

Pictures Of A Christmas World

Primary Script

by

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Great Britain	Jack	
	David:	
	Katie	
	Suzie	
	Sam	
	Wisbich	A Helper for Santa Claus
Poland	Mother	
	Jan	A Polish Man (<i>Pronounced 'Yan'</i>)
	Eve	His Wife
	A Peasant	
France	Another Peasant	
	Pierre	A Frenchman
	Jean	Eldest Son (<i>Pronounced schjohn</i>)
	Mârie	Pierre's Wife
	Annette	His Youngest Daughter
Germany	Christkindl	The Messenger of the Christ Child
	Child 1 - 4	
Caribbean	Tom	A Man
	Bernice	A Woman
	Errol	A Youth
	Pearl	A Girl
	Elder	A Village Elder or Dignitary
Russia	Mother	
	Child 1 - 3	
	Grandpa	
	Grandma	
Australia	Brad	
	Toby	
Canada	Narrators 1-5	
	Chorus of Messengers, Guests (<i>Non-speaking</i>)	
	Iagoo (<i>Non-speaking</i>)	
	Brave 1	
	Brave 2	
	Squaw 1	
	Squaw 2	
	Mexican 1 - 5	
Mexico	Joseph	
	Mary	
	Innkeeper	

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PRODUCTION NOTES

These Production Notes are intended to act as a guide, only. They are not definitive, but may be used as required. The set is intended to be as simple or as complex as the resources available allow. Costume should be researched by the children as could the traditions/story lines included in the script.

SCENES

Scene 1 - Somewhere in Great Britain

The scene is set outside. It could be outside in the playground, or outside someone's house. Ideally it should be a Christmas card scene, with snow everywhere. This is not essential to the plot and the use of certain items such as the snowman and snowballs will create the effect. The snowman can be made from polystyrene packaging material glued together; the snowballs made from sponge balls painted white. The toboggan needs to be long enough to allow all six to sit on it. Suzie should carry a small doll or teddy, dressed in similar colours to Wisbich's costume to connect the toy with the person of the dream.

Scene 2 - Poland

The village of Kepice is in North West Poland about 50km from the Baltic Sea. It has little relevance to the tradition of waiting for the first star to appear on Christmas Eve before eating the Christmas Eve dinner. This was a popular practice throughout Poland.

The scene is outdoor once again and could be the same backcloth as for scene 1. If resources allow the scene would have a romantic flavour if log cabins in a woodland clearing were depicted.

Scene 3 - France

The scene could be indoor or outdoor. The traditional custom is for the eldest child to process a freshly cut Yule log home followed by the other members of the family. The youngest member of the family pours wine onto the log and it is then set on fire in the hearth. It must burn throughout the Christmas season without going out and its ashes are then gathered for medicinal purposes throughout the year. The lines spoken by Pierre and family are part of the old custom.

Scene 4 - Germany

Christkindl or Kriss Kringle is the Christ child or Messenger. On Christmas Eve, children are not allowed to enter the room where the Christmas tree has been placed. Christkindl visits the house and passes through locked doors leaving the presents under the tree. When the children are allowed into the room, they are always too late to catch a glimpse of Christkindl. The Christmas tree was adopted as a Christian symbol when early Christian missionaries adopted the pagan worshipping of an Oak tree and used it as a Christian symbol. The triangular shape represented the Holy Trinity. The pagans were convinced that if they worshipped this kind of tree instead of the oak, they would not be giving up their old beliefs but would be paying homage to Christianity at the same time. Prince Albert is recorded as being the first person to popularise the decorating of Christmas trees in Britain. This scene is intended to be indoors and should be set accordingly.

Scene 5 - The Caribbean

The only island accorded with a distinctive Christmas carnival is St Kitts. All of the others celebrate Christmas in one way or another, but St Kitts hold a carnival throughout the Christmas season. The scene should have an outdoor, carnival feel to it.

Scene 6 - Russia

This is an indoor scene with the Russian children eagerly awaiting the arrival of the local village children and their own Grandparents. The tradition chosen for this scene involves a large bowl of water into which each person in turn places an object belonging to them. Then the bowl is covered with a cloth and each person removes an item. Prophecies abound as to the significance and meaning of the item selected. The quotes in the script are pure fiction!

Scene 7 - Australia

It is of course mid-summer and very hot at this time of year. The scene can be indoors or outdoors - whatever you wish. A popular pastime is to barbecue on the beach on Christmas morning and of course go surfing.

