

BANG GOES CHRISTMAS

by James Walter Blakley

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Mrs. Chase is expecting high society guests and has hired a "butlah" and a maid to keep up appearances. She also hires a Santa Claus for a clever surprise. But everything goes haywire. Rich Uncle Gregory arrives incognito and is given a very cold reception, the refreshments go wrong, and the presents are distributed to unexpected but deserving relatives. Funny with lots of action.

TIME: One Christmas Eve.

PLACE: Living-room in Chase's home in small city.

PLAYING TIME: About one hour.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HENRY CHASE: A small-town business man.

MRS. CHASE: Henry's wife.

BETTY CHASE: Their 17-year-old daughter.

ROBERT CHASE: Their 16-year-old son.

UNCLE GREGORY: Mrs. Chase's wealthy uncle.

MINERVA MILLS: Mrs. Chase's widowed cousin.

SARAH MILLS: Minerva's 16-year-old daughter.

ELMER MILLS: Minerva's 17-year-old son.

MR. LILLARD: The town banker.

MRS. LILLARD: The banker's wife.

ANN DEGER: A spinster.

FRED HAMMOND: Ann's suitor.

LUCRETIA: Maid.

PERNICIOUS: Butler.

SANTA CLAUS: An Irishman.

THE SET

Comfortable living-room in the Chase home. Two windows USR and USL, look out on street. Door SR to reception room; door SL to back of house. USC is stand, upon which is bowl of goldfish. Easy-chair on either side of stand. Christmas tree is to be placed in front of window USL. Couch, flanked by end tables, forward from R. corner back leaving room for three common chairs, which are to be brought in later. Library table is a little L. of center in front of tree. Bridge lamp R. of library stand. Two easy-chairs R. of door L. Easy-chair down-stage R.; another down-stage L. Small stand, at one end of which is end-table for punch bowl, down L. Curtains at windows. Pictures on walls; rug on floor, etc. Christmas decorations as desired to make room cheerful as befits the occasion. Very subdued lights back of windows to give impression of approaching night. White confetti or diamond dust tossed into blast of electric fan simulates, snow storm. As characters enter from outside, a slight sprinkling of diamond dust, previously placed on garments will add realism. Sound effects off-stage will also add effectiveness.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: MRS. CHASE and BETTY are decorating the house. A box of tree ornaments is on the floor by window L. BETTY is hanging holly wreath in window R. Enter HENRY CHASE through door L. with Christmas tree.)

HENRY: *(Jovially.)* Make way for Santa Claus! *(Starts toward corner SR.)*

MRS. CHASE: *(Quickly.)* No, Henry, not there! *(Indicates window SL.)* Here!

HENRY: *(Dubiously.)* Won't it obstruct the light?

MRS. CHASE: *(Decisively.)* I want it to show. *(HENRY looks puzzled.)*

BETTY: *(To MOTHER.)* Men never understand us women.

HENRY: *(Laughing good-naturedly.)* Anywhere you say, dear, just so you don't hang it on the chandelier. *(Places by window SL. Takes paper and sits down R of library stand; reads.)*

BETTY: *(Eyeing tree, frowns.)* But Mother, it's not as tall as Powells'!

(MRS. CHASE looks it over critically - obviously dissatisfied.)

MRS. CHASE: *(Appealingly to HENRY.)* You'll have to exchange it for another, dear.

HENRY: *(Looking up, surprised.)* Another! Why?

BETTY: *(Wails.)* The Powells have a lovely one.

MRS. CHASE: *(Decisively.)* A good foot taller than this one.

HENRY: Well, what of it? We don't -

BETTY: *(Pouting.)* They always try to get ahead of us in everything.

HENRY: And to retaliate, we must try to get ahead of them.

MRS. CHASE: Oh, I wouldn't put it that way.

HENRY: *(Rising, laying aside paper.)* I paid Tony twenty dollars for that tree. A larger one will cost another 10 bucks *(Appealingly.)* Katie, this Christmas shindig of yours has me about as clean as a picked goose. Those firecrackers I bought for a Christmas crack took -

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MRS. CHASE: (*Laughing.*) Oh, Henry, you and your old-fashioned ideas! That custom was discarded by the best people years ago.

HENRY: (*Doggedly.*) Then I must be one of the worst people. Katie, the day would be a total loss to me without a big bang Christmas morning!

BETTY: (*Looking out window SR.*) There comes Robert, Mother. Why not have him exchange the tree? Tony has some large ones yet.

MRS. CHASE: All right, darling. I shall send him. (*To HENRY, wheedling.*) Now, dear, since you have your firecrackers, I know you'll not object.

HENRY: (*Grinning.*) Okay, but you'll have to charge it.

BETTY: (*Gratified.*) Oh goody! I'm so happy!

MRS. CHASE: (*Smiling.*) Tony will not mind. (*Noise off SR.*) Robert!

ROBERT: (*Offstage SR.*) What d'ya want, Mother?

MRS. CHASE: I've an errand for you. (*Enter ROBERT through door SR.*)

ROBERT: (*Sullenly.*) Aw, shucks, Mother! What do I hafta do?

MRS. CHASE: (*Indicating.*) Take that tree back to Tony's and exchange it for a larger one, at least ... (*Appeals to BETTY.*) ... how much taller is Powells'?

BETTY: (*Holding hands apart.*) At least that much.

ROBERT: (*Disgustedly.*) Isn't that good! I'm to tell Tony, "As much taller than Powells' as this!" (*Indicating with hands apart.*)

HENRY: (*Laughing.*) The instructions are rather indefinite. Get one at least eighteen inches taller than this one. (*SOUND of car offstage C.*)

BETTY: (*At window.*) Mother, quick! There goes another batch -

MRS. CHASE: (*At window, reprovingly.*) Batch! Another what?

BETTY: (*Sullenly.*) Bunch, then!

(*Exit HENRY, SR, shaking head.*)

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