

Then One Foggy Christmas Eve

By Alexis Kozak

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STORY OF THE PLAY

'Tis the night before Christmas, and the employees at the local Shop Smart are forced to work a double shift. Soon a no-good Secret Santa with questionable intentions shows up to pay off the layaway. Will greed win out or will he get put on the naughty list? Throw in a live broadcast with a disgruntled local news anchor, a once in a lifetime mystical fog, and Santa's giant energy weapon powerful enough to destroy Earth (Pew! Pew!), and you have a superstore full of workers ready to take down the capitalist machine and ultimately help everyone celebrate the holiday in the most honest, generous way.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

"Then One Foggy Christmas Eve" received its world premiere at Southside Theatre in Middletown, New Jersey, opening on November 17th, 2022. It was directed by Alexis Kozak; the set design was by Izzy Mingino; the costume design was by Laura Mazza; the lighting design was by Andie Kershner; the sound design was by Kayla Saul; the assistant director and production stage manager was Mia Secondino. The cast was as follows:

SARAH	Ava Romano
JANE	Julie Deltuvia
JERRY	Kayla Friedmann
LADY	Nim Boudreau
RUDY	Anthony DeMarco
WOLF	Mia Dimitry
VIC	Juliette DeHanes
BOB	Jay Fielding
SANTA	Kendall Burns
SHRI	Julia Vultaggio
ENSEMBLE/INTERVIEWEES	Elena Asfendis
	Katherine Smith
CAMERAMAN	Alex Starick
JEBEDIAH ZAGALON	Nick Burnziewicz

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 4 w, 2 flexible, extras)

SARAH: (F) Early 20s, on a special needs social work placement program.

JANE: (F) 30s to early-40s, a working mother.

JERRY: (M) 60s, warm, intelligent, charming, and a joke-teller. A little overweight.

LADY: (F) 60s, wisecracking, shrewd, smart. Great storyteller. Charismatic and charming. A little rough around the edges. If people still smoked, she probably would.

WOLF: (M) 50s to 60s, in his own world. A currently practicing ex-hippie.

RUDY / RUBY: (Flex.) 30s, The store manager. Has had to become hard on the outside but is warm underneath.

SHRI RAVAJANAWALI: (F) 30s, local TV news reporter.

CAMERAMAN: (M) Any age, Shri's camera operator. Doubles as Santa.

VIC: (M) 60s, a poor excuse for a store Santa.

ZAGALON: (M) 50s to 60s, slick businessman.

BARB / BOB: (Flex.) 30s to 40s, regional manager, condescending.

SANTA: (M) Santa. The real Santa? Maybe? Doubles as Cameraman.

ENSEMBLE: Various other TV news interviewees, any age or type. *(Consumer Advocate, Shopper, Consultant, Dale, Shopper 2, Turkey thief, and Security)*

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SETTING

In a small area SR is the outdoor news broadcast. Closed backdoors of a news van can set the scene. If possible, throughout the broadcasts snow falls lightly and theatrically. Cameraman should keep his back to the audience as he films. Shri Ravajanawali should address the audience as if she was on screen. Any others “on camera” may be with her or featured separately downstage or in a spotlight.

SL is the breakroom of Shop Smart, a large superstore. There is a conference table, a few chairs, and some employee lockers. There is a closet door (which remains shut) and an entrance / exit.

TIME

The time is Christmas Eve, now or in the recent past.

NOTE

This show contains some adult language. It can be changed to suit your community standards. No additional permissions are needed.

SFX

“Ding” of a Santa tracker app
Store holiday music
Shri’s voiceover played on a cellphone

PROPS

wrapped presents
cell phones
video camera and microphone
paperwork, folders, clipboards, or tablet
plate of cookies
lunch bag, coats, personal items of employees, etc.
scroll or list
lock

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Christmas Eve. The breakroom of a superstore. On the table is a wrapped Christmas present. SARAH enters. Her face is down in her phone. She puts her things in a locker. SFX: radar "ding" of a Santa tracker app on her phone. She notices the present, fiddles with it, places it nicely in the center of the table. JANE enters and sits.)

JANE: This was a long one. Can't wait to see my kids.

SARAH: Where the hell is he?

JANE: I'm sure he's just running late.

SARAH: That's not acceptable.

JANE: He's a busy man tonight.

