

CHRISTMAS COMES TO LICKETY-SPLIT

by Joy Cleveland



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**CHRISTMAS
COMES TO
LICKETY-SPLIT**

**A Western for children and teens
by Joy Cleveland**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Sheriff Buck Ridges — The amiable John Wayne type sheriff of Lickety-Split. He speaks in a slow Southern drawl. He wears a cowboy hat, jeans, Western shirt, vest, badge, and boots.

Miss Ruby Mae — The grumpy store owner with a big heart. She is a no-nonsense kind of older gal, especially irritated by snooty people and gossips. She wears a long country skirt/dress, apron, and granny glasses, with her hair in a bun.

Miss Mabel — Lickety-Split's town gossip. She is a flighty, classic airhead in the Old West style. She also makes a mighty tasty fruitcake. She wears a country skirt/dress, with her hair in a bun.

Miss Irene — A snooty, well-to-do "Easterner" from Boston who speaks very properly. She is arrogant, quick to blame, and looks down on others. She wears nicer clothes: a long skirt/dress, and she carries a purse. She wears her hair up.

Miss Clementine — Miss Irene's spoiled teenage daughter. She is easily influenced, loves to brag, enjoys attention, and is loyal to her mother. She wears nicer clothes: long skirt, hat or parasol, and her hair up.

Hershel Butterfield — A lovesick country bumpkin with a heart of gold. He loves to sing but is not particularly adept at it. He wears jeans, a Western shirt, and a cowboy hat.

Loralei — An outlaw and typical big sister to Frank. She is a "pleaser" who isn't very smart and speaks in a country voice. She wears jeans, a Western shirt, a bandana around her neck, her hair in two braids, a cowboy hat, and boots if possible.

Frank — A childlike, simple-minded outlaw with a country voice. He wears jeans, cowboy hat, boots if possible, a Western shirt, and a bandana around his neck.

Granny Sloan — An eccentric, outspoken, and determined old woman. She wears a long skirt/dress, bonnet, apron, her hair in a bun, and little round glasses.

Ma Puddin' — The matriarch of the Corn Puddin' Gang. She is easily frustrated — a typical mother perturbed by her kids. She wears jeans, a Western shirt, a cowboy hat, a bandana around her neck, boots if possible, and her hair in a ponytail.

Polly Ann — A sweet-natured and fun-loving child who supervises Cody. She wears a long skirt and her hair in pigtails.

Cody — A young, energetic child. He wears jeans, a shirt, boots if possible, and a cowboy hat.

Dusty — An older, intelligent child who is the leader of the kids. He wears jeans, a shirt, a cowboy hat, and boots if possible.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Props: Broom, basket, and fan for Miss Mabel, guitar (real or toy), bell, three fabric samples, burlap bag or similar bag, can of beans, red sock, pot and spoon, sweet tater pie (an empty pie tin covered with brown paper or foil), knitting needles and yarn with a bit of a “project” started, jug of eggnog (a metal milk jug, plastic bottle, or antique crockery jug), rope, ham (a brown paper bag tied off with string), and candy canes.

Costumes: All male characters wear typical Old West attire: jeans, shirts, cowboy hats, bandanas, and boots. The Sheriff also has a badge. All female characters, with the exception of Ma Puddin’ and Lorelei, wear long skirts or dresses and blouses. Aprons and bonnets may also be added. Miss Ruby Mae and Granny Sloan wear old-time glasses (inexpensive wire-rimmed reading glasses work well). Miss Irene also wears a shawl and carries a purse. Outlaws Ma Puddin’ and Lorelei are dressed in jeans, shirts, cowboy hats, boots, and bandanas, and wear their hair in braids or ponytails. All other older townswomen wear their hair up in buns, and younger girls Clementine and Polly Ann wear one or two braids.

Staging and Set Design: The stage is divided into three regions: the Outlaws’ hideout (Stage Right), the general store and downtown area (Center Stage), and the cactus area (Stage Left). The Outlaws’ hideout consists of a simple chair and sign that reads “Hideout.” The general store consists of a counter or table off to the right and a smaller table in the center. Other store items — baskets, bins, barrels, a rocking chair — may be added as desired. A “General Store” sign should be placed behind this central area. The cactus area serves as a place for the Outlaws to hide. The cactus (saguaro are a typical Western variety) may be constructed from two sides of a large refrigerator box, painted green, and secured to stand upright using microphone stands. A stack of boxes or another large item could be substituted.