Scene 8 - Canada

The Huron Indians lived on the northern banks of Lake Huron and were, in the main, peaceful having formed a league with four other tribes. However they were almost wiped out by a siege party in the seventeenth century. Hiawatha was a chiefly title among the Mohawks but also believed to be a great prophet of the Iroquois. He is believed to have lived about AD. 1570. Longfellow based his poem 'Hiawatha' on a book by Henry Schoolcraft. There are some difficult words in the poem, these are the best pronunciations found:

Pau-Puk-Keewis	P <u>o</u> w (as in how) - P <u>u</u> k (as in pool) - K <u>e</u> (as in Key) w <u>i</u> s (as in wish)
Yennadize	Y <u>e</u> (as in yes) - n <u>a</u> (as in arm) - d <u>i</u> z (as in it) - z <u>a</u> (as in say)
Chibiabos	C <u>h</u> e (as in cheat) - b <u>i</u> (as in it) - <u>a</u> (as in arm) - b <u>o</u> s (as in rod)
Iagoo	<u>I</u> (as in it) - <u>a</u> (as in arm) - goo (as written)

The scene is inside a school hall and thus requires little scenery.

Scene 9 - Mexico

Ideally the scene represents the entrance to a church with a frame or tree nearby with the pinata hanging from it. The scene could be inside the church if resources are limited. There are two customs drawn on here. The first is the story of the Poinsettia, a plant with bright red leaves at Christmas time. The legend tells of a little peasant girl who wanted to go to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, but had no gift for the baby Jesus. Angels appeared to her and told her to pick some weeds and take them. As she went in, everyone laughed at her. She was so embarrassed that her face went scarlet and her blushes were reflected in the top leaves of the plant. The second tradition is the hanging of a large earthenware pot called a Pinata from a tree or ceiling or whatever. It is filled with sweets, nuts and fruit and the children take it in turns to try and break the Pinata with a stick to get at the good things inside.

Scene 10 - Britain

The scene picks up where the story began - outside the school or wherever.

COSTUME

It is intended that local costume should be used wherever possible and not 'westernised dress'. I have not defined costume precisely as the sex of some characters is not defined and costume does vary from district to district. It is best researched as part of classroom activities. A helpful guide can be found in libraries titled 'Costumes from around the world'.

LIGHTING

Ideally, the lighting should fade in and out as shown in the script. Flashes can be created by switching lights off/on/off without using the dimmers at the end of scenes. Colour should indicate the landscape or interior setting: i.e. warm/cold/forest/sunshine etc. Lots of colour for the calypso, if possible.

PROPS

Use whatever is available to create the right atmosphere for that scene. As elaborate or as simple as you wish.

SCENE ONE - SOMEWHERE IN GREAT BRITAIN

(The play begins anywhere in Great Britain - your home town would be quite suitable. At the start , David, Katie & Suzie are found building a snowman. Other children could be tobogganing, snowball fighting etc: anything in the way of traditional winter sports. Although it rarely happens in most of Britain at Christmas, snow has fallen on the ground! This is a Christmas card scene. The rest of the cast, with choir etc, enter during the first song and take up their positions as required.)

SONG ONE - DECK THE HALLS

(Choir & Cast)

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.

Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa la la - la la la - la la la.
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.

See the blazing Yule before us,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.
Strike the harp, and join the chorus,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.
Follow me in merry measure,
Fa la la - la la la - la la la.
While I tell of Christmas treasure,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.
Hail the new! Ye lads and lasses;
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.
Sing we joyous all together,
Fa la la - la la la - la la la.
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa la la la la - la la - la la.

Jack: ***(Runs onto stage with Sam)*** Hey, can we help make the snowman?

David: No! Make your own. We've spent ages trying to build this one. ***(Turns to one of his friends)*** Did you get the carrot for his nose?

Katie: Yes, and some pebbles for his eyes. I couldn't find any coal.

Suzie: I know where to get some coal from. ***(She goes off to collect a piece, leaving a teddy dressed like Wisbich {see Appendix}.)***

Jack: Huh! Come on Sam, we'll make our own. Much bigger and much better! ***(They move away)***

Sam: Let's have a snowball fight instead. ***(He picks up a snowball and throws it at Jack.)***

Jack: Right! Come on then! ***(He returns a snowball, others join in.)***

(During the snowball fight, a little elf enters from stage right {SR}. He/she looks very dejected and has tears in his/her eyes.)

Katie: What's up, little fella'?