SARAH: How come when I'm late it's not okay? But when he's late, it's no big deal?

JANE: It's not the same thing.

SARAH: When I'm late, I have to go talk to Rudy in the office, and then sometimes, he calls my caseworker.

JANE: When did he ever call your caseworker?

SARAH: The first week I was working here.

JANE: He's just doing his job.

SARAH: Well, I wish he wouldn't do his job so good.

JANE: Where is he now?

SARAH: He's still in Africa.

JANE: He'll make up some time over the Atlantic.

SARAH: If he doesn't get back on schedule, he's never gonna make it.

JANE: He doesn't come to places of business.

SARAH: He might.

JANE: There's no chimney, no tree.

SARAH: Chimneys. Aisle fourteen. On the left. And I told Rudy to order more trees. But nobody listens to me.

JANE: But it's not a home. His number one priority tonight is homes.

SARAH: We have a lot more Christmas stuff than any home I know. More decorations, more lights, more spirit, more everything. More than anyplace. He should come here first.

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JANE: He'll make it. He always makes it.

SARAH: Oh yeah? How do you know?

JANE: Because he's magic.

SARAH: (*Suspiciously.*) Yeah, right.

JANE: He is. Trust me. He'll be here.

SARAH: How do you know?

JANE: I'm a mom. Moms know all about magic.

SARAH: I hate working on Christmas Eve.

(JERRY enters, arriving for the start of his shift. He puts his things in a locker.)

SARAH: Hi, Jerry.

JERRY: Oooof. Thick as goulash out there. Fog rolling in off the lake. Worst in a hundred years, they're saying.

JANE: "They"?

JERRY: They. Them. Those.

SARAH: What's goulash?

JANE: Nobody actually knows, hon.

SARAH: Is it thick?

JANE: Must be.

JERRY: It is the national dish of Hungary. They are *hungary* for it.

JANE: Jerry, I love you for knowing that. Have a great night. Sarah, he's gonna come. Trust me. I'm gonna get out of here and pick up my kids. (*JANE gets herself ready to exit.*)

JERRY: You drive safe, okay?

JANE: I will. Thank you.

(LADY enters, plops herself down in a chair, and sighs a big one.)

JERRY: Tough one?

LADY: You wouldn't believe it if I told ya.

JERRY: Let's hear it.

(RUDY enters. He is the manager, in every way.)

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RUDY: Team meeting in five minutes.

JERRY: Got it, boss.

LADY: See ya, suckers!

RUDY: That means everybody.

LADY: Everybody?

JANE: What do you mean?

RUDY: Incoming *and* outgoing teams. Non-negotiable.

LADY: But Jane and I have been here since this morning.

RUDY: You wanna continue to work here, you'll be at the meeting. *(To EVERYONE.)* If you've got plans tonight, cancel 'em. *(Exits.)*

JANE: They're gonna double shift us? But my kids.

LADY: Like he cares? "You wanna continue to work here?" Not really.

JANE: Damn it.

JERRY: You were saying?

LADY: Huh?

JANE: I can't believe he's gonna double shift us. What am I supposed to do about my kids?

JERRY: Tough one. You were saying?

LADY: Oh yeah. Okay, so's this guy comes up to the counter, hefts this box up—

JANE: *(Overlapping, of LADY.)* What a jerk.

JERRY: *(Overlapping.)* Hefts?

LADY: Yeah, hefts. And is like, "I wanna return this."

JANE: *(Overlapping.)* What a huge jerk. What am I supposed to do?

LADY: Call your sister.

JANE: But Christmas Eve?

JERRY: Lady, "I wanna return this"? ...You were saying?

LADY: The guy, yes, "I wanna return this," he says. A TV, okay?

JERRY: Okay.

LADY: One of them fifty-six inchers.

JERRY: Right.

LADY: You know, we had them for one ninety-nine on Black Friday.

JANE: I was gonna get one for my husband.

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LADY: So I'm like, "Ok. Is there anything wrong with it?" He says, "No. I just don't like it."

"You don't like it?"

"I just don't want it."

"Okay, no problem," I say. I start to open up the box, like we're supposed to.

JERRY: Uh oh.

LADY: "Whaddya doin'?" the guy says.

JANE: Oh, no.

