

# CLUELESS AT CHRISTMAS

*by Stefanie Noonan*



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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# **Clueless at Christmas**

A Comedy/Mystery for Christmas

by Stefanie Noonan

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**PASTOR CONRAD**

Pastor of Morningside Community Church.

**JIM**

A coffee addict/deacon wanna-be with a big heart and a small brain.

**ALICE**

Church secretary new to Morningside Community Church.

**MYSTERY MIME**

Agile mime who transitions scene changes and creates mystery.

**DENNIS**

A young visitor at Morningside Community Church.

**MRS. COOPER**

Lonely widow and mother of Gary.

**GARY**

Grown son of Mrs. Cooper

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## *PRODUCTION NOTES*

**SYNOPSIS:** *Clueless at Christmas* is a seasonal Christmas play written as both a mystery and a comedy. The pastor and staff of Morningside Community Church set out to unravel the mystery of a very strange kidnapping. A ransom note creates great frenzy that humorously leads from one clue to the next. As each clue is unraveled, it becomes a springboard for the message of the gospel. In a Christmas like none other, church members come to cherish the Christ child who was born on Christmas day so many years ago.

**SET:** The main setting is a church office. A very simple set will suffice, consisting of a desk, phone, accessories and three chairs. Outside the office, a drum set is needed. For the church scene, Pastor Conrad may simply stand at the pulpit. To portray the home of Mrs. Cooper, a simple couch and coffee table will do.

**PROPS:** Coffee cup, coffee pot, three wrapped packages with note cards inside, silver spoon, flower bouquet, several boxes of Christmas decorations, cell phone, cookies, list of deacon requirements, pen, book, tissue. You will also need ten large signs for the Mystery Mime: 1. "Who Done It?" 2. "Did It." 3. "Gotta Go!" 4. "Congregation Gasps!" 5. "Yes." 6. "You're Doing Great, Alice." 7. "Mmmmm." 8. "Applause." 9. "Not Really, This Is a Play." 10. "Cookies!" An alternative to hand-held signs is to project the words with an overhead or PowerPoint projector.

**COSTUMES:** Mystery Mime is dressed in black from head to toe with a black cape over his outfit. He has the traditional whiteface mime makeup and wears a half mask around his eyes. Alice, Jim and Pastor Conrad need winter coats, hats, and gloves. Pastor Conrad should dress as clergy do in your denomination. The others may dress casually.

**MUSIC:** You will need music to bridge the scenes. The music should be mysterious when the Mystery Mime appears, and it may either be played by a pianist or recorded and played over your church's sound system. You will also need a recording of "Away in a Manger."

**RUNNING TIME:** 35 - 40 minutes

1           *(Mysterious music plays. MYSTERY MIME enters and coyly*  
 2           *slithers about the church office. JIM enters wearing winter*  
 3           *gear and carrying a partially opened Christmas package and*  
 4           *a cup of coffee. MYSTERY MIME exits quickly as JIM*  
 5           *enters. Music fades as a jittery JIM hangs up coat and*  
 6           *begins to pace the church office as he sips coffee.)*

7       **JIM:** Oh, this is not good! Not good at all! Jesus, Jesus,  
 8       **Jesus, don't leave me now, Jesus. Who would do this?**  
 9       **What am I going to tell Pastor Conrad? I'm so fired!**  
 10       **Calm down, Jim. Calm down — Pastor Conrad is going**  
 11       **to meet you here at the church any minute now. Pull it**  
 12       **together. Pull it together! Why? Why? Why did I have**  
 13       **to be so persistent? “Put me in charge this Christmas,**  
 14       **Pastor Conrad. I'll prove to you what a responsible**  
 15       **deacon I would make.” He's gonna kill me! My**  
 16       **tombstone is as good as written! “Jim Not-a-Deacon**  
 17       **Schumacher lies here. May he rest in peace.” What am**  
 18       **I saying? He's not gonna kill me. He's gonna fire me**  
 19       *(Pause)* **before he even ordains me a deacon! Jim, relax.**  
 20       **You can't fire a deacon if they're a volunteer — or can**  
 21       **you? Oh, but this is big! Maybe I'll get lucky, and he'll**  
 22       **just excommunicate me! Oh Lord, who would do this?**  
 23       **Who would do this? Who would do this? Don't leave me**  
 24       **now, Jesus. *(Hopeful)* Where's the list? Calm down, Jim**  
 25       **— just read the list again. You'll see — this incident**  
 26       **won't keep you from achieving your dream.**

27       *(JIM fumbles for the list in his pockets. He finds it and grabs a*  
 28       *pen. He perspires as he reads.)* **Here it is: *Six Biblical***  
 29       ***Requirements of a Deacon*, 1 Timothy 3:8-10.**

30       **One: “A man worthy of respect.” Sure, I'm respectable.**  
 31       **Check. *(He marks each item on the list with his pen.)***

32       **Two: “Sincere.” To a fault! Check.**

33       **Three: “Not indulging in much wine.” Never cared for**  
 34       **the stuff. Check.**

35       **Four: “Not pursuing dishonest gain.” Easy one. Check.**

1           Five: “Keeps hold of the deep truths of faith with a  
2           clear conscience.” Sure, the Bible is the Word of God.  
3           Check. So far, so good. Where was I? OK, Jim, you’re  
4           almost home free! Last one.

5           Six: “They must first be tested; and then if there is  
6           nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”  
7           Nothing against them? Oh, I’m so fired! (*Enter ALICE*  
8           *carrying a box of Christmas decorations.*) Alice! Thank God  
9           you’re here! If anyone knows anything about  
10          everything, it’s you!

