

Ornament Talk

A Christmas Short
By D. Richard Tucker

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D. Richard Tucker
5210 S 297th Place
Auburn, WA 98001
(206) 817-4196
WriteDaveTucker@Yahoo.com



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CAST

ANGELA, an angel ornament
KELLY, a silver glass ornament
GALE, a red glass ornament
LEE, a blue glass ornament
MONTY, a broken toy soldier ornament
HORSEY, a wooden rocking horse ornament
BULB, a Christmas tree light bulb
CHILD'S VOICE

Time: The present

Setting: The Christmas tree in a family's living room.

Lights up on the Christmas tree. The ornaments have just been hung and are getting used to their surroundings.

ANGELA

Is everybody all right?

LEE

I think so.

KELLY

Achoo! My allergies are acting up again. It's all that old newspaper they used for wrapping.

GALE

Just be grateful you got wrapped up. They didn't wrap Monty, and he's broken now.

ANGELA

No! Monty's broken?

LEE

Yeah, just listen to him. Hey, Monty!

MONTY

Company Attention! Forwarddddd – Retreat!

ANGELA

Monty! What's wrong?

MONTY

Dress right – forward – roll call – march!

LEE

I told you he was broken.

MONTY

Counter column – arms!

HORSEY

Oh, man, he is gone.

ANGELA

How are you doing, Horsey?

HORSEY

I'm okay, I was stuffed in a stocking.

KELLY

Oh, I wish I'd been wrapped in a stocking – that newspaper dust is horrible. Achoooo!

Enter BULB.

BULB

Hey guys! What's happenin'?

GALE

Shut up, dim bulb!

BULB

Hey, what's with all the hostility, Gale? What's the matter? Feelin' a little dusty?

GALE

Shut up! Just remember, you're a light – not an ornament. Don't get fresh with us.

BULB

Ah, be that way if you want. When we get a little juice up here, you'll be the dim one.

BULB exits.

LEE

Actually, I'm going to be the dim one – they stuck me on the back of the tree again this year.

ANGELA

Sorry, Lee, it does seem that you always get placed in the back, doesn't it?

LEE

For just once I'd like to be in the front, you know?

MONTY

Front and Center!

ANGELA

There he goes again. Monty's not doing very well. Let's hope he makes it through the holidays. By the looks of him, I doubt he'll be here next year.

GALE

Oh, what difference does it make anyhow? We're just going to hang here for a couple weeks and then be boxed up again until Thanksgiving.

KELLY

And wrapped up in that nasty paper, too. Achooo!

LEE

Yeah, just stuffed in a box and forgotten for most of the year.

ANGELA

Maybe we should be grateful that we're here in the first place. Just think of the alternatives.

KELLY

She's right. We could be refrigerator light bulbs. Once they burn out, they're broken and discarded.

HORSEY

Yeah, and I could be a broomstick or paintbrush or something.

GALE

At least that way you'd be used more often. I'm tired of hibernating for the summer.

ANGELA

Cheer up, Gale. This is why we're here. This is our purpose – to decorate this tree.

KELLY

Angela's right. Look at the living room. How can you be so grumpy in this atmosphere?

ANGELA

See all the greenery on the mantel – that’s lovely.

KELLY

Yes, and those candles on the coffee table are so pretty.

ANGELA

And look at the stockings! And the fire in the fireplace!

KELLY

Yes, and I can see the nativity scene set up in on the buffet in the dining room.

LEE

I can’t see anything but this dusty radiator.

HORSEY

Tough luck, Lee. Hey, can you smell what’s coming from the kitchen?

LEE

Yeah, at least I can smell. Is that cinnamon?

ANGELA

Must be making mulled cider.

MONTY

Ten o’clock and all is well!

KELLY

It’s Christmas Eve already – I can see the presents down below.

HORSEY

Wow, there are some really big packages this year.

GALE

I bet that one is a skateboard – that kid is going to break his neck.

ANGELA

I hope the children get the gifts they wanted.

LEE

I hope they don’t have their cousins over this year – those little brats are just so poorly behaved. Last year they ran around knocked over that big red lamp.

