

YOU CAN'T CANCEL CHRISTMAS!

by Andrea N. Burton



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You Can't Cancel Christmas!

A children's comedy for Christmas

by Andrea N. Burton

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Nate/Shepherd 1

Madi/Innkeeper

Mom

Tristan/Joseph

Noah/Shepherd 2

Nick/Drummer

Emily/Mary

Josie/Angel

Assorted Shepherds and Sheep

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis: “Dude, your mom has totally lost it,” Noah tells Nate. She’s so busy fretting about Christmas dinner preparations that she forgets about helping the kids practice for the church pageant. The dog eats the pumpkin pie she baked for Grandma, and she’s sick of having her hands inside a cold, dead bird — but her blood pressure really rises when she discovers Nate has taken an early peek at his Christmas present. That’s the last straw — Mom cancels Christmas! Banished from the kitchen, the kids are left on their own to prepare the pageant. King James it’s not — but funny it is! Convolved meanings and thoroughly modernized expressions are wrapped around fun snippets of well-known songs with new lyrics. When Mom unwittingly stumbles onto the scene of the performance, the beautifully simple truth of Jesus’ birth emerges from the humor and pushes her worries of domestic duties aside. Try as you might, you can’t cancel Christmas!

Cast: You will need four boys, three girls, one woman, and extras. The extras may play shepherds or sheep, plus all the children may help sing the carols and the “Baa Baa Black Sheep” song. Nate, Tristan, and Noah are around the same age. The three of them are older than Emily, Josie, Madi, and Nick, who are also close in age. Tristan/Joseph and Madi/Innkeeper have short solos, so bear this in mind when you do the casting.

Costumes: Casual dress for Part 1. A fun addition might be to suggest through costume that Mom is pregnant, but it is by no means necessary. You will need the requisite Christmas pageant costumes and sandals for Part 2, specifically a white robe, wings, and halo for the Angel, a blue robe with white headpiece for Mary, and simple tunic robes in earth tones with headpieces (tied with a cord around the head) for everyone else (except Mom, of course).

Music: The congregation sings two carols. “O Little Town of Bethlehem” and “Joy to the World” are suggested, but they may be replaced with any other appropriate carols. There are also three short numbers with original lyrics set to the tune of well-known children’s songs: “Rock-a-Bye, Baby,”

“Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” and “Baa Baa Black Sheep.”

Props:

Chocolate bar or cookie

Assorted toy boxes and other presents

Suitcase or box (With the above items inside)

Beef jerky

Drum

Baby doll

Set: Part 1 requires a chair.

Part 2 requires a large cardboard box that is painted to look like an inn with a door cut out in the middle.

Part 1

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(NATE and MADI enter Stage Right.)

NATE: *(To MADI, as she looks around nervously)* **Come on, you gotta see this.**

MADI: I don't think this is a good idea.

NATE: Aren't you just a little curious?

MADI: No.

NATE: Come on, you don't want to see if Mom and Dad got you that stupid doll you've been whining about?

MADI: No.

NATE: *(Sarcastically)* But Mom, she's so pretty. But Daddy, she wets herself ... Pleeease!

MADI: That's it. I'm out. If you want to spoil your Christmas — fine. But leave me out of it. *(MADI stomps out of the room.)*

NATE: Fine. I already know what I'm getting. I was just giving you a heads up. *(NATE pulls a large suitcase/box out from behind a chair and opens it. He looks inside, lifting out some of the toys.)* **Yes! This is going to be the best Christmas ever.** *(Takes out a chocolate treat and starts eating it.)*

MOM: *(From Off-stage)* **Nathan, Noah and Tristan are here.** *(NATE throws the chocolate inside and quickly closes the suitcase/box and puts it back behind the chair. He throws himself into a chair just as MOM enters with NOAH and TRISTAN.)*

MOM: **Nathan Eugene, you get your feet off that chair! Honestly, I just cleaned in here. Not that you could tell by looking. I said take your feet off my furniture! You wouldn't do that at someone else's house, would you?** *(TRISTAN and NOAH stifle a laugh.)* **Well, would you?**

NATE: *(Mumbling)* No.

MOM: What was that?

NATE: *(Defensively)* No.