11       ALICE: Thank you — I think. What’s the problem? You on  
12       Santa’s bad list?

13       JIM: I wish it were so simple. He’s gone, Alice! He’s  
14       vanished!

15       ALICE: I thought you quit drinking Frappuccinos, Jim.

16       JIM: I did. It’s a latt. (*ALICE takes JIM’S coffee cup from his*  
17       *shaking hands and sets it down.*)

18       ALICE: Breathe in through your nose and out through your  
19       mouth. In through your nose and out through your  
20       mouth. There you go. That’s better. Now tell me, Jim...  
21       (*Very slowly*) Who’s gone? Who’s vanished?

22       JIM: (*Panicked*) Jesus!

23       ALICE: Jesus is gone?

24       JIM: Yes! That’s what I’m trying to tell you!

25       ALICE: Where did Jesus go, Jim?

26       JIM: I don’t know! He’s vanished! Kidnapped!

27       ALICE: I’ve heard about this happening to people during  
28       the holiday season. (*Enter an upset PASTOR CONRAD.*)

29       PASTOR CONRAD: Where is he, Jim? He’s not there! He  
30       was there this morning. Please — not now, Lord — the  
31       Christmas service is in two weeks! Where is he, Jim?

32       JIM: I don’t know, Pastor Conrad. He’s been kidnapped!

33       ALICE: Who’s gone? Who’s vanished? Who’s been  
34       kidnapped? What is going on?

35       PASTOR CONRAD: Kidnapped? How do you know? (*JIM*

1           *hands PASTOR CONRAD a note card that he pulls out of*  
 2           *the package.)*

3     **JIM: This. They left this.** (*PASTOR CONRAD reads silently.*)

4     **PASTOR CONRAD: This is worse than I thought.**

5     **ALICE: Now come on, guys. No one's been kidnapped.**

6     **PASTOR CONRAD: It's all right here. Read it.** (*ALICE reads*  
 7           *silently.*)

8     **ALICE: A ransom note?**

9     **JIM: A gift-wrapped ransom note! And I know who gift-**  
 10           **wrapped it!**

11    **PASTOR CONRAD: Who?**

12    **JIM: The same thief who kidnapped baby Jesus!**

13    **ALICE: (*Laughing*) Baby Jesus ... from the Nativity set on**  
 14           **the front lawn? You're kidding! That's what you two are**  
 15           **freaking out about? Baby Jesus was kidnapped from**  
 16           **the manger in front of the church?**

17    **CONRAD and JIM: (*Together*) Yes!**

18    **ALICE: You're both insane!** (*ALICE and JIM rise to exit.*)

19    **PASTOR CONRAD: Where are you going?**

20    **JIM and ALICE: (*Together*) Me?**

21    **PASTOR CONRAD: Yes.** (*JIM, with his back to PASTOR*  
 22           *CONRAD, freezes in fear as ALICE responds.*)

23    **ALICE: To place an ad in the paper — “Secretary looking**  
 24           **for sane pastor and staff to work for.”**

25    **PASTOR CONRAD: You can't leave now.** (*JIM is frozen,*  
 26           *believing PASTOR CONRAD'S question is directed toward*  
 27           *him.*)

28    **ALICE and JIM: (*Together*) Why not?**

29    **PASTOR CONRAD: Because I haven't fired you.**

30    **JIM: (*Clasps his head between his hands.*) I knew it!**

31    **PASTOR CONRAD: Just kidding. You're a great secretary,**  
 32           **Alice. I'd hate to lose you. Besides, I need your help.**  
 33           **Would you please call the police?**

34    **ALICE: What do you want me to tell them?**

35    **JIM: The truth! That someone kidnapped baby Jesus!**

- 1 ALICE: This should be an interesting conversation.
- 2 JIM: "Thou shalt not steal" (*Exodus 20:15, KJV*). It's in the  
3 Bible, you know.
- 4 ALICE: Guys, let's sit down and think for a minute. I'm sure  
5 there's a logical explanation. Maybe a neighbor's dog  
6 drug him away.
- 7 JIM: And left a perfectly wrapped ransom note?
- 8 ALICE: Oh — I forgot about that.
- 9 PASTOR CONRAD: Twenty-three years of church tradition  
10 down the drain in one lousy practical joke.
- 11 ALICE: I've got it! Can't you just ... how do I delicately  
12 phrase this ... um ...
- 13 PASTOR CONRAD and JIM: (*Together*) Yes?
- 14 ALICE: Can't you just...buy another baby Jesus?
- 15 PASTOR CONRAD and JIM: (*Together*) No!
- 16 PASTOR CONRAD: It's not that easy. Old man Cooper —  
17 may God rest his soul — carved our entire Nativity set  
18 in his woodshop years and years ago. It was his gift to  
19 this church for our first Christmas service. This baby  
20 Jesus was special — one of a kind.
- 21 ALICE: I never met Mr. Cooper, but I heard he was a  
22 generous man.
- 23 JIM: Shortly before you started working here, he croaked.
- 24 PASTOR CONRAD: Passed on. This Nativity set meant so  
25 much to him. It's grown on the entire congregation over  
26 the years. Every Christmas we display it as sort of our  
27 gift to the community.
- 28 ALICE: It *is* beautiful.
- 29 JIM: Was beautiful.
- 30 PASTOR CONRAD: After our Christmas Eve service, we  
31 sing around the manger and then warm up with hot  
32 chocolate and eat Christmas cookies in the fellowship  
33 hall. It's tradition.
- 34 ALICE: Maybe no one will notice.
- 35 JIM: It's baby Jesus. Hello? Christmas? The birth of Christ?

1 PASTOR CONRAD: A P.I. — that's what we need. Alice, see  
 2 if there are any P.I.'s listed in the yellow pages, would  
 3 you?

4 JIM: He means private investigator — “P” private, “I”  
 5 investigator.

6 ALICE: Yes, Jim, I know. Are you sure about this? Couldn't  
 7 we just wait until Sunday and make an announcement  
 8 to the congregation and see if someone comes forward?

