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THE MIRACLE OF THE POINSETTIAS



**A NATIVITY PLAY WITH MUSIC
SET IN MEXICO**

**Written by
LYNN
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THE MIRACLE OF THE POINSETTIA

CAST LIST

Maria Gonzales (a poor peasant girl)

Ernesto Gonzales (her brother)

Mrs Gonzales (their mother)

The children of the village:-

Girls –

Damita (her name means Little Princess and she is the wealthiest girl in the village), Pilar, Alva, Tia, Rosario and Yolanda.

Boys –

Francisco, Enrique, Rafael and Joachim

Grandma Gonzales

Mr Rodriguez

Mrs Rodriguez

The Angel (*who visits in disguise and also acts as a Narrator*)

Two non-speaking angels

17 speaking parts – non-speaking (singing) can be added.

THE MIRACLE OF THE POINSETTIA

SCENE 1.

The action takes place in front of the Gonzales' humble house. It is an adobe shack with a straw thatched roof. (See Production Notes at the end of the play) Either side of the doorway are three plants in pots (six in total). They are poinsettia plants but have no red bracts – they are just completely green. Other scenery can be added. (See Production Notes at the end of the play.) All of the cast, except The Angel, appear on stage to sing the opening song.

SONG 1 - TO JEREZ WE WILL GO

O if you wish to Jerez we will go

O if you wish to Jerez we will go

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

That lady who knows how to shake her toe

O if you wish, let's go to Zapotlan

O if you wish, let's go to Zapotlan

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

To see that lady

That lady who kneads up her bread so fine

(Everyone goes into various groups and mimes talking. Mrs Gonzales starts brushing the floor outside her house; the boys crouch down and play a game of jacks; Grandma Gonzales talks to Mr and Mrs Rodriguez; Maria Gonzales sits alone looking sad. The Angel walks on stage. He is wearing a poncho and a sombrero, like a simple shepherd and he addresses the audience.)

ANGEL

Welcome to the small village of Poca Fe. The name means “Little Faith” and that is why this village is in trouble. The people here have begun to lose their faith in God. There are too many other things to occupy their minds, like who has the most money, or whose husband has the most horses, or whose child is the cleverest. So that is where I come in. I’m an angel. I know, I know – I don’t look much like an angel – but you can’t move around amongst ordinary people wearing long white robes and showing off your wings and halo, can you? No, I have come here, at this very special time of the year, to see if I can help the people of Poco Fe find the true meaning of Christmas. Today is the start of the festival called the Posadas. Nine days before Christmas Eve, a procession of people pretending to be Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary looking for lodgings in Bethlehem go from house to house. Each night they will go to three different houses and one of those houses will host the prayers and the celebrations afterwards.

There are only nine houses in this village, so every house here will have to host a party for the next nine nights. This family (*he points to the Gonzales’ house*) is the poorest in the village. Mrs Gonzales is a widow with two children – Maria and Ernesto. She also takes care of her elderly mother. They have been told that this year they have to host the most important party, the one on the twenty fourth of December – Holy Night. How are they going to do that? They have no money for extra food and sweets for all the village children. Maria and

Ernesto don't even have a pair of shoes each. The whole Gonzales family are worried.

(Maria goes to the side of the stage and puts her hands together in prayer.)

MARIA

Holy Virgin, hear my prayer. Please help my family to find the money to host the celebrations on Holy Night. Otherwise we will be disgraced and the Christmas will be ruined for the rest of the village. Please help us. Please help us.

(She goes and sits back down, looking sad)

ANGEL *(Still speaking to the audience)*

Well who could resist a cry for help like that? Not me! That's why I was sent, to help Maria Gonzales and her family and to bring the people of Poco Fe back to the true meaning of Christmas. But I'll let you see for yourselves how bad things have got.

(The angel leaves and the mime of the rest of the characters becomes conversation.)

FRANCISCO

Five! I win!

ENRIQUE

You always win. You've got bigger hands than the rest of us!

ERNESTO

No he hasn't. I've got bigger hands.