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1 *(RUBY is behind the counter at her general store in downtown*
 2 *Lickety-Split, straightening items. SHERIFF enters Stage*
 3 *Right and speaks to audience as he ambles across stage.)*

4 **SHERIFF:** *(Tipping hat)* Howdy, folks. My name is Sheriff
 5 Buck Ridges, and this here is the town of Lickety-Split.
 6 You might be wondering what a simple little Western
 7 town has to do with Christmas. Well, I'll tell ya. It all
 8 started on a December day when I walked into Miss
 9 Ruby Mae's General Store. *(SHERIFF enters store.)*

10 **RUBY MAE:** Sheriff! How many times do I have to tell ya to
 11 wipe yer feet on that mat before ya come in here!
 12 *(Storms around counter with broom, sweeping vigorously.)*

13 **SHERIFF:** Now, Miss Ruby, don't get yore glasses all
 14 steamed. I was just coming to see if those missing beans
 15 ever showed up.

16 **RUBY MAE:** *(Stops sweeping.)* Course not! I already told ya,
 17 somebody stole 'em from my store.

18 **SHERIFF:** Now, ma'am, are you sure you didn't just
 19 misplace those beans? Lickety-Split hasn't had no crime
 20 since Wiley Stout hit old man Tucker with his wife's
 21 biscuits. Fact is, our jailhouse is getting downright
 22 dusty. Besides, folks don't go around stealing beans at
 23 Christmas time. They got more important things on
 24 their minds, like — *(MABEL enters from Stage Left.)*

25 **RUBY MAE:** *(Interrupting)* Oh, for crying out loud, it's Mabel
 26 Crenshaw! She keeps bothering me about selling her
 27 fruitcakes. The last time I ate one of her cakes, I had
 28 indigestion for days. Now she's come up with some
 29 newfangled recipe that uses rutabagas. Have you ever
 30 heard such a fool idea? You can tell her I'm out back
 31 milking my goat, and I can't be disturbed. *(RUBY MAE*
 32 *exits Upstage.)*

33 **MABEL:** *(Enters left, carrying a basket.)* Yoo-hoo! Oh Sheriff,
 34 have you seen Ruby Mae?

35 **SHERIFF:** As a matter of fact —

36 **MABEL:** Actually, Sheriff, I need to talk to you more. *(Grabs*
 37 *his arm.)* The most awful thing happened to Hiram
 38 yesterday. He was coming back from town, and when he

1 passed by Stony Creek, he decided to take himself a
 2 little nap under the twin pine trees, and just to get
 3 comfortable, he took off his boots. Well, when he woke
 4 up, he was missing a sock. He looked high and low, but
 5 it just disappeared. Now, to be honest with you, I can
 6 knit him another sock — but who in their right mind
 7 would want to steal a red sock?

8 **SHERIFF:** Beats me.

9 **MABEL:** Well, Sheriff, I want that sock thief caught, lickety-
 10 split. It's what we hired you to do. I can't have my
 11 husband moping around over a red sock with it being
 12 Christmas and all.

13 **SHERIFF:** I understand, ma'am.

14 **MABEL:** Now Sheriff, if you'll excuse me, I was just on my
 15 way to deliver a fruitcake. (*Exits right.*)

16 **SHERIFF:** (*To audience*) Well, folks, that was the beginning of
 17 our troubles. Who would want to steal a can of beans
 18 and a smelly red sock? I had my work cut out for me,
 19 that's for sure.

20 **RUBY MAE:** (*Enters at Upstage Left.*) That woman can talk an
 21 ear off a jackrabbit.

22 **SHERIFF:** Miss Ruby, you seen anyone wearing one red
 23 sock? (*IRENE and CLEMENTINE enter, followed closely by*
 24 *HERSHEL, strumming a guitar and singing "Oh My Darling,*
 25 *Clementine."*)

26 **HERSHEL:** Oh my darling, Oh my darling,
 27 Oh my darling, Clementine ...

28 **RUBY MAE:** And you think *I'm* daft? (*Sees IRENE,*
 29 *CLEMENTINE, and HERSHEL.*) Oh, jellybeans! Just
 30 when I thought the day was getting better ... (*Ducks*
 31 *behind counter. SHERIFF observes newcomers.*)

32 **CLEMENTINE:** Hershel, for pity's sake. Not in public!

33 **HERSHEL:** Oh, Miss Clementine, I just can't help myself.
 34 When I see your sweet face, I burst into song. (*Starts*
 35 *singing "Beautiful Dreamer."*)

36 Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me.

37 Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee.

