

A Christmas Fruitcake Cast List

4 Males, 5 Females, 2 M/F, and 4-6 Extras

HERALD (M) he who announces the arrival of important people at Court; he who loves fruitcake.

JESTER (M/F) the professional jokester of the court.

TOWN CRIER (M/F) the professional announcement-maker of the village.

QUEEN MUM (F) an over-protective, overbearing mother who acts out most at family gatherings.

KING BALTHAZAR (M) a benevolent ruler who married a commoner, but he's still a bit elitist.

QUEEN GERTRUDE (F) a commoner turned queen who is just fine with the life of the rich.

PRINCESS EUGENIE (F) sister to King Balthazar and not much of a cook.

PRINCE EUSTACE (M) brother to King Balthazar, definitely a middle child.

LADY TIFFANY (F) a guest of Prince Eustace.

PRINCE EDWARD (M) brother to King Balthazar, the black sheep of the family, figuratively and literally.

GJERTA (F) your serving wench for this evening.

COURTIERS (M/F) can be four different people, one person, or members of the court.

2-4 SERVERS (NON-SPEAKING) (M/F) no speaking lines, but you get to lug fruitcake around all night: lots of room for physical humor.

Sample Pages

GJERTA: *(In the tone of a burned-out waitress. She has waited on too many tables where the children were unrestrained and given crackers to play with.)* Hello, my name is Gjerta, and I'll be your serving wench this evening. Would you like to hear our specials for tonight?

KING: No, we just want—

GJERTA: Our special today is whole wheat flour mixed with unshelled walnuts and stale fruit,

doused with kerosene and baked at a temperature of 250 degrees for eighteen days.

KING: You don't mean . . .

EUGENIE: My famous fruitcake!

HERALD: *(Enters with fanfare.)* Announcing that ambrosia of the gods, that manna from heaven . . . the fruitcake!

KING: Herald, you are only supposed to announce guests, not courses of a meal.

HERALD: But, your majesty, fruitcake is, in a way, a guest of special importance.

EUGENIE: *(Meeting the eyes of HERALD.)* A guest? I've never had anyone speak of my fruitcake in this way.

HERALD: *(Looking at EUGENIE with a kindling of desire.)* A guest that spreads warmth and love.

EUSTACE: *(Aside.)* An unwanted guest that stays for years and years.

KING: *(Resigned to his fate.)* Oh, very well. Bring on the fruitcake.

(GJERTA signals off-stage, and two SERVANTS enter carrying a tray between them. On the tray sits the fruitcake. It is obviously very heavy. They lift it off of the tray and set it onto the Royal Table in front of the king. He gets his knife and attempts to cut it. He makes stabbing motions more and more with no effect.)

KING: Well. I believe this needs the teensiest bit of softening. Servants, take this back to the kitchen and soak it in brandy.

(The SERVANTS are visibly disappointed to have to lift the fruitcake again, but they do so and stagger back to the kitchen. GJERTA starts to follow them.)

KING: Uh, serving wench . . .

GJERTA: My name is Gjerta, and I'll be your serving wench this evening.

KING: Quite right. Until the fruitcake is softened, bring us some soup. *(She starts to exit. EUSTACE stops her.)*

EUSTACE: Oh, and serving wench . . .

GJERTA: My name is Gjerta, and I'll be—

EUSTACE: Serving wench, could you also bring some crackers with the soup?

GJERTA: *(Pauses as if she wants to say something, but just glares instead. As she exits, she grumbles aloud.)* Would you like a high chair with those crackers? I am soooooo tired of cleaning up cracker crumbs. And what will my tip be after all of this? Same as always: crumbly.

*(Lights down on Royal Table. **The first course is served.** When guests have had some time to eat their soup, the action begins again. JESTER, TOWN CRIER and TIFFANY meet up on stage.)*

JESTER: Good evening, dear lady. Ah, have they just served the fruitcake?

TIFFANY: Excuse me?

TOWN CRIER: The fruitcake. Normally, guests find reasons to leave about this time.

TIFFANY: Oh, I'm not leaving. I've made a terrible blunder, and I'm trying to find a way to fix it.

JESTER: A blunder? I specialize in blunders. Perhaps, I can be of assistance.

TIFFANY: Well, I was told not to bring any gifts with me. But when I arrived, the queen mother presented me with a very expensive gift. And I brought her nothing!

