

Christmas Past and a Present Cast List

4 Male, 3 Female, 1 M/F, and Extras M/F

CHESTER/JESTER (M) a butler who knows how to keep a secret; doubles as Jester, who equally knows how to keep secrets. Must be ready to dance his heart out.

PRINCESS ABIGAIL/PRINCESS (F) a somewhat spoiled young princess, doubles as the Princess in the Royal Court of long ago.

LADY MARGARET/QUEEN MUM (F) Abigail's eccentric grandmother; doubles as Mum in the Royal Court of long ago.

KING (M) king of this realm, wonders what to buy the daughter who has everything.

QUEEN (F) queen of this realm, also wonders what to buy the daughter who has everything.

LORD (or LADY) HOLLYBERRY (M/F) a noble attending the feast.

HERALD/HAROLD (M) official announcement-maker, must know how to play trumpet or horn.

PAGE/PIZZA DELIVERY MAN/BLUE PUPPET (M) servant in the castle/delivers pizzas for no tips/ as Blue Puppet, he should be good at physical humor.

EXTRAS (M/F) Courtiers, Red Puppet, Guards, Servants, Pages, etc.

Sample Pages

This play starts in modern times and transform to Renaissance era.

FANFARE AND WELCOME

(When the guests have been seated, a second BRASS FANFARE will signal all entertainers to clear the hall. ABIGAIL, dressed in modern pajamas & carrying Mr. Peepers, sneaks in and rummages under the Christmas tree. CHESTER, dressed as a modern butler, enters.)

CHESTER: Ah, the Yuletide season! A time of good will, good cheer, and miracles! A time for hope; a time for . . . *(Hears the rummaging and looks closer at the tree.)* Princess Abigail? *(Looks around.)* What are you doing?

ABIGAIL: *(Stands and drops Mr. Peepers. Guiltily.)* Previews. Of the presents.

CHESTER: Excuse me? You're peeking at your presents?

ABIGAIL: I just want to know what I've got.

CHESTER: Well, I can help you out there.

ABIGAIL: Really?

CHESTER: *(Cups hands over face and breathes heavily, in Darth Vader voice.)* Princess, I know what you got for Christmas!

ABIGAIL: How?

CHESTER: *(Vader breathing, still in Vader voice.)* I felt your presents.

ABIGAIL: You have?

CHESTER: Of course not. It was a joke. Get it?

ABIGAIL: I see you've gone to the dark side. Now, let me just feel some of my presents—

CHESTER: Oh, no you don't. I am not going to have your father angry at me. Besides, Christmas is tomorrow.

ABIGAIL: But I don't think I'm going to get what I want.

CHESTER: *(Laughs.)* Really? You're the daughter of the King.

ABIGAIL: I want the Wee Box 300.

CHESTER: *(Pauses.)* But didn't you get that last year?

ABIGAIL: That was the Wee Box 299 . . . and ½. The Wee Box 300 has improved graphics, voice recognition, and tongue clips.

CHESTER: *(Puts his hand over his mouth as though she just said "tongue piercing.")* I don't want to know what the tongue clips are for. Now, off to bed with you!

MARGARET: *(Off-stage.)* You may take the extra blanket up to my room. And, I think I'd like a decent spot of tea before I retire, with two twists of a lemon and a teaspoon of honey. And just a smidgen of brandy.

ABIGAIL: *(To CHESTER.)* Is that Grandmother Margaret?

CHESTER: Of course, it is. She visits every Christmas.

ABIGAIL: She's a bit . . . odd. She brings me strange gifts that don't involve any electricity. And she always tugs my ear if I don't appear to be listening to her.

CHESTER: That's not so bad—

ABIGAIL: And she's the one who disconnected my Wee Box 298. *(Beat.)* With a hammer.

CHESTER: Well, she is opinionated.

ABIGAIL: Don't let her know that I'm here, all right? *(Hides behind Christmas tree.)*

CHESTER: Your secret is safe with me! Grand Mum's the word. *(Looks side-stage.)* In fact, I shall make myself scarce before she catches me in a verbal head-lock. *(Enter MARGARET in modern attire as CHESTER starts to exit.)*

MARGARET: Chester! Just the man I was looking for.

CHESTER: *(Stops in his tracks and turns.)* Why, Lady Margaret. What a . . . pleasure to see you again. I couldn't sleep. I was practicing some wrestling moves *(Tries to exit.)*

MARGARET: Wrestling moves?

CHESTER: Yes, like slipping out of a head-lock.

MARGARET: You have interesting nocturnal pastimes, Chester.