9 JIM: They're professionals! They're not coming forward.  
 10 Did you read it?

11 ALICE: Yes. (*Reading note card*) “If you want to see baby  
 12 Jesus again, this is what you must do: Search in the  
 13 manger and look for a clue.”

14 PASTOR CONRAD: I'm going to take a quick look. Be right  
 15 back. (*PASTOR CONRAD begins to exit.*)

16 JIM: It's not there. I already looked.

17 ALICE: Maybe you missed it.

18 JIM: I didn't miss it. (*Counting on fingers*) There are three  
 19 kings, two lambs, one donkey, one cow, one Joseph,  
 20 one Mary, one empty cradle and zero clues.

21 ALICE: Did you look in the straw?

22 JIM: Straw?

23 PASTOR CONRAD: Let's go! (*CONRAD and JIM exit. ALICE*  
 24 *remains and begins to decorate. She sings along as her radio*  
 25 *plays “Away in a Manger.” PASTOR CONRAD and JIM*  
 26 *enter as the song says, “But little Lord Jesus, no crying he*  
 27 *makes.” Their hats and gloves have straw sticking to them.)*

28 JIM: No crying he makes because he's not there! Neither is  
 29 the clue. (*PASTOR CONRAD and JIM sit glumly for a*  
 30 *moment.*)

31 PASTOR CONRAD: Call the police, Alice.

32 ALICE: Seriously? (*Dials phone.*) Hi. Could I get the number  
 33 for the non-emergency police, please? Thank you.  
 34 (*ALICE jots telephone number on piece of paper before*  
 35 *dialing again.*)

1     **JIM:** Non-emergency? This *is* an emergency!

2     **ALICE:** Hi, um, this is Alice Thor — *(Interrupted)* Oh! Sure,  
 3         you can transfer me to the deputy on duty. *(Pause)*  
 4         Deputy Perry, this is Alice Thornton from Morningside  
 5         Community Church. I need direction with something.  
 6         Sure. Um, I don't know how to say this exactly, but it  
 7         seems someone's ... um ... what I mean is ... OK, this is  
 8         going to sound silly, but it's the truth. I'm getting there,  
 9         Deputy. You sitting down? It seems we have a  
 10         kidnapping on our hands. No, no, not the pastor. He's  
 11         right here. He's a little rattled, but he's fine. It's our  
 12         manger scene outside. No, nobody stole the manger  
 13         scene. Not entirely, that is. Just baby Jesus. Yes,  
 14         Deputy, someone stole baby Jesus. They left a ransom  
 15         note, though. Hello? Hello? *(ALICE hangs up phone and*  
 16         *says sarcastically)* That went well. I'll be back. *(ALICE*  
 17         *puts on coat and exits. JIM again drinks coffee during*  
 18         *conversation with PASTOR CONRAD.)*

19    **PASTOR CONRAD:** Looks like we're on our own. Read it  
 20         again. Maybe we missed something.

21    **JIM:** *(Reading)* “If you want to see baby Jesus again, This is  
 22         what you must do: Search in the manger and look for  
 23         a clue.” I'm clueless, Pastor Conrad.

24    **PASTOR CONRAD:** So am I, so am I. We'll have to keep this  
 25         from Mrs. Cooper.

26    **JIM:** I read you loud and clear, Pastor Conrad. Loud and  
 27         clear.

28    **PASTOR CONRAD:** I don't think her heart could take it.

29    **JIM:** Over and out, good buddy. Over and out. *(PASTOR*  
 30         *CONRAD removes coffee cup from JIM'S hand and sets it*  
 31         *down as ALICE enters with a wrapped package.)*

32    **PASTOR CONRAD:** Where did you find that?

33    **ALICE:** It's a female thing. “We three kings of Orient are  
 34         carrying gifts we traverse afar.” One of the kings was  
 35         carrying *two* gifts.

1     **JIM:** *(Takes package.)* Let's open it! *(Rips open package.)* “If you  
2     want to see baby Jesus again, do as I say. After the  
3     service, look for an unfamiliar face.” What? An  
4     unfamiliar face? This is crazy! Now what?

5     **PASTOR CONRAD:** I guess we wait until Sunday morning.

6     **PASTOR CONRAD, JIM and ALICE:** *(Together)* Sunday  
7     morning. *(Lights fade. CONRAD, JIM and ALICE exit.)*

8

9

10

11

## SCENE #2

12

13     *(Mysterious music plays. MYSTERY MIME enters opposite side of*  
14     *stage and struts up to audience. MYSTERY MIME holds*  
15     *white poster board signs with his thoughts written on them.*  
16     *Thoughts may also be projected. MYSTERY MIME holds up*  
17     *first sign saying, “Who Done It?” Realizes grammatical error*  
18     *and holds up another sign: “Did It.” Non-verbally accuses*  
19     *several audience members before he becomes nervous as he*  
20     *hears PASTOR CONRAD enter. Holds up last sign: “Gotta*  
21     *Go!” MYSTERY MIME jumps Off-stage and hides near the*  
22     *audience. Music fades and lights rise as PASTOR CONRAD*  
23     *stands at the podium and speaks passionately to the*  
24     *congregation.)*

25     **PASTOR CONRAD:** To summarize my message today, let's  
26     never forget what Christmas would be without the birth  
27     of our Savior. On that Christmas morn so long ago, had  
28     the manger remained empty, so today our hearts would  
29     remain empty. No baby — no Savior. No Savior — no  
30     hope. So this Christmas, let your heart be full and let  
31     it rejoice in the birth of Christ. And may it be filled  
32     with thanksgiving that you may now belong to the  
33     family of God. Thank you for your faithfulness,  
34     Morningside Community Church. If you have any  
35     questions about the message today, please don't