LADY: Yeah, right? So I'm like, "I just gotta open it up." "For what?" he says. I'm like, "I gotta check the serial number."

JERRY: The serial number. Yep. Always gotta check the serial number.

LADY: I'm doing my due diligence, right?

JERRY: Right. Something happens, who's the person gonna get blamed? Not him.

LADY: Right? I'm the one has to work here. That's training.

JERRY: Technique is what that is. Technique and experience.

LADY: That's what I'm tryna explain to the guy. You know, it's just the procedure.

JERRY: Good procedure, too.

LADY: I know. That's what I'm thinking, and I'm about to start explaining to the guy— middle-aged, white guy, you know? Guy there with his kid.

JANE: He had his kid with him?

LADY: Good, right?

JERRY: That's really good.

LADY: Because a guy with a kid, right? Christmas Eve? Who's gonna give this guy a hard time?

JANE: I hate when they pull the kids into it.

LADY: Right?

JERRY: Alright, so you're explaining to the guy.

LADY: No, no. I was gonna explain to the guy, but I look behind him, and the line is like, I can't even tell you how long. And so, I take the box—

JANE: No.

LADY: Yes. I take the box—heavy as hell by the way—I take the box and I start to slide it behind the counter, because I wanna move the line along, you know?

JERRY: It's Christmas Eve, and you wanna move the line along.

LADY: Right.

JERRY: So, you're sliding the box over.

LADY: I'm about to slide the box over. And the guy's eyes get real big.

JERRY: (*This is the evidence!*) Got him.

LADY: Just like they tell you in training.

JERRY: It's good training.

LADY: So, the guy's eyes get real big.

JERRY: Like he just hit the Mega Millions, right?

LADY: Right. And I'm thinking, don't do this to me. Not tonight, not on Christmas Eve. Not with twenty minutes to go before the end of my shift and a nice, sweet glass of eggnog waiting for me at home.

JERRY: The eyes give it away every time.

LADY: Right. So I'm thinking, I'd better check the serial number here, because something just ain't right.

JERRY: Gotta check the serial number.

LADY: So, he says, "Whaddya doing?"

"I'm sorry, sir," I says. "I gotta check the serial number."

JERRY: Meanwhile, the line, right?

LADY: (*Indicating "like, to the back of the store."*) Right. The line is like...

JERRY: Right.

LADY: "I already told you, I don't want it," he says.

"Sorry. It's not *my* rule. It's company policy," I says. I start to open it up. The guy's eyes are about to pop out of his head. What do you think I find?

JERRY: Two by fours.

LADY: Two by fours? Try *bricks*.

JANE: *Bricks*?!

LADY: Damn bricks. The guy is like, "How the hell did *that* get in there?"

SARAH: You call Larry?

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LADY: Larry? Larry's out on a smoke break every time you need him. Nah, just took his picture.

SARAH: You took his picture?

LADY: Nah, but he thinks I did.

JANE: Merry Christmas, right?

(WOLF enters.)

JERRY: *(To WOLF.)* Lady just had a guy try to return bricks.

WOLF: Far out, man.

JERRY: *Bricks!*

WOLF: Cool, man. I like bricks.

LADY: Except they were inside the box for a fifty-six-inch television. *(To WOLF.)* By the way, don't plan on leaving tonight.

WOLF: Aw, man! My old lady's waiting for me at the casa.

JERRY: Highly likely that they are going to have everyone work a second shift.

WOLF: That's a bummer. So, what were you saying about this brick television?

JANE: This guy returns a TV box, but it was full of bricks.

WOLF: You should've seen his face. Like, "Who the hell filled my box with bricks?"

JERRY: Like he's the first guy ever thought of this.

LADY: Then he starts in with, "Are you calling me a liar? I was trying to return these bricks. I never said I was trying to return a television." Like I was insulting him. Like I was the criminal in this situation.

JANE: What about the kid?

LADY: The kid? The damn kid? The kid's crying like, "I told you so, Daddy. I told you not to do it."

WOLF: Did you call the fuzz?

LADY: Who, Larry? I didn't want to get the guy in trouble. I mean, it's the holidays, you know.

WOLF: Do you think maybe he was really trying to return the bricks?

LADY: Yes, Wolf, you're right. Why didn't I think of that?

WOLF: I don't know, man. Seems kinda obvious.

End of Freeview

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