

# ***Christmas at the Dingles***

A short play by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Edgar Dingle   Fiftyish or so lower class  
Englishman. He needs a shave,  
wears old black shoes, white socks,  
black pants, a tee shirt with  
holes, and suspenders.

Pruny Dingle   Early fifties lower class English  
woman. She wears a beat-up old  
house dress, black clunky shoes  
with her hose rolled down to her  
ankles. Her hair is a mess.

Santa Claus   A typical Santa Claus dressed in  
normal Santa Claus clothing. It  
would be great if he could be a  
very large man.

Setting:   The Dingle's rundown, basement  
apartment in a lower class area of  
London. There is a table stage  
right with a small Christmas tree  
and some other Christmas  
paraphernalia, and three chairs  
center stage. A TV is down center  
with it's back to the audience. A  
large bag filled with who-knows-  
what sits on the floor next to the  
table.

Time:   The present, evening.

At Rise:   The lights come up slowly. Edgar,  
smoking a cheap stubby cigar, sits  
on the stage right chair, Santa the  
middle chair, and the stage left  
chair is open. The two are  
watching the telly.

EDGAR

Hit 'em you bastard. Me wife can hit harder than that, you stupid, rotten, good-for-nothing jerk.

(To Santa)

See what he's doing wrong? First, he's jabbing too low. He has to keep the left up. See what I mean? Pick it up, pick it up you moron.

(Edgar crosses to a table and picks up a stuffed Christmas angel. He beats Santa with it as he cheers on the boxer. When Santa gets hit, he flinches only slightly.)

What kind of a boxer are you? Swing, damn it, swing.

(Pause) Bloody idiot, get up off the mat. Oh, for Christ sake. Five, six, get up you nit, nine.

(Edgar begins to shake Santa.)

He's up, he's up. Go to a neutral corner, you bastard. The bell, saved by the fucking bell.

(Edgar is hugging Santa as Pruny enters carrying two large mugs.)

PRUNY

Edgar, dear, I've brought you a toddy.

EDGAR

I don't want a bloody toddy, Pruny. Now leave us alone until the fight is over. I been waiting for a month to see this fight, and you're not going to stop me. Understand?

(Pruny crosses to the table and puts the toddies down.)

PRUNY

Edgar, it's Christmas eve. One shouldn't watch such violent things at Christmas time.

(She crosses to Santa and sits on his lap.)

Christmas is a time for love, caring, and understanding. A time when people should come together in harmony and peace.

PRUNY (CONT'D)

(Kisses Santa, then stands and screams at Edgar.)

So, I'm turning the damn thing off.

(Pruny crosses to the TV and Edgar intercepts her. Santa jumps up and comes between them as if to stop the fight.)

EDGAR

You turn the damn thing off and I'll throw you out the damn window, you ugly...

(Edgar, stopped by Santa's menacing glare, turns back to the TV.)

Round three, twelve more to go and then I'll join you in your little Christmas celebration, my lovely.

(Edgar and Santa cross to their chairs. Santa tries to sit in Edgar's chair and there is a brief scuffle, then both settle into their original positions. Edgar whistles loudly.)

Kill 'em, you ninny.

(Pruny crosses to Santa.)

PRUNY

If that's the way you want it, Edgar, then I'll celebrate by myself.

(Pruny grabs Santa by the hand and pulls him up. Pruny starts singing "Here Comes Santa Claus" as the two dance to the song. They dance in front of the TV, blocking it from Edgar's view. When he moves to the right, they move to the right. When he moves to the left, they move to the left. Santa is definitely into it.)

EDGAR

Would you stop it! I can't see a bloody thing.

(Pruny breaks away from Santa in tears and sits on the stage left chair. Santa sits in the middle chair and tries to comfort her.)

PRUNY

You don't care about me. All you ever care about is your stupid boxing matches.

(Edgar doesn't move to comfort Pruny, as she continues to wail. Santa grabs Edgar by the shirt and pulls him close, as if to say " Well, man, do something.")

EDGAR

Oh, Pruny, I hate it when you cry, you know that. Come on, please, stop.

(More crying from Pruny. Santa lets go of Edgar and begins to comfort Pruny.)

It's Christmas and it's time we had some fun.  
(Edgar tries to grab Pruny from Santa's arms but Santa won't let her go. Pruny continues to wail.)

Come on, love, cheer up. I'll turn it off, if it will make you happy.

(Edgar crosses to the TV and turns it off. Pruny continues to snuffle as Edgar crosses back to his chair. The two are hugging and being hugged by Santa.)

Come on, let's have a song.  
(Pruny is reluctant.)

Pruny, please?