1       hesitate to find me after the service. (*Sighs.*) As we close  
 2       our service today, I'm afraid I have a rather unsettling  
 3       announcement to share with you that was perhaps the  
 4       catalyst for my message today. Some of you may have  
 5       noticed our outdoor Nativity this morning on your way  
 6       into church. It seems someone has played a practical  
 7       joke and has stolen the baby Jesus from the manger.  
 8       (*MYSTERY MIME enters and rallies audience with sign that*  
 9       *says, "Congregation Gasps!"*) Yes, I know it's very  
 10       alarming. You'll be the first to know when this  
 11       practical joke is resolved. Be assured, my staff and I  
 12       are diligently working on this. We're leaving no stone  
 13       unturned. Speaking of staff — on a much happier  
 14       note, our church secretary, Alice Thorton, has an  
 15       announcement she'd like to make. (*ALICE enters from*  
 16       *back of church and goes to announcement microphone.*)

17   **ALICE:** (*Tapping*) **This on? Can everyone hear me?**  
 18       (*MYSTERY MIME rallies audience with sign saying "Yes."*)  
 19       **Hi, um, bear with me, I'm nervous.** (*MYSTERY MIME*  
 20       *rallies audience with sign: "You're Doing Great, Alice."*) **Do**  
 21       **you all smell that good food cooking?** (*MYSTERY MIME*  
 22       *rallies audience with sign: "Mmmmm."*) **I have to agree.**  
 23       **Just a reminder that today after the service, there will**  
 24       **be a potluck in the fellowship hall for all newcomers.**  
 25       **Any unfamiliar face is welcomed. How was that,**  
 26       **Pastor? Any unfamiliar face is welcomed.**

27   **PASTOR CONRAD:** I hope you can all stay. Alice worked  
 28       hard to coordinate this potluck last minute. Thanks,  
 29       Alice. (*MYSTERY MIME holds up sign: "Applause."*) **You**  
 30       **are all dismissed.** (*MYSTERY MIME holds up sign: "Not*  
 31       *Really, This Is a Play."*) *ALICE goes On-stage to PASTOR*  
 32       *CONRAD. MYSTERY MIME exits.*)

33   **ALICE:** Pastor Conrad! When I was making the  
 34       announcement, I saw him — in the back row, all by  
 35       himself.

- 1 PASTOR CONRAD: Baby Jesus?
- 2 ALICE: No, the unfamiliar face! You have to go talk to him.  
3 (*Points.*) Right over there. See? (*Enter DENNIS from back*  
4 *of congregation.*) Oh wait, he's coming up here!
- 5 PASTOR CONRAD: OK, Alice, I see him. (*Shakes DENNIS's*  
6 *hand.*) Good morning — nice to meet you. You are?
- 7 DENNIS: Dennis.
- 8 PASTOR CONRAD: Hi, Dennis. Do you have a last name?
- 9 DENNIS: Yes. (*Pause*)
- 10 PASTOR CONRAD: Is this your first service at  
11 Morningside?
- 12 DENNIS: Yes.
- 13 PASTOR CONRAD: Good. You look “unfamiliar” to me.
- 14 DENNIS: You're rather familiar to me.
- 15 PASTOR CONRAD: Oh, how so?
- 16 DENNIS: I've seen you many times.
- 17 PASTOR CONRAD: But this is the first service you've  
18 attended here.
- 19 DENNIS: Yes ...
- 20 PASTOR CONRAD: Good, good.
- 21 DENNIS: ... and no. Yes — this is my first service here, but  
22 I've been here many times — but only as far as the  
23 parking lot. It's the first week I've had the courage to  
24 come inside, Pastor Conrad.
- 25 PASTOR CONRAD: (*Paranoid*) How'd you know my name?
- 26 DENNIS: Um ... earlier when you preached: “Hi, I'm Pastor  
27 Conrad, pastor of Morningside Community Church.”
- 28 PASTOR CONRAD: Oh, yes. Is there something you need to  
29 talk to me about — in private?
- 30 DENNIS: Gee, um, yes — but I don't really know how to start.
- 31 PASTOR CONRAD: It's about Jesus, isn't it?
- 32 DENNIS: Well, yes, actually it is.
- 33 PASTOR CONRAD: You want to make a confession?
- 34 DENNIS: Yes, Pastor Conrad, but I don't know where to start.
- 35 PASTOR CONRAD: Well, you could start by telling me what

- 1           you have done with Jesus.
- 2   DENNIS: Thank you. I appreciate your bluntness. You see,  
3           that's why I'm here.
- 4   PASTOR CONRAD: I thought so, Dennis. I thought so. So  
5           what have you done with him, Dennis?
- 6   DENNIS: Well, uh, I haven't done anything with him. You  
7           see — I want to find him.
- 8   PASTOR CONRAD: Good, good. Find him? What do you  
9           mean, find him? This is all wrong. I'm the one who  
10          wants to find him!
- 11   DENNIS: You're the pastor, dude. You mean you haven't  
12          found Christ yet? Is there someone else I should talk  
13          to?
- 14   PASTOR CONRAD: Oh! You're here today because you're  
15          seeking salvation? Oh Dennis, that's a riot!
- 16   DENNIS: Sorry. I didn't mean to cause a riot, Pastor.
- 17   PASTOR CONRAD: I mean, praise God! Today the angels in  
18          heaven will rejoice!
- 19   DENNIS: Rejoice? Over me? What do you mean?
- 20   PASTOR CONRAD: Party! Whoop it up! Because you're a  
21          believer!
- 22   DENNIS: Whoa, that's awesome, dude! *(Pause)* You see, I'm  
23          all alone here. No family to speak of, that is. Usually I  
24          prefer it that way, but with the holidays and all, it gets  
25          a little lonely. Today when you were talking about  
26          belonging to the family of God, well, uh, I guess I've  
27          been, uh, kind of looking for somewhere to belong.  
28          Never heard anyone speak so passionately before about  
29          Jesus. It's like you made him seem real — alive. Is what  
30          you said really true? He really came here and made  
31          himself nothing so everyone could come to him?
- 32   PASTOR CONRAD: It's true, *(Pause)* dude.
- 33   DENNIS: I'm nothing, too. He still wants me?
- 34   PASTOR CONRAD: Yes, Dennis, he does. *(ALICE enters.)*
- 35   ALICE: Excuse me, Pastor. We're waiting for you in the

1 fellowship hall to say the blessing. Oh! What do we  
2 have here — an unfamiliar face?