38 Beautiful dreamer —

- 1 IRENE: (*Whacks HERSHEL with her purse.*) Practice some
2 self-control, Mr. Butterfield! My daughter has made it
3 perfectly clear that you are making a spectacle of
4 yourself. I've a good mind to get the Sheriff to lock you
5 up for harassment, not to mention disturbing the peace.
- 6 SHERIFF: (*Amble over, claps HERSHEL on the shoulder.*)
7 Hershel, do we need to have a talk again? Seems to me
8 these womenfolk want you to mosey on along. By the
9 way, that's a fine-looking gee-tar you got there.
- 10 HERSHEL: Thanks, Sheriff. My mama gave it to me for an
11 early Christmas present. I've been practicing. I'm
12 wooing Miss Clementine with my singing.
- 13 CLEMENTINE: Hershel, I already told you "no."
- 14 HERSHEL: Oh Miss Clementine! You've wounded my
15 insides, but I'm not giving up. (*Falls to knees, sings "Let Me
16 Call You Sweetheart."*)
17 Let me call you "sweetheart,"
18 I'm in love with you.
19 Let me hear you whisper
20 That you love me too.
- 21 IRENE: (*Yells above HERSHEL's singing.*) Sheriff, I insist you
22 do something!
- 23 SHERIFF: (*Pulling HERSHEL up*) Come on, lover boy. It's
24 time we went for a stroll. (*As they exit Stage Left,
25 HERSHEL looks back at CLEMENTINE with longing. IRENE
26 and CLEMENTINE approach store counter; IRENE starts
27 ringing bell.*)
- 28 IRENE: Where is that woman? What's her name? Robbie
29 something-or-other.
- 30 RUBY MAE: I ain't deaf. (*Grabs bell.*) What do ya want?
- 31 IRENE: (*Nose in air*) Well, a good day to you, too. We need
32 some fabric for a Christmas dress for my daughter
33 Clementine.
- 34 RUBY MAE: (*Plops fabric on counter.*) This is all I got.
- 35 IRENE: Three samples. That's all you have?
- 36 CLEMENTINE: Mama, I already told you I want green fabric
37 with black lace. If it's not green, I don't want it.
- 38 IRENE: You heard my daughter. She wants green.

- 1 RUBY MAE: I ain't got no fancy green cloth. I sold out last
2 week. In case you forgot, it's almost Christmas.
- 3 IRENE: In Boston, a store merchant would have anticipated
4 a shortage of green fabric at Christmas time and would
5 have taken appropriate measures to secure more. I
6 suggest you do the same.
- 7 RUBY MAE: Alrighty, I'll just duck out back and skin a
8 cactus. It's green and all prickly to boot, just like your
9 daughter.
- 10 IRENE: I beg your pardon!
- 11 RUBY MAE: Why don't you do this town a favor and go back
12 where you came from? (*Ducks behind counter.*)
- 13 IRENE: I've never heard such impertinence! I've a good
14 mind to complain to the sheriff. Come along,
15 Clementine. (*They exit left. As IRENE and CLEMENTINE*
16 *pass by the cactus, FRANK and LORALEI steal IRENE's*
17 *shawl. IRENE and CLEMENTINE scream, 'Help, help, we've*
18 *been robbed!' and run off left. FRANK and LORALEI come out*
19 *from behind cactus and sneak to Center Stage.*)
- 20 LORALEI: My, but this is a purty shawl. Ma is gonna be
21 plumb surprised.
- 22 FRANK: Yep. It shore will go nicely with her brown eyes.
- 23 LORALEI: What else have we got? (*FRANK takes beans out of*
24 *burlap bag.*)
- 25 FRANK: I'm thinking a pie would be downright dee-licious
26 with these beans.
- 27 LORALEI: Yore just full of good ideas, Frank.
- 28 FRANK: We also got this red sock. (*Holds up sock.*)
- 29 LORALEI: (*Holds nose.*) Phewy! That thing could shame a
30 skunk.
- 31 FRANK: But it's red, Ma's favorite color.
- 32 LORALEI: Shhhh! Someone's coming. (*OUTLAWS hide behind*
33 *cactus, then sneak away left. SHERIFF enters Stage Right and*
34 *stops in front of store.*)
- 35 SHERIFF: (*To audience*) Well, folks, after I calmed Miss Irene
36 and her daughter Clementine down and took a full
37 report, the bad news just kept a-comin'.
- 38 GRANNY: (*Enters banging pan with a spoon.*) I want to know