JESTER: Ah, so you blundered your way through by saying you actually did have a gift after all?

TIFFANY: Exactly.

JESTER: Well, let's see what we can find.

TOWN CRIER: I have a gift-wrapped box that should work. *(JESTER and TIFFANY stare at him.)* I keep a stockpile just for such occasions.

TIFFANY: How big is it?

TOWN CRIER: Oh about this size. *(He pulls out a wrapped shoe box.)*

JESTER: You really are prepared!

TIFFANY: I'll take it. But what will I do for a gift?

JESTER: Trust me, the Town Crier and I have been in this position more times than I can count. Let the experts handle this. *(Thinks aloud.)* Now, what would be a good present for the queen mum?

TOWN CRIER: *(Thinks a moment then looks at the audience.)* Ah, I have it. *(TOWN CRIER whispers in JESTER's ear. TOWN CRIER hands box to TIFFANY while he goes with JESTER out into the audience. They should look for audience members, preferably a male with VERY large feet.)* Excuse us, good

sir, but I am trying to help a young lady out of a sticky situation. And may I remind you that this is the season of good will and generosity?

JESTER: Do you, perhaps, have anything you could donate to a needy cause? *(Picks up the man's foot and examines the shoe.)* Your feet appear to be the same size as those of the Queen Mum. Perhaps you would donate your fine shoes? *(Improvises with the answer. You could make some puns like, "Don't be a heel," or "If the shoe fits, wear it," or "The sole of Christmas," but convince him to donate his shoes.)* You appear to be of the wealthy class; I'm sure you have others at home.

TOWN CRIER: *(Reaches into a bag he carries.)* Perhaps he'll need something to keep his feet warm until he gets home. *(Pulls out some very crazy-looking slippers. See production notes.)*

JESTER: *(Laughing.)* Where in the realm did you get those?

TOWN CRIER: It's no laughing matter. They were a Christmas present from my sister in Cornwall. She made them herself.

JESTER: Really. Well, if she ever comes to visit, you can honestly say that they were sacrificed for a higher good. *(Takes them and exchanges them for the audience member's shoes. They return to TIFFANY.)*

TIFFANY: *(Looking at the shoes.)* Do you think they will fit the Queen Mum?

JESTER: Oh, they might pinch a bit, but then, everything the Queen Mum wears pinches a bit. I think she'll like them. Into the box they go. *(He puts them in the box.)*

TOWN CRIER: Well, I'm off. I've still got to find a gift for the local magistrate. *(Looks once again at the audience.)* Wonder if anyone here has a nice headsman's axe? Oh, on second thought, I'll check with the cooks.

JESTER: Headsman's axe? Are you on good terms with the magistrate?

TOWN CRIER: Not exactly.

JESTER: Then why on earth would you get him a headsman's axe?

TOWN CRIER: Well, I sort of . . . broke . . . the old headsman's axe.

JESTER: I don't think the cooks will have a headsman's axe, but you could ask them if they have some extra fruitcake. I'm sure they can help you out.

TOWN CRIER: Interesting. It's fruitcake that got me into this mess. *(TOWN CRIER exits.)*

JESTER: Now, good lady, let's rejoin the party.

(Lights up on Royal Table.)

TIFFANY: *(Handing the gift box to the QUEEN MUM.)* For you, dowager.

MUM: Dowager?

TIFFANY: It's a term of respect and endearment.

JESTER: It also rhymes with howitzer.

MUM: How thoughtful of you, dear. I hope you didn't go to any trouble.

TIFFANY: *(Looks to JESTER.)* Uh, no trouble at all. I went with a larger present as something befitting of your stature.

JESTER: This present is big like you.

MUM: *(Pauses, not sure how to take this.)* Oh. *(She starts to examine the present. She holds it closer and smells it, and then holds it at arm's length.)* It has an interesting aroma.

JESTER: Also like you.

TIFFANY: Well, this gift is personalized.

JESTER: By an outstanding villager. The workmanship of this gift was quite a feat.

TIFFANY: I can understand if the gift you got me came straight off the shelf. After all, you hardly know me.

MUM: Oh, that gift? Why, that was merely a stocking stuffer. Your Christmas present is in my room. Please excuse me while I go get it. *(She exits, taking the present with her.)* . . .