3 PASTOR CONRAD: Leave it alone, Alice. This is Dennis.  
4 He'll be joining us today for lunch.

5 DENNIS: Lunch? But I didn't bring any...

6 PASTOR CONRAD: It's OK, there's plenty. Please join us.  
7 It'll give us a chance to talk. Today is a special day,  
8 son. Today you will find Jesus! (*PASTOR CONRAD and*  
9 *DENNIS exit. ALICE remains, calling after PASTOR*  
10 *CONRAD.*)

11 ALICE: Find Jesus? What do you mean, find Jesus? Oh,  
12 great--he forgot where he put him! What about a clue?  
13 Did he give you the next clue? (*JIM enters carrying a*  
14 *wrapped package and munching on a cookie, with several*  
15 *more cookies in his hands.*)

16 JIM: Wow, Alice, did you make these? They're delicious!  
17 (*ALICE, deep in thought, gives JIM little notice.*)

18 ALICE: Thank you. Yes, I did.

19 JIM: Did he get the next clue?

20 ALICE: Not yet. But he's about to. Did you see the  
21 “unfamiliar face” he left with?

22 JIM: No, huh-uh. Here. This is for Pastor Conrad. (*JIM*  
23 *hands ALICE the package.*)

24 ALICE: Thanks. Yes, indeed! I think we've got our man!

25 JIM: These could be blue ribbon cookies, you know.

26 ALICE: You think? Thanks, Jim. I'll give Conrad your gift.

27 JIM: Oh no, it's not from me. The woman back there handed  
28 it to me and asked me to give it to Pastor Conrad.

29 ALICE: Woman? Who was she?

30 JIM: Oh, I don't know — never seen her before. Pretty little  
31 gal. About five foot two — eyes of blue. Funny, she was  
32 just right over there.

33 JIM and ALICE: (*Together*) The unfamiliar face! (*JIM drops*  
34 *cookies as he and ALICE exit quickly. Lights fade and music*  
35 *plays.*)

**SCENE #3**

1  
2 *(MYSTERY MIME enters and sweeps across stage before noticing*  
3 *the cookies. He picks one up and takes a bite. He smiles, then*  
4 *holds up sign saying, "Cookies!" and then another saying,*  
5 *"Mmmmm!" MYSTERY MIME looks skittishly over his*  
6 *shoulder, thinking he hears a noise. He does a 360-degree*  
7 *turn and scampers off, eating cookies. Music fades and lights*  
8 *rise on PASTOR CONRAD, ALICE and JIM, who are sitting*  
9 *slumped in the church office. There is an open package on*  
10 *the desk in front of them. They are quiet momentarily before*  
11 *dialog resumes.)*

12 **PASTOR CONRAD:** *(Pacing)* **Seven days until the Christmas**  
13 **service. That's all we have — seven days. We must find**  
14 **him.**

15 **JIM:** **Impossible.**

16 **PASTOR CONRAD:** *(Matter-of-factly)* **Luke 1:37.**

17 **ALICE:** **"For nothing is impossible with God."**

18 **JIM:** **Yeah, yeah. But are you aware that there are only**  
19 **seven days in a week?** *(Counting on fingers)* **One, two,**  
20 **three, four, five, six, seven. One short week. He's been**  
21 **missing seven days now.** *(Counting on fingers)* **One, two,**  
22 **three, four, five, six, seven. Do you know that**  
23 **statistically speaking, our chances of finding him**  
24 **plummeted at the forty-eight hour mark? That was five**  
25 **days ago. One ... two ...** *(JIM starts to count on his fingers*  
26 *again, but ALICE stops him.)* **We're no closer to finding**  
27 **him. Nothing this big in the history of mankind has**  
28 **ever been resolved in seven days.**

29 **PASTOR CONRAD:** **God created the world in six days, Jim.**  
30 **That's one day less than seven.** *(Pause)* **And how about**  
31 **Joshua, chapter six?**

32 **JIM:** **Sorry, Pastor Conrad, but** *(Whispering)* **the account of**  
33 **creation is in Genesis — the first book of the Bible. It's**  
34 **not in Joshua.**

35 **ALICE:** **He's referring to the walls of Jericho. The walls of**

1           Jericho fell in one week too. God told Joshua to march  
2           around the city for six days with all of his armed men,  
3           and on the seventh day the walls of the city collapsed.

4   **JIM:** Creation. Jericho. OK, you guys got me there. Sure!  
5           Everything works out in the Bible, but we're dealing  
6           with something a little more — contemporary, shall we  
7           say? There are no baby snatchers or evil phantom  
8           poets in the Bible.

9   **PASTOR CONRAD:** Evil is a pretty strong word.

10 **JIM:** You don't find it evil to give clues that lead nowhere?  
11       *(Reading clue)* "Now in the cradle you will find what  
12       you've been seeking all the time." What a farce! I  
13       checked the cradle at the Nativity, and there's nothing  
14       there. Go ahead, I know you two don't believe me.  
15       Take a look for yourselves. *(ALICE and PASTOR*  
16       *CONRAD shrug him off.)* No, I insist. Go take a gander.  
17       That cradle is *(Spells)* E-M-P-T-Y.