- 1 who made off with my sweet tater pie. Was it you,
2 Sheriff?
- 3 **SHERIFF:** Granny Sloan, give me that pot before you hurt
4 yourself. (*Takes pot away.*) What pie are you talking
5 about?
- 6 **GRANNY:** Don't play dumb with me, Sheriff. That pie was
7 for Christmas. I grew those sweet taters myself. I even
8 bought me some fancy brown sugar and pe-cans.
- 9 **SHERIFF:** Now, let me get this straight. You baked a pie and
10 now it's gone.
- 11 **GRANNY:** And when I catch the varmint that did it, I'm
12 gonna take his no-good hide, dunk him in some lye
13 soap, and hang him up with the warsh!
- 14 **SHERIFF:** Granny, now simmer down. How about you let
15 the law handle this? (*HERSHEL enters left and runs up to*
16 *SHERIFF and GRANNY.*)
- 17 **HERSHEL:** Sheriff, my gee-tar's missing! How am I gonna
18 woo Miss Clementine without my gee-tar? I can't sing
19 no good a capella.
- 20 **GRANNY:** Hershel, we got more important things to discuss
21 than your love life. My sweet tater pie is missing. Open
22 yer mouth!
- 23 **HERSHEL:** What for?
- 24 **GRANNY:** I wanna see if yer tongue's orange. (*HERSHEL*
25 *runs away from GRANNY. GRANNY proceeds to chase him*
26 *around the front of the stage or into the audience.*)
- 27 **SHERIFF:** Now, Granny.
- 28 **GRANNY:** (*Yells while chasing HERSHEL.*) Don't "granny" me.
29 I want my pie back!
- 30 **HERSHEL:** I didn't take your pie. Sheriff, help me!
31 (*SHERIFF catches GRANNY as she runs by him and holds her*
32 *arms behind her back as she struggles against him to get to*
33 *HERSHEL.*)
- 34 **RUBY MAE:** (*Exits store front.*) What's all this commotion?
- 35 **MABEL:** (*Comes running in, frenzied.*) Sheriff, Ruby Mae,
36 Granny, Hershel, I just stopped by to check on Miss
37 Hattieberg's sick pig, and while I was there, Noah
38 Perkins came running in and said he heard from

1 Leonard Peabody that Constance Harding nearly
 2 fainted when Mr. Martin announced ... are y'all sure
 3 you want to hear this? (*She fans herself. SHERIFF lets go of*
 4 *GRANNY. She retrieves her pot and spoon.*)

5 RUBY MAE: Hear what?

6 MABEL: (*Fans self more.*) Lord have mercy, the Corn Puddin'
 7 Gang has been spotted south of town!

8 GRANNY: The Corn who?

9 MABEL: The notorious Corn Puddin' Gang.

10 RUBY MAE: Corn Puddin'? Couldn't they come up with a
 11 better name than that?

12 GRANNY: I don't care what their name is. I want my pie
 13 back! (*Starts beating pot again. IRENE and CLEMENTINE*
 14 *enter from Stage Left.*)

15 IRENE: Sheriff, what's all this ruckus about, and why is that
 16 woman beating a pot?

17 MABEL: You haven't heard? Well, when I went to check on
 18 Miss Hattieberg's sick —

19 RUBY MAE: (*Loudly*) There's a gang in town!

20 CLEMENTINE: Is that who robbed us? A gang? Oh, Mother,
 21 I want to go back to Boston this minute!

22 HERSHEL: I'll protect you, Miss Clementine. Don't worry!

23 IRENE: (*Raises purse.*) Mr. Butterfield, I'm warning you!
 24 (*SHERIFF moves HERSHEL away from CLEMENTINE.*)

25 RUBY MAE: What are we gonna do, Sheriff?

26 SHERIFF: (*Scratches chin.*) Well, Miss Ruby, I've been a
 27 lawman for many years, and it appears to me this gang
 28 is showing some mighty strange behavior — kind of like
 29 folks do when they go Christmas shopping. Otherwise,
 30 they would've just hit the bank and stole some gold. If
 31 we want to catch 'em, we gotta think like 'em. Now, let's
 32 review the facts: they took food, they took clothing,
 33 they even took a gee-tar, but there's one thing they
 34 didn't take.