MOM: You had better not — that's all I'm gonna say. And you don't do it in my house, either. Especially when your grandmother will be here in — oh my goodness — in less

1 than three hours! What was I doing?
 2 **NATE:** Mom, it's Grandma. You can chill out a little.
 3 **MOM:** Shhh! *(Pause)* Did you hear something? *(Speaking very*
 4 *quickly now)* Oh, what on earth is your sister up to now?
 5 Honestly, how am I supposed to get anything done when
 6 I have to keep cleaning up after the two of you? OK, you
 7 boys stay in this room. Do not make a move. Do not make
 8 a sound. Do not make a mess that you are not fully
 9 prepared to clean up — because no one leaves until you
 10 do. I will be back. Do you understand?
 11 **NATE:** Yeah. *(MOM looks at him a moment.)* Yes, Mother.
 12 **MOM:** Thank you, you're a good boy. *(Turns to leave.)* *Madison*
 13 *Elizabeth!*
 14 **NOAH:** Dude, your mom is losing it.
 15 **TRISTAN:** Seriously, she's got some issues.
 16 **NATE:** Tell me about it. I've had to clean my room twelve times
 17 in the last two days, and for the last week we've only eaten
 18 fast food and those little snack-size boxes of cereal. She's
 19 so freaked out we'll use the fridge or mess up the kitchen.
 20 **NOAH:** I wish my mom would make me eat fast food.
 21 **TRISTAN:** Yeah, the junk food thing is pretty cool when you
 22 think about it.
 23 **NATE:** I guess you have to live it to get it. It's just weird. Hey
 24 guys, wanna see what I'm getting for Christmas?
 25 **NOAH and TRISTAN:** *(Overlapping)* Yeah! Sure. You found your
 26 presents? You are so lucky! *(MADI, JOSIE, and EMILY*
 27 *enter.)*
 28 **NATE:** What are you doing here? I thought you didn't want to
 29 get caught up here.
 30 **JOSIE:** Your mom kicked us out of the kitchen and told us to
 31 come up here with you guys. Apparently she wants to
 32 keep us kids quarantined.
 33 **NATE:** Gotcha. What were you doing that got you kicked out
 34 of the kitchen?
 35 **MADI:** Washing our hands.

- 1 NATE: Oh, please ...
- 2 EMILY: Now what do we do?
- 3 TRISTAN: What do you mean?
- 4 JOSIE: We're supposed to be practicing for the Christmas
5 pageant.
- 6 NOAH: *(To MADI and NATE)* I thought your mom was in charge
7 of that. *(MADI and NATE turn and give NOAH a "look.")*
- 8 TRISTAN: Back up. What are you talking about?
- 9 JOSIE: The Christmas pageant at church. Our grade always
10 does the Christmas pageant.
- 11 EMILY: It's a very big responsibility.
- 12 MADI: But with Grandma coming for turkey, I think Mom
13 forgot. I think Mom has forgotten a whole lot this
14 Christmas.
- 15 MOM: *(Enters with NICK.)* Madi, this young man was knocking
16 on our door — for you. Don't forget, we have to finish
17 getting ready for Grandma. I just took the turkey out of
18 the oven and put the casseroles in. When they are done, it
19 will be time for you all to say good-bye to your friends. Do
20 you understand? Show me you understand. *(Everyone nods.)*
21 Good. *(She smiles and retreats.)*
- 22 NOAH: *(To NATE)* OK, it's official, dude. Your mom has totally
23 lost it.
- 24 NICK: No kidding. She's scary.
- 25 MADI: Be nice, everybody. Bandit ate the pumpkin chiffon pie
26 she made for Grandma.
- 27 NATE: *(Pumps his fist.)* Yessss! I hate pumpkin chiffon pie. It
28 makes my skin crawl just thinking about it.
- 29 MADI: It's a little rich for my taste, too, but that was Mom's
30 Christmas present to Grandma. She worked really hard on
31 it.
- 32 NATE: All I can say is easy come, easy go.
- 33 MOM: *(Entering)* Sorry to bother you. I just need to grab some
34 of my table linens. Nathan, could you please hand me that
35 box behind the chair?

1 **NATE:** What?

2 **MOM:** The box. There. Thank you. *(She takes the box/suitcase and*
3 *exits.)*

4 **NATE:** *(Shakes head with hand to forehead)* Oh, no ...

5 **TRISTAN:** What's up?

6 **NATE:** It's been nice knowing you. I'm gonna die now.

7 **MOM:** *(From Offstage)* Nathan Eugene Alexander Ericson!
8 *(Entering)* You are in so much trouble! And you, Miss
9 Madison Elizabeth Ericson, did you know about this?