18 **PASTOR CONRAD:** That's OK, Jim. We believe you.

19 **JIM:** Oh no, Pastor Conrad — I insist! Go on, Alice. Check  
20       it out. Nothing in the straw. No extra gifts in the three  
21       kings' hands. Go on, you two — skedaddle.

22 **ALICE:** It's OK, Jim. I believe you.

23 **JIM:** You do?

24 **ALICE:** I already checked.

25 **PASTOR CONRAD:** Me too.

26 **JIM:** I knew it! Now I know I'm not the brightest light on  
27       the tree, but I know an empty cradle when I see it.  
28       *(Stirring coffee with spoon)* At first I thought the cat was  
29       the clue, but you should have seen how quick that  
30       thing took off when I came around the corner. Must  
31       have startled it.

32 **PASTOR CONRAD and ALICE:** *(Ad lib)* Cat? What cat?  
33       Where? etc.

34 **JIM:** The orange fluffy one that ran away. Come on! I'm  
35       sure it was just a stray. A cat is no more a clue than

- 1           this here spoon is a clue.
- 2   **PASTOR CONRAD:** Spoon? Where'd you get that?
- 3   **JIM:** (*Hesitantly*) It fell ... off ... the ... cat's ... collar ... (*In a*  
4           *rush*) when it ran out of the cradle?
- 5   **ALICE:** There was a cat in the cradle with a silver spoon,  
6           and you didn't think it could possibly be our next clue?
- 7   **JIM:** It's not a true silver — looks a little tarnished to me.
- 8   **ALICE:** (*To PASTOR CONRAD*) What do you think it means?
- 9   **JIM:** It's a song. (*Sings.*) “The cat's in the cradle with a silver  
10          spoon,” da, da, da, da, da, da —
- 11   **ALICE:** Yes, Jim. We know.
- 12   **PASTOR CONRAD:** Well, in the song, the father is too busy  
13          to spend time with his son. Then the son grows up to  
14          be just like his father.
- 15   **JIM:** Too busy, busy, busy!
- 16   **PASTOR CONRAD:** Jim! You're brilliant!
- 17   **JIM:** (*Looks around himself.*) Me? Why, thank you, Pastor  
18          Conrad.
- 19   **PASTOR CONRAD:** The clue is about being too busy.  
20          Christmas is the busiest time of the year. There are  
21          gifts to buy, parties to attend, cards to mail, cookies to  
22          bake ...
- 23   **JIM:** Busy, busy, busy.
- 24   **ALICE:** That's right. We're to slow down and smell the  
25          coffee.
- 26   **JIM:** Mmmm — coffee! Don't mind if I do. (*JIM begins to refill*  
27          *his cup when MYSTERY MIME enters with package. Only*  
28          *JIM sees him.*)
- 29   **JIM:** I'll get that while you decipher the clue. You two are  
30          too busy, busy, busy! (*MYSTERY MIME hands JIM a*  
31          *package and exits dramatically.*)
- 32   **ALICE:** A missing baby Jesus. A cat with a silver spoon.  
33          The clue must be about not forgetting baby Jesus in the  
34          midst of our Christmas bustle. I'm sure that's it.
- 35   **JIM:** Special delivery.

1 ALICE: It's early for UPS. They don't come until four  
2 o'clock.

3 JIM: Oh, this was no Mr. Brown. This was Mr. Black.

4 ALICE and PASTOR CONRAD: *(Together)* Black?

5 JIM: What? You guys still don't trust me? I might be a  
6 teensy bit colorblind, but I know brown from black,  
7 and he was most certainly dressed in black. Even the  
8 veily thingy over his head.

9 ALICE: A mask? He was wearing a mask?

10 PASTOR CONRAD: Give that to me! *(He tears open package*  
11 *and pulls out clue. He reads it silently as ALICE and JIM*  
12 *also read silently over his shoulder.)*

13 JIM: "I am a poor boy too. I have no gift to bring that's fit  
14 to give the King."

15 PASTOR CONRAD: "Shall I play for you?" The last line of  
16 the clue. You forgot "Shall I play for you?" *(PASTOR*  
17 *CONRAD paces as ALICE sits, thinking, at her desk. She*  
18 *begins to tap her fingers to the beat of "pa rum pum pum*  
19 *pum.")*

20 JIM: Alice, you're ruining my concentration. Stop tapping  
21 your fingers — pa rum pum pum pum, pa rum pum  
22 pum pum! I can't think!

23 ALICE: That's it! "I am a poor boy too, pa rum pum pum  
24 pum. I have no gift to bring, pa rum pum pum pum.  
25 That's fit to give the King, pa rum pa pum pum. Shall  
26 I play for you? Pa rum pum pum pum."

27 PASTOR CONRAD, ALICE and JIM: *(Together)* "On my  
28 drum!"

29 PASTOR CONRAD: That's it — the church drum. The next  
30 clue must be on the drum set! *(They all run out of the*  
31 *office and go to the drum set, where they look but find*  
32 *nothing.)*