KELLY

Yes, and they are so noisy, too. Constantly yelling..screaming..stomping. How are we supposed to deal with that?

HORSEY

Hey! Hey! Hey! Cut that that out! Get away, you!

GALE

What's wrong, Horsey?

HORSEY

It's that cat. He's swatting at my tail again.

SOUND: Cat "meow."

MONTY

CHARGE!

HORSEY

I wish they'd hang me higher, so he wouldn't do that.

ANGELA

Remember when he was a kitten and used to climb up here and knock us on the floor?

GALE

Yeah, thank goodness he's gotten too fat to climb anymore.

HORSEY

Get away, you! I wish I could bark like a dog – that would scare him.

ANGELA

There he goes.

LEE

Fortunately he has a short attention span, too.

GALE

That's because he doesn't have to hang here all day. He can run around like we can't.

KELLY

Quit complaining, Gale.

GALE

What else is there to do? What's the purpose in all this anyhow? I'm tired of being just another pretty decoration. That's not what I expect from a meaningful life.

LEE

I'm beginning to agree with Gale. I just hang here and stare at the wall every year. If I had been a light bulb, at least I would have had more purpose.

GALE

Yeah, and we could have been made into something more important, too. Lee, you could have been a champagne glass or a stained glass window. Kelly, you might have been a microscope lens or a pair of eyeglasses. Now that's living.

LEE

And Angela, you could have been made into a nice lace blouse or a beautiful tablecloth.

HORSEY

Wow, and I could have been a baseball bat or a wooden toy.

GALE

And then we could have something to do all year long – not just at Christmas time.

ANGELA

I have always admired fine Italian linen.

KELLY

A microscope lens – now that's a great career.

ANGELA

But think about all the joy we bring to people during the holidays.

LIGHTS brighten. All scream.

KELLY

Doggone it! I wish they'd warn us!

GALE

There goes my visual purple!

HORSEY

Whoa! I'm seeing spots.

GALE

Every year they catch us by surprise when they turn on the lights.

Enter BULB.

BULB

Hey guys! Pretty exciting, huh? Now who's a dim bulb?

LEE

Nice job.

GALE

Now shut up.

BULB

You're just jealous because I've got such an electric personality.

BULB exits.

ANGELA

So like I was saying, our jobs as ornaments are important contribution to Christmas.

KELLY

I'd rather be a shaving mirror.

LEE

Or sunglasses – now that would be so cool.

HORSEY

Or a music box.

MONTY

All present and accounted for!

ANGELA

But your jobs here make a difference – Christmas in this tree would not be the same without you.

GALE

Yeah, right, I'd rather be a monocle for an eighty-year-old British barrister. Or a broken prescription bottle for a homeless hypochondriac. Or the cracked cover of a busted altimeter on a World War I biplane that went down over France and has been sitting out in the rain for the last eighty-seven years, without so much as a -

CHILD'S VOICE

Hey! Look! The Christmas tree!

LEE

Sounds like they turned the kids loose.

CHILD'S VOICE

Wow, look at all the lights!

BULB (offstage)

Oh, yeah! That's us!

CHILD'S VOICE

And look at the decorations! They're so pretty.

ANGELA

Hear that, Gale?

CHILD'S VOICE

There's my favorite – the Rocking Horse!

HORSEY

Awww, shucks.

CHILD'S VOICE

And the Angel is up on top! She's beautiful.

ANGELA

Oh, kids are so cute.

CHILD'S VOICE

I love Christmas! I love this tree! It's so beautiful!

KELLY

How do you feel now, Gale? Now can you find a reason for your “thankless” job?

ANGELA

It's all about bringing a little joy into somebody's holiday. I doubt that a microscope or a pair of sunglasses get this much enthusiasm.

GALE

Okay, I concede. I would miss those little smiling faces anyhow.

MONTY

Mission Accomplished!

Enter BULB.

BULB

Hey guys, get a load of this – we're all going to go out in a minute – just to drive the kid's dad crazy!

Blackout.