

# The Christmas Gift

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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Publication of this play indicates its availability for performance.

ISBN-13: 978-1724532688 (paperback available on amazon.com)

ISBN-10: 1724532685

Published by:

 **HCP BOOK**  
**PUBLISHING**  
[www.hcpbookpublishing.com](http://www.hcpbookpublishing.com)

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## Characters

**ARTHUR:** 8-10-year-old boy. Innocent, curious, impressionable, honest, caring.

**MOTHER:** Woman, late 30's-40's.

**FATHER:** Man, late 30's-40's.

**STEVEN:** Boy, 13-16 years old. Arthur's brother.

**TV:** Man, late 40's-50's.

**PASTOR:** Man, 50's.

**HOMELESS WOMAN:** Woman, 20's.

**STORE CLERK:** Man, 40's-50's.

**AUNT SUE:** Woman, late 30s-late 40's. Arthur's Aunt and wife to Uncle Marc.

**UNCLE MARC:** Man, Early-late 40's. Arthur's Uncle. Gruff, close-minded, cheap

**MARGOT:** Girl, 13-15. Arthur's cousin and daughter to Uncle Marc and Aunt Sue. Spoiled, loud, bratty.

**GEORGIA:** Girl, 8-10 years old. Arthur's classmate. Know it all.

**ETHAN:** Boy, 8-10 years old. Arthur's best friend and classmate.

**MRS. JOHNSON:** Woman, late 20's-30's. Arthur's teacher.

Non-speaking roles:

**HOMELESS PEOPLE:** Men, women, and children of various ages

**CHURCH MEMBERS:** Men, women, and children of various ages

## Setting

The stage is bare, except for some needed chairs and appropriate props.

Several different settings are used and require some level of creativity from the Director to make it work.

The Characters should enter from different parts of the stage.

## The Story

Arthur hears about Jesus for the first time on Christmas Eve. What he knew to that point was bits and pieces of information passed on to him by his non-Christian family. He goes on a hilarious quest to find the truth about Jesus, Santa Claus and the real purpose of Christmas.

Arthur will attempt to save his family and himself and help them find a connection to God after hearing about the prophecy on Christmas Eve. This play is an excellent reminder of the true message of Christmas, as one family journey from unbelief to faith in Jesus.

## Play Details

**Length:** 45-60 Minutes

**Cast:** 8 Males, 6 Females

**Audience:** Teens & Adults

**Genre:** Contemporary Drama

# THE SCRIPT



## SCENE 1

### LIGHTS UP

*Living Room/Kitchen.*

*Arthur, Mother, Father, Aunt Sue, Uncle Marc, Steven, and Margot are about to open Christmas gifts.*

**UNCLE MARC:** Here ya go, sis. Merry Christmas.

*He hands her a present and pours himself another glass of juice.*

**MOTHER:** Thanks, Marc. Here's your's.

*She hands him a gift casually.*

**MARGOT:** Which ones are mine?

**FATHER:** Oh here, Margot, this one is for you.

*He hands her a gift. She snatches it and rips it open immediately, disappointed with the contents. She tosses it aside.*

**MARGOT:** Which one is next?

*Margot, Steven, and Arthur continue to open presents.*

*Aunt Sue pours herself and Mother some juice.*

**MOTHER:** What's new with your job, Sue? How's that jerk boss of yours?

**AUNT SUE:** Ugh, don't even get me started. She had the *nerve* to ask me to work today. Those smelly hobos are going to have to let me have *one* day without having to deal with them. I mean, it's Christmas. I deserve to give *myself* a gift, am I right?

*Both women laugh.*

**MOTHER:** God, you are a saint for dealing with those people.

*The kids have opened all their presents and Steven and Margot are not impressed.*

**STEVEN:** That's it?

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**FATHER:** *(Yelling, annoyed)* Hey. Santa did what he could this year. Give him a break.

**UNCLE MARC:** Why don't you kids go watch some TV or something.

**MARGOT:** Yeah, whatever.

*The kids move to the TV room while the adults continue to talk.*

**ARTHUR:** *(Excited)* Oh boy. I can't believe I actually got a Turbo Air Ray Gun. I didn't even tell Santa I wanted it when we visited him at the mall.

**STEVEN:** Don't be an idiot, Arthur. You know there is no such thing as Santa Claus, right? It's just mom and dad buying us stuff.