Jack: Hey, I like the fancy dress. Smart isn't it?

David: He doesn't look very happy, does he *{she}*?

Sam: I don't think he's from around here.

Jack: Wouldn't be, wearing an outfit like that! ***(They laugh)***

Katie: ***(Going over to the elf)*** Why are you so upset? What's bothering you?

David: More to the point, who are you?

Wisbich: My name's Wisbich, and I'm lost, tired and fed up.

Jack: Apart from that - you're fine?

Katie: Lay off him, Jack. Can't you see he's upset? ***(To Wisbich)*** What's up?

Sam: Where are you from? I've not seen you around here before.

Wisbich: You shouldn't have seen me ever before. I'm from the North Pole.

David: ***(Incredulous)*** The North Pole? That's at the top of the world isn't it?

Jack: Wow! Aren't you a bit far from home?

Suzie: **(Entering with the coal)** I've got some coal. Oh, hello. Who's this?

Sam: His name's Wisbich and he's from the North Pole.

Katie: I don't get this. If you're from the North Pole, what are you doing here?

Wisbich: **(Frustrated)** I'm one of Santa's helpers and I was collecting with the others and someone must have messed with the clock... and time stopped... when it shouldn't have ... and he went and left without me... and I don't know where they've gone or how to find them or.....

All: Slow down!

Suzie: I can't keep up with this.

Katie: Start again and this time go a bit slower.

Wisbich: I'm one of Santa's helpers.

Sam: The Santa!

Jack: No! A Santa! Anyone knows there's dozens of them. They're in every shop and store.

Wisbich: I'm talking about the real Santa. Santa Claus, from the North Pole. The one who brings the presents on Christmas Eve.

Katie: You're one of his helpers?

Jack: Aren't you a bit early? Christmas isn't for another eighteen days!

Wisbich: No, I'm not too early, but now I'm going to be too late. That's what I meant when I said that we were collecting. We were collecting the letters to Santa Claus on our way back to the North Pole.

David: On your way back from where?

Wisbich: On our way back from delivering some presents.

Sam: But Christmas isn't for...

Jack: ...another eighteen days yet!

Wisbich: We don't deliver all of the presents on Christmas Eve. In some parts of the world we start early and other parts we don't deliver until January.

Kate: Do you mean, that some people don't celebrate Christmas on Christmas day?

Wisbich: No, I don't mean that. Christmas day is Christmas day. But in some countries presents are opened in early December, and in other countries they are opened on Christmas day, and in others they don't open them until twelfth night.

Suzie: Why?

Wisbich: It's traditional - anyway, it gives us a chance to get them made and delivered on time. We deliver the first lot and pick up letters from children for the next delivery and so on.

Sam: Wow!

Jack: OK, so you don't deliver them all on one night. What's all that about someone messing with a clock and time stopping?

(Wisbich has calmed down. He sits down on a tree stump. The children gather around him/her.)

Wisbich: We have to deliver the presents at the same time. So before we start out, Santa opens the box with the Omega clock in it and...

Suzie: What's the Omega clock?

Wisbich: That's the clock that controls all time. Santa stops the clock, time stands still and off we go. My job is to collect the letters from other children on our way back. Someone must have messed with the clock and I got left behind - here.

Katie: So what are you going to do?

Wisbich: **(Becoming upset)** I don't know. Somehow, I've got to find out where Santa is and catch up with him. But I haven't got any transport.

David: I've got a toboggan you can use.

Jack: **(A bit sarcastic)** What about the reindeer? What are you going to use for them - your pet guinea pigs?

Suzie: Don't be horrible, Jack! He's only trying to help.

David: I just thought you might have some magic powder or something like that.

Wisbich: **(Brightening up)** I have! Why didn't I think of that? I could sprinkle some magic star dust onto the toboggan and I'll be away. **(Downcast again)** Oh, but I don't know which way to go - or where.

Katie: We could help. Couldn't we, gang?

Sam: I'm in!

David: And me!

Suzie: Brilliant!

(They all look at Jack who, up until now has said nothing)

Jack: What? Me? **(Reluctantly)** I suppose so.

Katie: Go on, David, fetch your toboggan and we can head for the stars.
(David exits to fetch the toboggan)

Suzie: Shall I fetch an atlas, so that we know where we've got to go?

Katie: How about a globe, that would be better?

Suzie: My little brother's got one of those. I'll go and fetch it. **(She exits)**

Sam: Do you have any idea where we've got to go, to find him?