(Slowly, Edgar starts singing "Rudolph the Red Nose Raindeer." Soon, the two are singing and being rocked by Santa. Pruny and Edgar get up and start dancing and are joined by Santa. Santa sings the part that starts: "Rudolph with your nose..." When the song comes to an end, Santa continues singing by himself. Edgar and Pruny watch him briefly.)

EDGAR

Shut up, you fat tub of lard.

(Santa rushes to his chair in tears. Pruny rushes up and hugs Santa and tries to comfort him.)

PRUNY

There, there, come on, it's all right. Edgar's just a mean, nasty, person who doesn't deserve anything for Christmas. Now let's see that big Christmas smile of yours.

(Santa smiles and the two hug.)

There, isn't that better?

EDGAR

You never treat me that way.

PRUNY

Because you don't deserve it. And besides, that wasn't very nice. He carried his big bag filled with wonderful gifts for us all the way from the North Pole. You should be ashamed of yourself.

EDGAR

Gifts! Gifts! Every year the bastard shows up at our door with his gifts. A bunch of crap, if you ask me. Never once have I gotten something I wanted, something I could use. Always the same, crap.

PRUNY

Edgar, it's Christmas eve. Santa deserves a bit of care. He's been working so hard to please everyone.

EDGAR

Oh, yes, he certainly has been hard at work. Let's hear about all of the nice things he's brought you through the years.

PRUNY

Well, there was...

(Pruny stops, thinking.)

EDGAR

Yes?

PRUNY

Well, I...

EDGAR

Come on, come on.

PRUNY

(To Santa)

I, I...you big tub of lard, claiming to be this great gift giver. Big fraud if you ask me.

(Santa slowly rises and  
crosses to the big bag.)

Ever since I was a little girl I've wanted something special  
for Christmas, and not once have you come through.

(Santa is crying as he crosses  
back to Pruny. He hands her  
the bag.)

Yes, beat a path to the door. The quicker the better. I  
don't want to see your fat, ugly face around here again,  
understand?

(Santa crosses to the door and  
exits.)

EDGAR

I think we were a bit hard on the old guy.

(The sound of sleigh bells  
jingling and then Santa  
calling out his Raindeer.  
Then they are off.)

PRUNY

Look how big and full the bag is. Never seen it stuffed  
with so many gifts. And all for us. We're a couple of  
jerks, that's what we are. Sending 'im off like that  
without so much as a thank you. Just think how we're gonna  
feel when we open those presents and their all from Saks,  
Neiman-Marcus, Tiffany's.

(Edgar rushes to the door and  
opens it.)

EDGAR

We're sorry! Come back, we're sorry.  
(No reply. He crosses back to  
Pruny)

Bet he'll never come back after this.

PRUNY

Yeah. Suppose we should open 'em.



(Edgar reaches into the bag  
and pulls out a present and  
hands it to Pruny.)

PRUNY

Oh, I'm so nervous. What do you think it could be, Edgar?

EDGAR

How do I know.

PRUNY

Ohhh, it feels special.

EDGAR

Just open the damn thing.

(Pruny opens the gift. It's  
an old iron with no cord.)

PRUNY

Oh, no. Oh, no, not again.

EDGAR

Now, Pruny, calm down.

(Edgar pulls out another gift  
and unwraps it. )

EDGAR

It better be good, tubby.

(It's an old sock with a  
large round object inside.  
He pulls out a large rock.)

All right, it's even.

PRUNY

He's doing it again. Every damn year we fall for his song  
and dance and he gives it to us up the butthole.

(Pruny opens another gift and  
it is a bag filled with  
dirt.)

It's a bag filled with dirt.

(Edgar rushes back to the door  
and opens it.)

EDGAR

(yelling)

Don't ever darken our doorstep again, you plump, portent of  
Christmas despair.

(Edgar drags himself back to  
Pruny.)

PRUNY

Fine Christmas this turned out to be.

(Pruny starts to sniffle.)

EDGAR

There, there me sweet. Let's just make ourselves comfy and  
forget about that old bastard.

(Edgar and Pruny sit on the  
chairs and cuddle.)

PRUNY

This is much better.

(We hear the sound of carolers  
singing "Come All Ye  
Faithful.")

PRUNY

Listen Edgar, the sounds of beautiful young voices caroling  
outside our door.

(Edgar and Pruny get up, cross  
to the door, and open it.)

EDGAR and PRUNY

(in unison)

Keep your bloody holes quiet. We're trying to enjoy our  
Christmas.

(The singing stops.)

EDGAR

That's better.

(Edgar and Pruny return to the  
chairs and continue to  
cuddle.)

PRUNY

Merry Christmas, Edgar.

EDGAR

You too, me love.

Lights to black.

The End