(The boys all start comparing their hands)

TIA

So, Damita, do you have a new dress for the Posadas?

DAMITA

Of course! This year my mama has bought me a dress from Mexico City. It's made of white Spanish lace and it has a red satin sash around the waist.

(All the girls make admiring noises)

ROSARIO

So what will you do with last year's dress, Damita?

DAMITA

I shall give it to someone.

YOLANDA

Oh can I have it? Pleeeeease!

PILAR

No, me!

TIA

I deserve it more than you!

DAMITA

Girls! Girls! I shall give the dress to whoever is my *best* friend tomorrow.

ALVA

I'll give you all my sweets from the party on the 24th December if you give me your dress!

DAMITA

Huh! The party supposed to be held at the Gonzales' house. You don't imagine there will be any sweets, do you? We'll be lucky if we get bread and water!

(All the girls giggle and Maria, who overhears the last remark, covers her face with her hands. Ernesto has overheard as well and he jumps up from his game.)

ERNESTO

I heard that! You take that back, you spoilt girl!

DAMITA

Every word I said was true. Your family is so poor that you can't even afford shoes. How are you going to host the Holy Night party?

ERNESTO

You just wait and see! Just because your family is rich doesn't mean you can go around insulting other people!

MARIA

Ernesto – come away. Don't get involved.

DAMITA

***(Mimicking Maria)* Ernesto, come away. Don't get involved. Come on girls. Let's go to my house and I will show you my new dress.**

(All the girls leave, following Damita.)

MARIA

It's just not worth fighting with Damita. Her family is rich and ours is poor. You're never going to win an argument.

ERNESTO

What does wealth have to do with it? She's mean and spoilt. Being rich doesn't give her the right to be nasty to us.

MARIA

I know. But she is right. I don't know what we are going to do about the Holy Night party.

ERNESTO

I'm going to get a job and earn some money.

MARIA

Where are you going to get a job? Not in this village. And even if you did get a job, you won't earn enough in the next nine days.

(Ernesto realises the truth of what Maria has said and he slumps down beside her looking dejected. The other boys stand up.)

JOACHIM

Hey, Ernesto! We're going swimming in the lake! Are you coming?

ERNESTO

No thanks, Joachim. I don't feel like it.

JOACHIM

OK. We'll see you later.

(The boys leave)

GRANDMA GONZALES *(breaking off from her conversation with the Rodriguez couple)*

What's this I hear? My grandson doesn't want to go swimming! Are you sick, child?

ERNESTO

No Grandma. I just don't feel like it, that's all.

MRS GONZALES *(she stops sweeping the floor)*

What's wrong with you, Ernesto?

MR RODRIGUEZ

Perhaps he's tired.

MRS RODRIGUEZ

Oh it's his age! Boys get to a certain age and they get lazy!

ERNESTO

I wish everyone would just leave me alone!

(He rushes into the house)

MRS GONZALES

Well! I've never known him behave like that before! I must apologise Mr and Mrs Rodriguez. Ernesto is never normally rude.

MRS RODRIGUEZ

It's quite alright. I still say it's his age. My son started behaving very strangely when he was the same age as your Ernesto. Take no notice of him. He'll grow out of it.

MR RODRIGUEZ

Come along my dear, we must go to market now before the sun gets too hot.

(The Rodriguez couple leave)

MARIA

Mama. Ernesto isn't tired or any of the other things people said. He's just worried – like me.

MRS GONZALES

Worried about what, Maria?

MARIA

The Holy Night party.

GRANDMA

Ah. We're *all* worried about that, child.

MARIA

But what are we going to do? We have no money! How can we give hospitality to the whole village! I'm so ashamed!

MRS GONZALES

***(Putting her arm around Maria)* There, there, don't cry. Something will happen. I have faith. Perhaps God will send us just a little miracle – you never know.**

(The ANGEL enters, behaving as though he was unwell. He is holding his stomach.)

ANGEL

Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you but I feel a bit dizzy. Could I please sit down in the shade of your house?