35 MABEL: What's that, Sheriff?

36 SHERIFF: Eggnog.

37 IRENE: I've got eggnog. I always serve it for Christmas.

38 CLEMENTINE: (*Bragging*) Mother makes the best eggnog. In

- 1 Boston, she won first place for her eggnog at the
2 Mayor's Christmas Festival.
- 3 RUBY MAE: Well, don't that beat all.
- 4 GRANNY: I don't care who makes the best eggnog, I just
5 want my pie back! (*Beats on pot again.*)
- 6 SHERIFF: Miss Irene, if we could use some of your eggnog
7 as bait, we might just be able to catch the Corn Puddin'
8 Gang.
- 9 IRENE: Certainly, Sheriff.
- 10 CLEMENTINE: Mother's eggnog will be perfect. I'll go fetch
11 some.
- 12 SHERIFF: Thank you, Miss Clementine. Now, folks, just go
13 about your business and keep calm. We'll catch those
14 no-good scoundrels, or my name isn't Sheriff Buck
15 Ridges. (*RUBY MAE goes back to store. IRENE and
16 CLEMENTINE exit center aisle or left. HERSHEL tries to
17 follow them, but SHERIFF pulls him back. MABEL and
18 GRANNY exit left, talking about baking. FRANK and
19 LORALEI sneak in Stage Left from behind cactus, bringing the
20 sweet tater pie and guitar.*)
- 21 FRANK: Mmmm-mmmm! This pie smells mighty good.
- 22 LORALEI: And look at this gee-tar. It comes from New York
23 City.
- 24 FRANK: Ma is gonna bust her suspenders.
- 25 LORALEI: Frank, Ma don't wear suspenders.
- 26 FRANK: She don't?
- 27 LORALEI: No, Frank, but never mind that. The important
28 thing is that we're giving Ma a good ole-fashioned
29 Christmas. Come on, let's get back to the hideout while
30 the coast is clear. (*LORALEI and FRANK sneak off Stage
31 Right to "hideout." MA enters at Stage Right, sits down with
32 knitting needles and yarn, and grows frustrated.*)
- 33 LORALEI: Howdy, Ma. Whatcha doing?
- 34 MA: (*Gruff*) What does it look like?
- 35 FRANK: (*Excited*) Ma, are you making me a pair of long johns?
- 36 MA: (*Holds up knitted piece.*) Does this look like long johns to
37 you?
- 38 FRANK: Well, now that you mention it ...

1 LORALEI: Ma, I tried to tell you, outlaws just ain't made for
 2 knitting. Why don't you put that down and see what we
 3 got you for Christmas? Now, close your eyes. Frank,
 4 give me a hand. (*LORALEI and FRANK take out stolen*
 5 *items.*)

6 LORALEI: All righty, on the count of three, you can open
 7 your eyes. One, two, three ... Merry Christmas, Ma!

8 MA: (*Surveys items.*) What in tarnation? Beans? For
 9 Christmas? And what's this? (*Picks up pie.*) You know I'm
 10 allergic to sweet taters.

11 FRANK: (*Proudly*) Well, how about this sock? You can use it
 12 for a stocking. It's your favorite color.

13 MA: (*Takes socks and smells.*) Are you trying to kill me?

14 LORALEI: Now, settle down, Ma. We also got you this purty
 15 shawl. You can wear it when —

16 MA: When what? When I rustle some cows?

17 FRANK: Well, look at this gee-tar. We know you love music.

18 MA: Frank, does anyone in this family play the gee-tar?

19 FRANK: Uh, no ...

20 MA: You young'uns don't know a thing about Christmas. I
 21 guess I have to do everything myself. Now, load up.
 22 We're going back into town.

23 LORALEI: What for, Ma?

24 MA: We're gonna take this stuff back and get ourselves a
 25 proper ham, a fruitcake, and some eggnog. Then we can
 26 have a *real* Christmas. (*OUTLAWS exit Stage Right. RUBY*
 27 *MAE enters Stage Left and sets up jug of eggnog on table out*
 28 *front with large sign reading "Eggnog Here," then exits into*
 29 *store. CODY, POLLY ANN, and DUSTY enter. They are*
 30 *playing hide-and-seek. POLLY ANN and CODY hide behind*
 31 *eggnog table.*)

32 DUSTY: (*With hands across eyes, counting*) Forty-seven,
 33 forty-eight, forty-nine, fifty. Ready or not, here I come!
 34 (*Looks around.*) Now, where can they be? (*DUSTY searches*
 35 *for kids Stage Right as OUTLAWS enter left and hide behind*
 36 *cactus with the burlap bags of stolen goods.*)

37 MA: (*Speaking to FRANK and LORALEI*) Looks like we hit the
 38 jackpot. Now when the coast is clear, follow me and act



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