CHESTER: *(Laughs weakly.)* Escape moves are an important skill. *(Starts to exit.)*

MARGARET: Now that you say it, it reminds me of a story. *(CHESTER stops.)* Now stop me if you've heard this one.

CHESTER: Stop. *(Tries to exit.)*

MARGARET: You haven't heard the story yet. *(CHESTER stops and turns to her.)* It was Black Friday, and I was held in a heaving horde of hostile holiday shoppers. My only chance to escape was through a move called the Oily Eel. It was taught to me when I was a child. Which is a story in and of itself. I was on Kawa Karpo, the most sacred mountain in Tibet. There, half-starving, I stumbled onto the monastery of the Limber Lizards, masters of escape. I was about Abigail's age—

CHESTER: *(To himself.)* Of course! Abigail!

MARGARET: *(Tugs at CHESTER's ear.)* Chester, are you listening to me?

CHESTER: *(Rubs his ear.)* Of course, Lady Margaret. I just remembered that Princess Abigail is having trouble sleeping. Isn't that right, Princess? *(Looks toward Christmas tree.)*

ABIGAIL: *(Comes out of hiding and glares at CHESTER.)* Grandmother! How . . . pleasant to see you. *(Aside to CHESTER.)* Traitor. *(CHESTER smiles and makes a quick exit.)*

MARGARET: Were you peeking at your presents early?

ABIGAIL: Me? No . . . I was just—

MARGARET: I have just the thing that will help you out. We'll call it an early Christmas gift.

ABIGAIL: *(Excitedly.)* Really? *(MARGARET pulls an old book out of her bag and hands it to ABIGAIL. ABIGAIL turns it over carefully and examines it suspiciously.)* What is it?

MARGARET: *(Aghast.)* It's called a book!

ABIGAIL: A book? What do I do with this?

MARGARET: You read it. *(Blank stare from ABIGAIL.)* It has pictures, too. *(Blank stare from ABIGAIL.)* It tells you a story? *(Blank stare from ABIGAIL.)*

ABIGAIL: Okaaay. *(Taps the cover of the book like a touchscreen and waits.)* I guess the battery needs to be recharged.

MARGARET: There is no battery. *(Takes the book and turns it right side up.)* You hold it this way. The pages turn like this. *(Blank stare from ABIGAIL.)*

ABIGAIL: So, where do the pictures come up? Are they projected on the wall? Where's the wand? And where's the tongue clip?

MARGARET: *(Hand to mouth as though she just said "tongue piercing.")* Tongue clip? I don't even want to know what that is for. This is a book. You read it in order to get the story.

ABIGAIL: How will I see what's going on? *(MARGARET strongly taps ABIGAIL's forehead.)* How will I hear the conversations? *(MARGARET strongly taps ABIGAIL's forehead.)* How will I know what the people look like? *(MARGARET strongly taps ABIGAIL's forehead.)* Ouch. Does reading always give you a headache?

MARGARET: It is called the world of imagination. Let your mind create the scenes. *(Blank stare from ABIGAIL.)* Let's give it a try, shall we? *(Opens the book and begins to read.)* "Once upon a time, there was a great King who lived in a great castle, and he was giving a great feast."

(Enter HERALD, in Renaissance garb, who stands on Mr. Peepers and plays BRASS FANFARE.)

ABIGAIL: Grandmother?

MARGARET: Yes?

ABIGAIL: There's a strange man in this room. And he's blowing a trumpet. And he's standing on Mr. Peepers.

HERALD: *(Clears his throat.)* Ready the meal and heat the wassail!
Bring forth the meat and finest of ale!
Blow the clarion! Singers appear!
The King and his Court are drawing near! *(Exits.)*

After the toasts and welcome . . .

MARGARET: You see, Abigail? Isn't imagination wonderful?

ABIGAIL: There was a strange man in this room. And Mr. Peepers' nose is inside out.

MARGARET: All right, why don't you give it a try? Let's see, where was I? "It was early in the evening, and the first course was being served." *(Nothing happens.)* Abigail?

ABIGAIL: What?

MARGARET: Use your imagination. We need the Herald.

ABIGAIL: But he scares me.

MARGARET: Well, imagine him in a way that doesn't scare you. Now, then. "It was early in the evening, and the first course was being served."

HAROLD: *(HAROLD enters opposite side of stage. He wears baggy jeans—drooping to show boxers is very optional. He wears a t-shirt and a backwards baseball cap. He plays the theme from the Flintstones on the trumpet.)* Dude! Some more munchies are coming. *(Exits.)*

MARGARET: Abigail?

ABIGAIL: Yes?

MARGARET: Who was that?