33 JIM: Told you the phantom poet is evil.

34 ALICE: I'm stumped. There's no clue. What drum are they  
35 talking about?

- 1 PASTOR CONRAD: Maybe it's not about a drum at all. The  
2 little drummer had no gift to bring.
- 3 ALICE: Yes, it's a metaphor.
- 4 JIM: A meta for who? What's a meta?
- 5 PASTOR CONRAD: *We're* supposed to give a gift to the  
6 King.
- 7 JIM: What king?
- 8 PASTOR CONRAD: Jesus, the King.
- 9 JIM: What gift? Where are we going to find myrrh this close  
10 to Christmas?
- 11 ALICE: Not that kind of gift. A gift like in the song. The  
12 little drummer boy had no gift to bring except for the  
13 beat of his drum. A gift of ourselves.
- 14 PASTOR CONRAD: Yes! Using the gifts and abilities God  
15 has given us ... for others. "The King will reply, 'I tell  
16 you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of  
17 these brothers of mine, you did for me.' " Matthew  
18 25:40.
- 19 JIM: It's so vague. It could mean anything goodwillishnessy  
20 at all.
- 21 PASTOR CONRAD: Yes! It could.
- 22 JIM: Like being more patient at the coffee shop when they  
23 dollop it with whipped cream when I specifically say, "No  
24 whipped cream, please." Or going to your mother-in-law's  
25 for Christmas dinner when it's the last place you'd rather  
26 be.
- 27 PASTOR CONRAD: Yes, Jim.
- 28 ALICE: Or as simple as loving your neighbor or being kind to  
29 a stranger.
- 30 PASTOR CONRAD: Yes.
- 31 JIM: Speaking more gently to my wife, remembering the  
32 widows and orphans. Where does it end? There's  
33 Operation Christmas child, food donations, the Salvation  
34 Army, visiting the elderly or those who are lonely. It's  
35 way too vague, I say. It needs to be simplified.

- 1 PASTOR CONRAD: It *is* simple: doing something for  
2 others — something we are good at.
- 3 ALICE: I love to bake.
- 4 PASTOR CONRAD: I love people.
- 5 JIM: The only thing I'm kind of good at doesn't really fit  
6 this goodwillishnessy thingy.
- 7 ALICE: Anything fits, Jim.
- 8 JIM: I like to ... take showers. (*Pause*) I mean, because I like  
9 to sing.
- 10 PASTOR CONRAD: I didn't know that.
- 11 JIM: That's because I'm too afraid to perform in church.
- 12 ALICE: Do you like to sing Christmas carols?
- 13 JIM: I could go caroling. Yes! We could all go. First we  
14 could all go get coffee and — and I'll be kind to the  
15 barista no matter how badly she fouls up. (*Thinks*) I've  
16 got it! The coffee shop in the mall. Get it — mall?
- 17 PASTOR CONRAD and ALICE: (*Together*) No.
- 18 JIM: What's at the mall, guys?
- 19 ALICE: One hundred and forty stores?
- 20 JIM: The little old man with the bell? Ding, ding? Come  
21 on!
- 22 ALICE: Santa?
- 23 JIM: No! The Salvation Army bell ringer! We'll drop some  
24 loose change in the bucket and find someone who looks  
25 lonely and then I'll say hello to a stranger. Better yet,  
26 we'll find an orphan or a widow and — and — we'll  
27 sing Christmas carols to them! Wait, wait, axe that. I  
28 don't know any orphans. (*Pause*) A widow will have to  
29 do. Axe that too. Don't know any widows. Coffee  
30 sounds real good, though.
- 31 PASTOR CONRAD: Have you thought of Mrs. Cooper?
- 32 JIM: Mrs. Cooper? Mrs. Cooper likes coffee?
- 33 PASTOR CONRAD: She's a widow. I haven't seen her at a  
34 service for a while. It's not like her, either. She's always  
35 been so faithful.

1 ALICE: Maybe she's lonely. It's her first Christmas alone  
2 and all.

3 PASTOR CONRAD: Yes. I've been meaning to check in on  
4 her. I have to gently break it to her about the missing  
5 baby Jesus. It won't be easy. Her husband cherished  
6 that Nativity set.

7 JIM: Do you think she'd mind some rookie carolers?

8 ALICE: I'm sure she'd love it! I'll bring her some cookies,  
9 too.

10 JIM: Hey, I'll be the rookie — and you'll bring the cookies!  
11 *(Looks about.)* How'd you like that, Phantom Poet?! This  
12 goodwillishness is grand! Just grandiose! *(JIM puts arms*  
13 *around PASTOR CONRAD and ALICE, and they exit*  
14 *laughing as lights fade.)*

15

16

17 *SCENE #4*

18

19 *(Mysterious music plays. MYSTERY MIME enters and goes to*  
20 *drum. He finds the package that the others didn't find. It's*  
21 *in a small box between the cymbals. He pulls it out and*  
22 *shakes his head, miming that he can't believe they couldn't*  
23 *find it. He tiptoes comically Off-stage. MRS. COOPER lies*  
24 *napping on couch with book on lap. Boxes of Christmas*  
25 *decorations lie on her coffee table and floor. Mysterious music*  
26 *fades as PASTOR CONRAD, JIM and ALICE go to the*  
27 *outside of MRS. COOPER'S window where they begin to sing*  
28 *as lights rise.)*

29 PASTOR CONRAD, ALICE and JIM: *(Singing)* “Go tell it on  
30 the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it  
31 on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.”

32 JIM: *(Singing solo)* “He made me a watchman upon the city  
33 wall. And if I am a Christian, I am the least of all, yeah,  
34 yeah, yeah.”