*Arthur is stunned, hurt.*

**MARGOT:** Hey, Steve. Ashley told me she caught you messing around with Sophie Carson behind the bleachers at school on Friday. I thought you were still going out with Jessica.

**STEVEN:** What Jess doesn't know won't hurt her.

**ARTHUR:** Were you guys *kissing*? EWWW.

**MARGOT:** Shut up, Arti. Well, Steve how can we be sure Jess *doesn't* know? We could keep your little secret safe --- for a price.

**STEVEN:** How much?

**MARGOT:** 50 bucks and my lips are sealed.

**STEVEN:** And you'd do that to your own cousin?

**MARGOT:** Steve, I'd do this to my own mother. Now fork it over.

*She holds out her hand, and Steven reluctantly hands her the money.*

**MARGOT:** Pleasure doing business with you, cuz.

*She hands him the TV remote and the kids turn on the TV and sit down to watch.*

**STEVEN:** I hate you.

*She smiles at him.*

*Lights dim in the living room and rise in the kitchen where adults are talking*

**UNCLE MARC:** So, you *stole* from the register?

**FATHER:** Just skimmed a bit off the top. An insignificant amount. Just like, \$10 a day. Had to make sure the fam had a nice Christmas, ya know.

**UNCLE MARC:** Yeah, well the decorations on the house look great this year. You really out-did yourself.

**FATHER:** And the whole neighborhood.

*They laugh.*

**MOTHER:** That's my guy. Always coming up with new ways to make us rich.

*She kisses his cheek.*

**FATHER:** Ha. Well, they work me hard enough. Just thought I'd give myself a little Christmas bonus is all.

**AUNT SUE:** Yeah, Marc. How come you didn't think of that? We could have used a few extra bucks this year too.

**UNCLE MARC:** Well, now we know. Next year for sure.

**AUNT SUE:** Well at least we were able to get Margot *some* of the gifts she wanted. The older she gets, the more expensive things are.

**FATHER:** Ain't that the truth. I told Steven he'd better start looking for a job if he's going to keep hitting me up for cash to impress all those girls he's hanging around with.

**MOTHER:** Oh, honey, he just wants them to like him.

**FATHER:** (*Laughing*) That's my boy. And that's why I keep giving him money. Girls don't like boys who don't take care of them, right baby?

**MOTHER:** That's right, hun.

*Doorbell rings.*

**MOTHER:** Oh, who could that be?

*Caroling is heard offstage.*

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**AUNT SUE:** Oh, God. I hate carolers.

**MOTHER:** I know. It's not Halloween or anything. Leave people alone so we can enjoy our Christmas in peace. Marc. Turn off the lights, so they think nobody's home.

*Marc stands and switches off lights. Caroling fades.*

**AUNT SUE:** Phew. That was close.

**FATHER:** Ya know? I don't even like most Christmas carols anyway? I mean, you hear all those songs from November until New Years. Honestly. I am sick of all of em.

**UNCLE MARC:** Yeah. And what does "wassailing" mean anyway?

**MOTHER:** And all of that holy rolling baby Jesus stuff? Gives me the creeps.

**AUNT SUE:** Do you know they actually want us to start praying before folks eat at the homeless shelter? I think I should write a complaint. It's totally inappropriate.

**MOTHER:** You should.

**FATHER:** Let's not talk about all this work stuff. Let's celebrate.

*He refills all their drinks.*

**FATHER:** To gifts. To vacations. To avoiding carolers and remembering what this season is all about. CHEERS.

**ALL:** Cheers.

*They clink glasses and **lights dim** on the kitchen. **Lights rise** on the Living room where the kids are watching TV.*

**MARGOT:** Give me the remote, Steve.

*She grabs it from him.*

**STEVEN:** Hey. I was watching that.

**MARGOT:** What would Sophie think if she saw you watching "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer?"

*He let's go of the remote, and she changes the channel.*

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**MARGOT:** UGH. There's nothing on. I hate Christmas. No one can hang out, nothing is on TV, and I never get any presents I want.

**ARTHUR:** I like Christmas.

**STEVEN:** No one asked you.

**ARTHUR:** I like the lights, and the tree and the people seem nicer.

**MARGOT:** What planet do you live on?

**STEVEN:** He's still just a kid, Margot. He just doesn't get it. I mean, he still believes in Santa Claus.

**ARTHUR:** Steven, is it true there is no Santa Claus?

*Margot rolls her eyes.*

**STEVEN:** Sorry, dude, but it's best you learn now. No Santa. No Jesus. Just an excuse to sell stuff. That's what Christmas is all about, kid. Get used to it.

