

CHRISTMAS THROUGH THE WINDOW

A duologue

By
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This duologue can be performed either in costume or in modern dress, and can be put on in any theatre, hall, Church or even in a living room. The only requirements are a table and two chairs. The window should be imaginary, either at the front of the playing area, on one side or the other, but so placed that when Keziah “looks” through it she is still facing the audience. Stage directions and movements have been kept to a minimum to allow scope to directors.

SCENE 1

ELI: (*Announcing*) The scene is the house of Eli and Keziah in Bethlehem. Their house is in the main street, right opposite the inn, and through their front window they get a good view of everyone who arrives there, - at least Keziah does. We are going to show you a few ‘snapshots’ of what might have gone on there in mid-winter, two thousand years ago. The first scene starts now.

(*He sits and reads*)

KEZIAH: (*peering out of the window*) Here come some more, about four of them, no five. I can see a small child as well. They’ll never get in. That place must be bulging at the seams. There’s only twenty beds and do you know how many people they’ve packed in there now? (*Pause*) Eli, I’m talking to you.

E: (*Without looking up*) H’m?

K: I said do you know how many people there are now?

E: Where?

K: In the inn of course.

E: What inn?

K: Our inn, the one across the road. Don’t you listen to anything I say?

E: I’m sorry my dear, I was reading.

K: Well, I’ve been counting, and I make it forty-two so far, and only room for twenty. They must be sleeping on the floor.

E: Uh-huh.

K: And I reckon some of them sleep in the dining-room. (*Looking out*) Oh no! They’ve taken in those last people; I should think they’ll have to sleep

standing up. It's sheer greed, that's what it is: the innkeeper is taking advantage of this census or taxing – or whatever you call it – and he's raking in the shekels with both hands.

E: So are other people.

K: I don't know what you mean by that.

E: Well, we are sleeping in the dining-room too.

K: That's quite different. It wouldn't be right for us to have three good bedrooms and not offer them to deserving cases.

E: So long as they are prepared to pay.

K: You wouldn't expect me to work my fingers to the bone for nothing!

E: M'hm

K: Well, would you?

E: Keep your eye on the inn; you might miss something.

K: Oh you ... (*Glancing out of the window and then suddenly riveted*) Oh! Eli, come and look at this.

E: (*Not moving*) What?

K: Here's another couple; he's walking and she's riding a donkey.

E: (*Without interest*) Oh yes?

K: She's quite young and I think ... yes, now he's helping her down I'm sure. She's very near her time.

E: (*With a mock sigh*) Aren't we all.

K: It's not funny. She's going to have a baby, and I should say it's any minute now.

E: What does the innkeeper say to that?

K: He's waving his hands about. Ooh! He's turning them away. He must be really full.

E: He usually is.

K: Oh, you know what I mean. She's drooping badly, poor thing. The man is pleading with the innkeeper. He's waving his hands again. No he isn't, he's

pointing round the corner.

E: Which corner?

K: Round the ... oh no! There's nothing round there except the stable.

E: Which will be full of animals.

K: They are going, anyway. Oh, you men! Fancy bringing a poor young woman out in her condition and then treating her like an animal! I wonder how far they've come.

E: Go and ask.

K: There's nothing I can do about it. All our beds are taken.

E: *(With sarcasm)* And we haven't got a stable.

K: *(Taking it seriously)* I wish we had. I think I'll just ...

E: You think you'll just what?

K: Oh, I don't know. Perhaps I could help.

E: You could take them some hot water. I believe that's the usual recipe.

K: Yes, of course, *(then, realising he is teasing)* they'll want bedding and bedclothes and baby clothes and nappies and ... oh, all sorts of things.

E: You go, my dear. I'll stay and work my fingers to the bone while you've gone.

K: If I'm not back by supper time, you know where everything is. Our lodgers can look after themselves.

E: Yes, yes. *(As she goes)* Oh, Keziah.

K: Well?

E: Don't forget the hot water.

(Keziah flounces out)