looks like you are about out of trees.

MARIA

Only two left. Do you want to buy one?

MISS HARDY

Well now, I'm not sure.

MARIA

You probably already have one, huh?

MISS HARDY

As a matter of fact, I do.

MARIA

Then I guess you don't want another one.

MISS HARDY

Why do you say that?

MARIA

It's just that most people who already have a Christmas tree think it is a waste of money to buy another one.

FATHER/PASTOR FRANK can be heard laughing heartily offstage. HE enters and calls out to MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS.

FATHER FRANK

Merry Christmas, everyone! Merry Christmas.

MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS

Merry Christmas, Father. Merry Christmas, Father Frank! Merry Christmas!

FATHER FRANK

(To CAROLERS)

It's great work you be doin' here.

MR. SIMS

Just trying to spread some Christmas cheer Father.

PASTOR FRANK

Well, keep up the good work. Merry Christmas!

MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS

Merry Christmas!

FATHER FRANK crosses to MARIA and MRS HARDY.

FATHER FRANK

And, a very Merry Christmas to you ladies.

MARIA and MISS HARDY

Merry Christmas, Father Frank.

PASTOR FRANK

And how might you two be on this beautiful Christmas Eve?

MARIA

Fine.

MISS HARDY

Maria and I were just discussing whether or not it is a waste of money to buy more than one Christmas tree at Christmastime.

FATHER FRANK

I see. And what conclusions might ya be drawin' in regards to such a profound subject?

MISS HARDY

Well, we're not sure Father.

MARIA

It's my experience that people don't want to waste their money buying more than one tree. That's why selling trees on Christmas Eve is so hard. Everyone already has one.

FATHER FRANK

I see... but, is purchasin' more than one tree at Christmastime really a waste now?

MARIA

What do you mean?

FATHER FRANK

Think, child. Imagine what the Christmas tree stands for. It represents a time for rejoicin', a time to spread good cheer to yer fellow man, and a time to celebrate the birth of Our Lord. In short, a Christmas tree should make us feel happy. How can happiness possibly be a waste of money?

MISS HARDY

I don't believe it can.

FATHER FRANK

Nor do I, Miss Hardy. Why, if a person has the means and can afford it, he should have a Christmas tree in every room of 'is house. That way he would have constant reminders that Christmas is a time to rejoice.

MARIA

A farmer could have one out in his barn to brighten things up while he did his chores.

FATHER FRANK

I bet the cows would love it, don't you?

MISS HARDY

I could have one in my yard—then it would be shared with my neighbors!

FATHER FRANK

A capitol idea.

MARIA

So, does this mean the two of you want to buy a Christmas tree?

FATHER FRANK

(Laughing)

Heavens be praised, I believe it does! *(Pointing to a tree)* I'll take that fine specimen right there.

MISS HARDY

And I'll take the other one.

MARIA

Are you sure you want to...

FATHER FRANK

Spread good cheer and happiness? Well by the life of me, I certainly hope so.

MISS HARDY

Me too.

MISS HARDY and FATHER FRANK are laughing as they pay MARIA and gather up the two remaining trees.

MARIA

Thank you, and Merry Christmas! I hope you enjoy the trees.

FATHER FRANK

I'm sure we will.

MISS HARDY

(To FATHER FRANK)

Well, it looks like we have some work ahead of us when we get home, Father.

FATHER FRANK

Just a wee bit. But, it will be happy work.

MISS HARDY

Yes, it will. Merry Christmas, Father.

FATHER FRANK

Merry Christmas to you, Miss Hardy. (To MARIA) Merry Christmas, Maria!

MISS HARDY

Bye Maria. Merry Christmas!

MARIA

Merry Christmas!

MISS HARDY and FATHER FRANK exit. MR. SIMS and THE CAROLERS regroup and begin to sing Silent Night very softly. MARIA begins to straighten up the area where the trees were. JOE enters and sees that all the trees have been sold.

THE CAROLERS, *Singing*

Verse #1

*Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace*

Verse#2

*Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God loves pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord at thy birth
Jesus, Lord at thy birth*

JOE

(To MARIA)

Oh, my... you sold all of the trees?

MARIA

Yep.

JOE

I can't believe it.

MARIA

Well, Father Frank and my teacher, Miss Hardy, bought the last two. I think maybe they just felt sorry for me.

JOE

I prefer to believe they actually wanted a tree and that you're an excellent salesperson.

MARIA

I hope so.

JOE

Come on, let's close-up shop and head home. What do you say?

MARIA

Okay.

MARIA and JOE begin to pack up THEIR chairs, lights, and other things in the tree lot. THE CAROLERS continue to sing "Silent Night" softly. CHARLIE stumbles in and crosses to MARIA. JOE takes some lights and exits.

CHARLIE

(To MARIA)

Did you sell all your trees?

MARIA

Yep, just sold the last two to Father Frank and my teacher, Miss Hardy.

CHARLIE

(Obviously disappointed)

Oh, uh... that's good. You sure had some nice ones.

MARIA

Yeah, we did.

MARIA grabs the folding chairs and folds them up. JOE enters and stands upstage watching CHARLIE and MARIA.

CHARLIE

You want some help?

MARIA

Some help?

CHARLIE
Yeah, loading your things up.

MARIA
Sure, if you want.

CHARLIE
I'm really strong.

MARIA
Sure. Okay grab the other chair.

CHARLIE struggles with the chair and HE and MARIA start to exit with chairs. JOE enters.

JOE
(To MARIA)
What have you got here, a helper?

MARIA
Dad, this is Charlie, my friend Christine's little brother.

CHARLIE
I'm not little.

MARIA
Oh yeah, I forgot... sorry.

JOE
Nice to meet you, Charlie. Thanks for the help.

CHARLIE
That's okay.

MARIA
Come on Charlie, let's get this stuff loaded, I want to get home.

CHARLIE and MARIA exit with the folding chairs. JOE continues cleaning up the space where the trees were. THE CAROLERS finish singing "Silent Night" and start to gather up their things. MR. DALTON rushes in and crosses to JOE.

MR. DALTON
Oh, thank goodness you are still here.

PROPS LIST

2 folding lawn chairs

10 or more Christmas trees (real or artificial/assorted sizes)

Sign reading Christmas Trees for Sale

Stools for THE CAROLERS

Sheet music for THE CAROLERS

Pitch pipe for MR. SIMS

Thermos jug for MISS HARDY

Foam cups for MISS HARDY