10 **MADI:** About what?

11 **MOM:** Did you know your brother got into the Christmas
12 presents?

13 **NATE:** Hey, why do you think it was me? It could have been
14 Madi.

15 **MOM:** Because your sister hates chocolate! Why? Why would
16 you two do this? You just ruined your Christmas. How
17 does that make you feel? Do you know how hard I have
18 worked to make this a good Christmas? For two weeks I
19 have had my hands down toilets; inside cold, dead birds;
20 I've restrung cranberries and popcorn; baked a beautiful
21 pumpkin chiffon pie which the dog ate — but oh, well. Do
22 you know why? Because it's Christmas. You just wanted
23 presents? Fine. Here. *(She dumps the presents out of the box*
24 *or suitcase.)* Christmas is canceled.

25 **NATE:** But Mom, I didn't — I didn't mean to.

26 **MADI:** Mom, I'm sorry.

27 **MOM:** No. I've had it. *(Points to MADI and NATE.)* You, you —
28 your rooms. Everybody else — home. *(Exits.)*

29 **EMILY:** Wait!

30 **JOSIE:** Mrs. Ericson, please!

31 **MADI:** Mom —

32 **EMILY:** Now what?

33 **JOSIE:** If your mom isn't going to help us, what are we going
34 to do?

35 **MADI:** We'll figure something out.

1 NATE: You just have to talk about Jesus.
2 EMILY: What do you know about Christmas pageants?
3 NATE: Well, I've been in one or two of them in my time.
4 MADI: Yes, you have, and now you're going to do one more.
5 NATE: What? No way. I'm not playing dress up with a bunch
6 of girls.
7 NICK: Hey!
8 MADI: Oh, yes you are. You got us into this mess. *(Everyone*
9 *looks at NATE.)*
10 NOAH: She's got a point. Besides, how bad can it be?
11 NATE: Dude, it's my sister.
12 TRISTAN: Dude, it's Christmas.
13 NATE: Fine. Madi, go and get a Bible.
14 EMILY: Why?
15 NATE: Because Christmas is about Jesus. If you want to find
16 out about Jesus ...
17 ALL: *(Together)* You have to read the Bible.
18 NATE: OK, this is what we're going to do ... *(Lights fade and*
19 *KIDS go change clothes. Audience is left to sing "O Little*
20 *Town of Bethlehem" or another Christmas favorite.)*

24
25 *(The chair has been removed and replaced with a large*
26 *cardboard box Upstage Left. It is decorated to look like a*
27 *stable/inn. INNKEEPER is behind it. The ANGEL appears*
28 *Stage Right.)*
29 **ANGEL:** Once upon a time, many years ago ...
30 **JOSEPH:** *(From Off-stage)* Two thousand years ago now.
31 **ANGEL:** All righty then, two thousand years ago, a decree
32 went out from Caesar Augustus that all of the world
33 should be taxed. To tax *all* the people, they had to know
34 how many people there were. So Caesar made all the
35 people go back to their home towns. A man named

- 1 **Joseph** (*JOSEPH and MARY enter and walk forward from*
2 *the back of the sanctuary*) **and his betrothed, Mary, were**
3 **among those who had a journey to make.**
- 4 **MARY:** Are we there yet?
- 5 **ANGEL:** And, oh yeah, Mary was pregnant.
- 6 **MARY:** Are we even close?
- 7 **JOSEPH:** I can't tell. Things have changed a lot since the last
8 time I was down this road.
- 9 **MARY:** My back is killing me.
- 10 **JOSEPH:** I think you may have mentioned that. Can you be
11 patient just a little bit longer? (*She takes a deep breath and*
12 *nods.*)
- 13 **ANGEL:** Mary was a blessed woman, because she was
14 carrying a special baby.
- 15 **MARY:** Can you slow down a little? Precious cargo here.
16 Remember what the angel said?
- 17 **ANGEL and MARY:** (*Together*) Thou shall bring forth a son
18 and call him Jesus. He shall be called the Son of the
19 Highest, and of his kingdom there shall be no end
20 (*Author's paraphrase from Luke 1:31-33*). (*They all pause and*
21 *smile.*)
- 22 **JOSEPH:** I know. The angel spoke to me, too. Look, we're
23 almost there. (*Points.*) See?
- 24 **MARY:** Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.
- 25 **JOSEPH:** Are you OK? You don't look so good. (*MARY looks*
26 *offended.*) I mean, you look nice, just ... not quite
27 yourself.
- 28 **MARY:** Can we please find an inn or something? I really
29 need to lie down.
- 30 **ANGEL:** Blessed or not, Mary was *great* with child. Now
31 Bethlehem was one of those towns where once you grow
32 up and move out, they don't really expect you to come
33 back. So it didn't take long for all the inns around town
34 to fill up. And with Mary in her condition, uh, our couple
35 didn't make the best time. In fact, they were pretty slow.