35 PASTOR CONRAD, ALICE and JIM: *(Repeat Chorus)*

- 1     **MRS. COOPER:** *(Slowly rises and peeks out her window. She*  
2             *grins from ear to ear and joins in on the last line of the*  
3             *chorus as she opens the door.)* **Pastor Conrad, Jim, Alice**  
4             **— that was beautiful! Bless you.**
- 5     **PASTOR CONRAD:** How are you, Edith?
- 6     **MRS. COOPER:** I'm doing OK, all things considered.
- 7     **PASTOR CONRAD:** Good, good.
- 8     **MRS. COOPER:** Please — come in. *(All enter.)*
- 9     **ALICE:** I brought some cookies.
- 10    **MRS. COOPER:** Thank you, Alice.
- 11    **ALICE:** Where should I put them?
- 12    **MRS. COOPER:** *(Clears away boxes of Christmas decorations.)*  
13            **Sorry about the mess. I wasn't expecting company. I've**  
14            **been meaning to get to these, but somehow it just**  
15            **doesn't feel like Christmas this year.**
- 16    **JIM:** Would you mind if I —
- 17    **MRS. COOPER:** Help yourself, Jim. *(JIM takes a cookie from*  
18            *the plate.)*
- 19    **MRS. COOPER:** Last time I saw you, Jim, you were talking  
20            **about becoming a deacon at Morningside.**
- 21    **PASTOR CONRAD:** He will be next month.
- 22    **JIM:** I will? Thank you, Pastor Conrad! *(Hugs him.)*
- 23    **PASTOR CONRAD:** I've been thinking about you a lot lately  
24            **— Mr. Cooper, too. We put his Nativity set up again.**
- 25    **MRS. COOPER:** You did? Oh, it's a beauty.
- 26    **PASTOR CONRAD:** Yes, it is.
- 27    **MRS. COOPER:** Built it with love, he did. Thanks. It always  
28            **meant so much to him.**
- 29    **PASTOR CONRAD:** He was a very special man.
- 30    **MRS. COOPER:** Yes, he was. Of course he never thought so,  
31            **but he was special indeed.**
- 32    **ALICE:** What are you doing for Christmas dinner, Mrs.  
33            **Cooper?**
- 34    **MRS. COOPER:** Oh, I haven't given it much thought.
- 35    **ALICE:** Frank and I would love to have you, if you would

- 1           like to come. We'll pick you up.
- 2   **MRS. COOPER:** That's awfully sweet and all, but I think I'll
- 3           pass. I'm not very good company right now.
- 4   **JIM:** (*Whispering*) Pastor Conrad, you forgot to tell her about
- 5           someone stealing baby Jesus from the nativity.
- 6   **PASTOR CONRAD:** I didn't forget.
- 7   **MRS. COOPER:** What? What happened?
- 8   **JIM:** Remember to be gentle, Pastor — her heart thing. We
- 9           don't want any incidents, if you know what I mean.
- 10          Over and out?
- 11   **PASTOR CONRAD:** (*Irritated*) Over and out, Jim. (*To MRS.*
- 12          *COOPER*) Have you heard from your boys lately?
- 13   **MRS. COOPER:** Gary I have, but not David. I'm sure they'll
- 14          be calling me on Christmas day. They always do. Gary
- 15          was just here for Thanksgiving break.
- 16   **PASTOR CONRAD:** Sorry I missed him.
- 17   **MRS. COOPER:** He's going to Colorado for Christmas.
- 18          Going to spend Christmas with his girlfriend's family.
- 19          He met her at college. Real nice girl.
- 20   **PASTOR CONRAD:** Well, you raised two fine sons, Alice.
- 21          You should be proud.
- 22   **MRS. COOPER:** Oh yes, I certainly am!
- 23   **JIM:** (*In a stage whisper, to PASTOR CONRAD*) Phantom poet.
- 24          Empty cradle. Silver spoon.
- 25   **MRS. COOPER:** What's that, Jim? (*ALICE quickly stuffs*
- 26          *another cookie in JIM's mouth to shut him up.*) Well, you all
- 27          have certainly brightened a lonely lady's day. (*GARY*
- 28          *and MYSTERY MIME enter. MYSTERY MIME acts as*
- 29          *though he and GARY are best buddies. GARY carries*
- 30          *flowers.*)
- 31   **GARY:** Hi, Mom.
- 32   **MRS. COOPER:** Gary! What are you ... (*Hugs him.*)
- 33   **GARY:** Merry Christmas. These are for you. (*GARY hands*
- 34          *flowers to MRS. COOPER before greeting PASTOR*
- 35          *CONRAD.*)

1     **GARY:** Pastor Conrad! Hello. Good to see you  
2     **PASTOR CONRAD:** Merry Christmas, Gary.  
3     **GARY:** Hello, Jim.  
4     **ALICE:** Hi. I'm Alice.  
5     **MRS. COOPER:** (*Interrupts*) What happened to Colorado? Is  
6         **everything OK with you and Chloe?**  
7     **GARY:** Everything is great with Chloe. It's just ... my other  
8         **special lady isn't in Colorado. She's here.**  
9     **MRS. COOPER:** Oh Gary, you didn't have to...  
10    **GARY:** I wanted to, Mom.  
11    **MRS. COOPER:** Oh — forgive me for being rude to your  
12         **friend!**  
13    **GARY:** Friend? Oh, him? I just met him. He was hanging  
14         **around outside.**  
15    **MRS. COOPER:** What's your name, son?  
16    **GARY:** He doesn't speak.  
17    **MRS. COOPER:** Oh! Why not?  
18    **GARY:** He's a mime.  
19    **MRS. COOPER:** A mime? But he must have a name.  
20    **GARY:** Sure, it's ... (*MYSTERY MIME whispers into GARY'S*  
21         *ear.*) **Seems he prefers to be called Mystery Mime since**  
22         **his character is written into the play to create mystery.**  
23         (*MYSTERY MIME flexes proudly in his cape and then*  
24         *whispers into GARY'S ear. GARY looks confused.*  
25         *MYSTERY MIME continues trying to communicate with*  
26         *GARY by dramatically miming, as though he were an opera*  
27         *singer. Finally GARY gets it.)* **Oh! He prefers we call him,**  
28         (*Singing in a low operatic voice*) **Mys - ter - y Mime!**  
29         (*MYSTERY MIME nods head in approval and continues to*  
30         *strut.*) **It's what directors do with actors when they're**  
31         **not exactly leading man material.** (*MYSTERY MIME*  
32         *looks hurt and then mimes that he's pulling a dagger from*  
33         *his heart. He slowly keels over and plays to the audience as*  
34         *he spurs them on to applaud his act. After his dramatic*  
35         *death, he looks up and motions for GARY to come closer so*



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