ABIGAIL: That was Harold. He goes to my school. He's a third-year freshman.

(SERVANTS bring out Doritos to the Royal Table.)

MARGARET: Doritos? Abigail, this is supposed to be a feast!

ABIGAIL: Oh, yeah! Right. A feast. *(SERVANTS enter with two-liter bottles of Mountain Dew.)*

MARGARET: Mountain Dew? Is this how you eat all of the time?

ABIGAIL: It's the way I imagine I'd eat. *(Beat.)* And it sure beats smidgeon-less wassail.

MARGARET: *(Frustrated.)* I think I had better take care of the first course for everyone. *(SERVANTS exit with Doritos and Mountain Dew.)* And I will provide the entertainment.

(Background music begins. The first course is served. SERVERS bring out traditional food to guests. Dim lights on stage.)

After the main course, Abigail & Margaret appear in Renaissance garb . . .

ABIGAIL: So, why am I dressed like this?

MARGARET: I am imagining us at the feast. Now, let's get into the story proper. "Once upon a time, there was a great King who lived in a great castle, and he was giving a great feast."

(HERALD enters, stands on stuffed animal, and plays BRASS FANFARE again.)

ABIGAIL: Grandmother! You already read that! Strange man blows horn and stands on Mr. Peepers and the feast begins.

MARGARET: Right. "The great feast continued into the night."

ABIGAIL: And the strange man gets off of Mr. Peepers.

MARGARET: Of course. *(HERALD exits.)* Now, because it was close to Christmas, the Queen Mum was visiting. The King's daughter, who was supposed to be in bed, was spying on the guests at the feast. *(The ROYAL COURT freezes.)*

ABIGAIL: Why did everyone stop?

MARGARET: We need the Queen Mum and the King's daughter.

ABIGAIL: What are they like?

MARGARET: Well, they can be any way you imagine them to be.

ABIGAIL: Well, I imagine the Queen Mum to be a bit odd and irritating. *(PAGE enters and escorts MARGARET to the Royal Table.)*

MARGARET/MUM: *(Glares at ABIGAIL.)* Odd and irritating, you say?

ABIGAIL: Oh, but the King's daughter was very special indeed. Beautiful, intellectual, and killer at gaming.

(PAGE escorts ABIGAIL to stage, where she hides behind Christmas tree. PAGE places MR. PEEPERS in an empty chair at the Royal Table. From here, MARGARET becomes MUM and ABIGAIL becomes PRINCESS.)

MUM: *(To PRINCESS.)* You're bringing Mr. Peepers to the feast?

PRINCESS: Don't worry, he's a light eater. Do they have a vegetarian menu here?

MUM: Of course. Shall I continue? *(PRINCESS nods.)* Now in this castle, there was a certain Jester.

PRINCESS: What was he like?

MUM: Well, a bit of a dull fellow. He mostly just puns.

PRINCESS: Can he keep a secret?

MUM: No.

PRINCESS: Oh, that's easy.

(Enter CHESTER, now dressed as JESTER, looking around aimlessly.)

MUM: No, dear, I said "Jester" not "Chester."

PRINCESS: That's what I imagine the Jester to look like.

JESTER: *(Waving to PRINCESS.)* Hello, Princess. Still focused on your gifts? At least you've got presents of mind. *(Laughs at his own joke.)*

PRINCESS: He sounds like our Chester, too.

MUM: Quite. . . . Now on this night of celebration, the King was in a quandary. He simply did not know what to get the Princess for Christmas. *(ROYAL COURT unfreezes.)*

KING: (*Thinking aloud.*) I just do not know what to get the Princess for Christmas.

QUEEN: If you ask me, she has enough. I fear she has lost her focus on what is important at Christmas.

PRINCESS: I have not! (*ALL are startled.*)

KING: What was that?

MUM: A squirrel. (*ALL look at MUM.*) It came in with the Christmas tree.

QUEEN: I heard words.

MUM: It is a magic squirrel. A magic talking squirrel that rudely interrupts.

QUEEN: How . . . interesting.

KING: Back to the problem at hand: I still do not know what to get the Princess.

JESTER: I know, sire. Why don't you get her the Wee Box 300?

MUM: (*Turns to PRINCESS. COURT freezes.*) Wee Box 300?

PRINCESS: I was just helping the story with my imagination.

MUM: They had no "Wee Boxes" at this time!

PRINCESS: Really? What did they do for fun?

MUM: They danced; they had feasts; they went on quests. There was no electricity for video games.

PRINCESS: Oh. So that's why they called it the Dark Ages. (*COURT unfreezes.*)