**MARGOT:** Speaking of which ---

*She pulls a bottle out of her purse.*

**MARGOT:** I don't think mom or dad saw that I slipped away with this.

**STEVEN:** All right.

*They sit side by side and begin taking turns sipping from the bottle. Arthur picks up the remote and starts changing channels.*

*TV Enters. TV faces the audience and changes persona with each line.*

**TV:** Are you tired of your car insurance? Static. Bah. Humbug. Static. It's everywhere you want to be. Static. *(singing)* FROSTY THE SNOWMAN. Static. I'm coming, Rudolph. Static. Open your presents, Timmy. Static. Remember the season we honor him.

*Arthur stops changing channels. TV is set as a somber preacher saying a Christmas sermon.*

**TV:** *(Preacher's voice)* On this blessed day we give thanks for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary and died on the cross to take away our sins. Remember Him on this day and take Jesus into your heart for He was the greatest gift God could have brought to man. By His blood did He wash away

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our wickedness and save us all. To know happiness, know that being saved by Jesus Christ will lead you there and to heaven. Amen.

*TV Exits.*

**ARTHUR:** Steven, what does “being saved” mean?

**STEVEN:** What?

**ARTHUR:** This guy on TV says Jesus saved people. What does that mean?

**MARGOT:** Arti, that’s just preachy stuff.

**STEVEN:** Yeah, didn’t I just get done telling you Jesus isn’t real? He didn’t save anyone. He didn’t even exist.

**ARTHUR:** But how do you know?

**STEVEN:** Dude, if He did, don’t you think the world would be a better place? That kid’s wouldn’t go hungry or wish for peace on Earth or Christmas presents?

**ARTHUR:** Do kid’s wish for food *instead* of toys at Christmas?

**MARGOT:** You’re totally missing the point, Arti.

*She takes a sip from the bottle.*

**MARGOT:** What is the point, Steve?

**STEVEN:** That Jesus didn’t save people.

**MARGOT:** Oh, yeah.

**ARTHUR:** Does someone else do the saving, then? Do you think mom or dad have ever been saved?

**STEVEN:** I dunno, kid. Why don’t you ask *them*?

*Arthur ponders for a moment, then turns and walks towards the adults in the other room as Steven grabs the remote and he and Margot continue to watch TV.*

*Lights dim in the living room and rise in the kitchen. The adults are still drinking and talking but notice Arthur enter right away.*

**MOTHER:** Hey Arthur, sweetie. Are you having a good Christmas, baby?

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**ARTHUR:** Why did you lie to me, mommy?

**MOTHER:** *(Confused)* What, honey?

**ARTHUR:** About Santa Claus. Steve told me he wasn't real.

**FATHER:** Why did he ---

**MOTHER:** Of course Santa is real, sweetie. Your brother was just playing a joke on you.

**ARTHUR:** So, Jesus is real too then?

**AUNT SUE:** Jesus?.

**ARTHUR:** The man on TV was talking about Jesus and how He saved us all from sin. What does sin mean?

**MOTHER:** Oh, honey, you don't have to worry about that kind of stuff.

**UNCLE MARC:** Yeah, Arti. Sin is just another word for stuff other folks try to make you feel bad for doing. You're a pretty good kid. You don't have anything to worry about.

**ARTHUR:** But what about the other part about being saved? How did Jesus save us?

**AUNT SUE:** My my, Arthur. You sure do have a lot of questions tonight.

**MOTHER:** Arti, I don't think Jesus actually "saved" any of us. It's just a story.

**ARTHUR:** But you said Santa was real. Why can't Jesus be real too?

**FATHER:** Well, because Santa gives you toys for being a good boy, and Jesus doesn't do that, does He?

**UNCLE MARC:** Speaking of which, where are those new toys of yours? Don't you want to play with them a bit more before bedtime?

*He nudges Father.*

**FATHER:** Uh, yeah maybe if you're a good boy and go to bed early, Santa will bring you something extra special for your Christmas stocking tomorrow morning.

**ARTHUR:** Oh boy, really? I'll go brush my teeth right now.

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*Arthur exits excitedly.*

**AUNT SUE:** I thought you said you gave them all their presents already.

**FATHER:** I did. Has anyone seen my wallet? I'll just drop some cash in his stocking.

**LIGHTS OUT**