Wisbich: Well, we started in Turkey, then we went to Holland and Belgium and one or two other countries and delivered presents to all of them.

Jack: Great! But we need to know where he goes to after that.

Wisbich: We came here on the start of our letter-collecting run, then he was going to Poland, I think.

(David re-enters with the toboggan, followed shortly by Suzie with a large globe.)

David: Got the sledge!

Sam: Come on then, let's go find Santa Claus!

(Wisbich takes a small packet out of his pocket and sprinkles some dust onto the toboggan as he says some magic words.)

Wisbich: All aboard and on the sleigh
We will soon be on our way.
Gliding o'er the land and seas,
Flying high above the trees.
Magic star dust of the night,
Give this sledge the power of flight.

(The Children climb onto the toboggan. There is a flash followed by a blackout. The scene changes to Scene 2 - Poland.)

SCENE TWO - POLAND

(Lights up. The children are found, somewhat scattered about the floor, around the toboggan. They are in the village of Kepice.)

Jack: Crikey, can't you manage a softer landing than that? My insides are all outside now.

David: This toboggan's got good brakes now, hasn't it?

Wisbich: Sorry about that. I'm not used to controlling the sleigh, Donner and Blitzen are usually on automatic pilot!

Katie: Where are we?

Suzie: *(Pointing on the globe)* Are we here?

Wisbich: No, that's Italy, we're in Poland and I hope we are in Kepice.

Sam: Why's that then?

Wisbich: 'Cos that's the last place we visit in Poland. If he's not been here, we're ahead of him, aren't we?

Sam: I wish I was clever like you.

Wisbich: And if we're ahead of him, all we have to do is wait and he'll turn up. If we're not ahead, well... I s'pose we've got to get our skates on.

Suzie: Why? What's wrong with the toboggan:

Jack: Nothing's wrong with the toboggan. It's just a oh never mind.

Katie: What's that noise?

Suzie: It sounds like someone's singing.

Wisbich: Sssh!

(They listen for a moment as a group of peasants enter and join the choir singing.)

SONG TWO - LULLABY, JESUS
Peasants & Choir

Lullaby, Jesus, my dear one be sleeping.
Lullaby, Jesus, while watch I am keeping.
Lullaby, baby, my darling I love you.
Your mother will sing and so gently will rock you.

When you awaken, sweet Jesus, I'll give you
Raisins and almonds and sweet berries too.
Lullaby, baby, my darling I love you.
Your mother will sing and so gently will rock you.

Hush he is sleeping while stars shine above us;
Like the bright sun is the sweet baby Jesus.
Lullaby, baby, my darling I love you.
Your mother will sing and so gently will rock you.

Jan: ***(Turns to his mother)*** When can we eat, mama? I'm hungry.

Eve: As soon as the first star appears in the sky, we shall have dinner.

Jan: But I'm hungry now.

Eve: I'm sure you are, little one. But we must wait, it's traditional.

A Peasant: ***(Pointing upwards)*** Look, a star, a star!

Jan: Where?

Another Peasant: Up there, look. Can't you see it?

Eve: The Star of David. Come children, let us prepare for Christmas. Let us
go and eat our Christmas Eve Dinner.

(They exit, leaving the children and Wisbich)

Wisbich: Did you hear that?

David: Yeah! Someone mentioned dinner. I think I'll go and join them. I'm
starving.

(The other children groan.)

- Wisbich: No, not that bit. Didn't you hear what they said? The first star - Christmas Eve dinner - it's Christmas Eve!
- Jack: Don't be daft. We only started out a few minutes ago, and it was December the sixth then.
- Sam: So it can't be Christmas Eve, then, can it?
- Wisbich: It can - if someone's messed with the clock!
- Sam: I wish I was clever like you.
- Katie: Oh shut up, Sam. ***(To Wisbich)*** Do you mean someone could have messed with that clock thing that you were on about.
- Wisbich: How else can you explain the fact that we've just skipped eighteen days?
- Jack: Perhaps that's how you came to be left behind.
- Suzie: How do you mean?
- Jack: Well, he got lost because someone messed with the clock, didn't he? Well perhaps they messed with it so much that time has gone on without Wisbich, leaving him here.
- David: Cor!
- Sam: I wish I was clev....
- All: Shut up, Sam!
- Katie: What do we do now?
- Wisbich: Move on - and quick. We've only got a few hours to catch up with him, before it's too late.