- 1 Happily, as with all things, God had a plan.
- 2 JOSEPH: I'll be right back.
- 3 MARY: Please find a place for us to stay.
- 4 JOSEPH: (*Knocks on the door of the inn. INNKEEPER emerges.*)
- 5 Excuse me, we've come a very long way. My betrothed
- 6 is great with child. May we have a room for the night?
- 7 INNKEEPER: No. (*Tries to shut the door, but JOSEPH blocks it.*)
- 8 JOSEPH: (*Sings to the tune of "Rock-a-Bye, Baby."*)
- 9 The baby is coming, coming real soon.
- 10 The sky is all dark and there is no moon.
- 11 The wind is quite crisp, it blows left and right.
- 12 Oh, please don't make Mary stay out all night.
- 13 MARY: (*Approaches door.*) Please, good innkeeper.
- 14 INNKEEPER: Wow! You look like you're about to pop!
- 15 MARY: I feel like I'm about to pop. Kind innkeeper, do you
- 16 have a room?
- 17 INNKEEPER: Not a one.
- 18 MARY: Please. I just want to lie down. Please!
- 19 INNKEEPER: I'd give you my room if I could, but I've even
- 20 rented that.
- 21 JOSEPH: The cellar?
- 22 INNKEEPER: Don't have one.
- 23 JOSEPH: Kitchen?
- 24 INNKEEPER: Taken.
- 25 MARY: Come on, guys, think outside the box.
- 26 INNKEEPER: (*Sings to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."*)
- 27 I know I should let you in.
- 28 Soon contractions will begin.
- 29 You can't stay on donkey's back
- 30 Though in rooms I have a lack.
- 31 I know I should let you in,
- 32 Soon contractions will begin.
- 33 INNKEEPER: I've got it! The stable. It's not glamorous, but
- 34 it's warm. With a few blankets and some straw, I bet we
- 35 could make it pretty comfy!

- 1 JOSEPH: Comfy is good.
- 2 MARY: Can comfy be fast? I really think I should lie down.
- 3 JOSEPH: Well?
- 4 INNKEEPER: Right this way. (*INNKEEPER leads MARY and*
5 *JOSEPH behind the inn.*)
- 6 ANGEL: In the meantime, while Mary was preparing to give
7 birth to our incarnate Lord, some shepherds were
8 watching their flocks by night. (*SHEPHERDS enter.*)
- 9 SHEPHERD 1: So you'll need to round up the sheep and take
10 them to water.
- 11 SHEPHERD 2: But I just fed them.
- 12 SHEPHERD 1: Now they need water.
- 13 SHEPHERD 2: I just need a little break. I've been chasing
14 these crazy animals all day.
- 15 SHEPHERD 1: Yes, and I will remind you that these sheep
16 were your idea. I told you they would be work. You said
17 you would take care of them.
- 18 SHEPHERD 2: I take it back. I don't want to be a shepherd
19 anymore.
- 20 SHEPHERD 1: No, I don't think so. You wanted the sheep.
21 You got the sheep. You take care of the sheep!
- 22 SHEPHERD 2: I thought they'd be more fun.
- 23 SHEPHERD 1: And they are fun — in their own kind of way.
- 24 SHEPHERD 2: So you say.
- 25 SHEPHERD 1: Tell you what, go and get the sheep, take
26 them to drink, and when you get back, we'll have some
27 of that beef jerky.
- 28 SHEPHERD 2: Can I have some now?
- 29 SHEPHERD 1: Get on with you. (*Exits.*)
- 30 MOM: (*Bursting into the sanctuary*) Nathan Eugene, you are in
31 so much trouble! At this point, you'll be lucky if I let you
32 out of your room to go to college. What were you
33 thinking?
- 34 NATE: (*Breaking character*) Mom?
- 35 MOM: Obviously.



Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

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P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

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