Suzie: ***(Fiddling with the globe)*** Where do we go to, now?
Wisbich: We're off to France. All aboard who's coming aboard.

(They all scramble back onto the sledge)

Wisbich: Yo! ***(There is a flash/blackout for the scene change.)***

SCENE THREE - FRANCE

(When the lights come up, the children are all bunched up into one another, with Wisbich squashed at the front)

Jack: You're improving. At least this time we all stayed on the sledge.

David: Perhaps it's got disc brakes.

Jack: There aren't any wheels, idiot, so you can't have disc brakes.

(David pulls a face at him)

Suzie: I've found where we are! ***(She is holding the globe upside down and pointing to Thailand)***

Katie: Suzie, you're holding it upside down. That's Thailand, not France.

Suzie: Well, that's alright, isn't it. That's where he comes from isn't it?

David: Who?

Suzie: Santa Claus.

Jack: Thailand, not Toy land, you idiot. Thailand by China, not Toy land in Woolies!

Suzie: ***(Turning the globe over)*** Oh, yes. Sorry!

Sam: What happens now?

Wisbich: Well, we'd better go and find out if he's been here yet.

Sam: It's a bit dark, isn't it? I don't like the dark.

Katie: You'll be alright with us.

(Pierre enters with a large tray on which is a cake in the shape of a Yule log. He is followed by his family. The eldest son {Jean} is carrying a large Yule log, mother {Marie} carries a 'witches' broom, the youngest {Annette} carries a decanter or jar of wine. Other members of the family are also in the procession.)

Pierre: Joy, joy! May God shower joy upon us. Christmas brings us all good things.

Pierre's children: Joy, joy, joy!

Marie: Joy, joy! God give us grace to see the New Year, and if we don't increase in numbers, may we, at least, not decrease.

Pierre's children: Joy, joy, joy!

David: What are they doing?

Wisbich: It's an old custom throughout France. They process with the Yule log all the way home and then pour the wine onto it and set it on fire. It has to burn throughout the Christmas season, without going out. They use the ashes during the year as a sort of medicine.

Jack: *(Turning to Sam)* Don't you dare say....

Sam: I wish I *(Jack puts his hand across Sam's mouth.)*

(The French family break into a song, marching around the stage accompanied by the choir. The children tag onto the march half way through.)

SONG THREE - MARCH OF THE KINGS French family & Choir

Three great kings, I met at early morn
With all their retinue were slowly marching;
Three great kings, I met at early morn,
Were on their way to meet the newly born.
With gifts of gold, brought from far away,
And valiant warriors to guard the royal treasure,
With gifts of gold, brought from far away,
Their shields all shining in their bright array.

Katie: Does that mean we've missed him again?

Wisbich: Well, it means it's Christmas Eve still. Santa and the gang must have been and collected the letters and are now doing the rounds with the presents. I don't know whether he's been here and delivered yet.

Pierre: Joyeux Noël!

Marie: Joyeux Noël!

Jean: Let's go and open our presents.

Pierre: No! We must first take the log and light it. Then we open the presents.

Wisbich: Oh, crikey, we've missed him. All aboard, Abracadam. We've got to find Santa, so come on, let's scam!

(Flash/Blackout)

SCENE FOUR - GERMANY

(During the blackout a Christmas tree is placed on stage. There is a crashing sound! Lights up, to reveal the children and Wisbich piled on the floor some under the tree, others with tinsel etc on top of them.)

Sam: ***(Getting up)*** I want to go home!

Jack: ***(Scrambling free)*** Oh, don't snivel, he's bound to get the hang of it soon.

Suzie: ***(Also getting up)*** We're too flipping late again aren't we?

(They all move away from the tree)

Katie: It looks like it.

Wisbich: Yes, my mistake. I should have set course for the Caribbean. He comes to Germany early.

David: Why?

Wisbich: Well, tradition says that the presents are delivered by a beautiful girl with a crown of candles, call Christkindl. We have to deliver the presents to her and she brings them to the children on Christmas Eve.

Sam: I thought we'd gone past Christmas Eve.

Wisbich: Right now, I don't know what day it is. I guess it's probably Christmas Eve and she hasn't delivered the presents yet.

(Christkindl enters. She wears a long white, dress like an angel, and has a crown of candles on her head. She carries the presents and places them under the tree.)

Suzie: Wow! Isn't she pretty?

Wisbich: She is the Messenger of the Christ child.

(Christkindl exits from the same side of stage that she entered. There is a pause then several children rush in from the opposite side of stage.)