MRS GONZALES

Yes, yes. You poor man. You must have had too much sun. Maria, go and fetch a beaker of water for this gentleman. Quickly!

(The ANGEL sits down in front of their house. Maria goes inside and returns with the water. Meanwhile, Grandma holds up her apron and begins to fan him to cool him down.)

MRS GONZALES

Now, Maria, go and fetch a damp cloth, so that I can bathe the gentleman's face.

(Maria does so and Mrs Gonzales begins to pat the ANGEL's forehead with the cloth.)

ANGEL

Ah, that's better. You are so kind. I was out in the sun for far too long and I forgot to take a water bottle with me.

GRANDMA

Ooh that's dangerous! You need some salt in you. Maria, go and sprinkle some salt on a piece of bread and bring it out here, there's a good girl.

(Maria does so and the ANGEL sits and munches the bread)

ANGEL

I'm feeling much better now. Thank you for being so generous.

MRS GONZALES

Oh it's nothing. Nothing at all.

ANGEL

I think that such an act of kindness deserves a reward.

(The ANGEL claps his hands and everyone around him freezes, as if in a trance. He steps out from the group and addresses the audience.)

ANGEL

Now, you would think that the simplest thing for me to do is to give them some money. But, Maria and her mother wanted a little miracle, so that is what I am going to give them. Remember, I was sent here not just to help this family but to restore the faith of the whole village. At least, that is the plan.

(He goes to the side of the stage and calls out.)

ANGEL

I'm ready!

(Two Angels appear, dressed in white, with wings and haloes. One is carrying a red poinsettia plant. The two angels go up to the line of plants outside the Gonzales' house and replace one green plant with the red one. They nod to the ANGEL and leave. The ANGEL resumes his place amongst the group- claps his hands and they all unfreeze.)

MRS GONZALES

No, no! We don't want any reward! For goodness sake! If we can't help someone in need, what sort of people would we be?

ANGEL

**Well you're very kind. My name is Pedro, by the way. I'm a carpenter.
Do you mind if I sit here a little longer and get my strength back?**

GRANDMA

Of course we don't mind! You stay as long as you like.

ANGEL

**That's a very nice plant, by the way. You don't see many of those
around here?**

(Everyone looks at the plant in amazement)

MARIA

**I've never seen that plant before! Look at the colour, mama, its
beautiful!**

MRS GONZALES

I've never seen it before either!

GRANDMA

Pedro, did you know what this plant is called?

ANGEL

**I do indeed. It's called Flowers of the Holy Night, because it always
blooms at this time of year. I've seen it high up in the mountains but
I've never seen it down in the valleys before.**

MARIA

Ernesto! Come and look at this amazing plant!

(Ernesto appears from inside the house)

ERNESTO

What plant? *(He sees it)* Oh, where did that come from?

ANGEL

**Well, there are some that say it is a special gift from God and that it
only appears when someone has done a good deed.**

MRS GONZALES

Well I'm blessed! Do you mean to say that this plant appeared just because we gave you some bread and water?

ANGEL

Exactly.

ERNESTO

Who are you?

ANGEL

My name is Pedro, how do you do? *(He offers his hand and Ernesto shakes it)* I'm a carpenter and a woodcarver and I'm looking for someone to assist me. You look like a fine young man. Would you be interested in a job?

ERNESTO

Yes I would, sir!

ANGEL

Well, Ernesto, if your mother would agree to let me set up shop outside your house, you and I could set about making something very special that everyone will want to buy.

ERNESTO

And what is that, sir?

ANGEL

A nativity set. I make wooden nativity sets. Very popular at this time of year.

MRS GONZALES

How wonderful! Ernesto would be the perfect assistant. He's very good with his hands – even though they are very big.

ANGEL

Then it's settled. For the next nine days I shall sit here in front of your house and they boy and I will make the finest nativity set anyone has ever seen. I must go and get my tools. I left them just outside the village. I'll be back very soon.

(The Angel leaves)

MRS GONZALES *(Putting her arm around Maria)*

You see Maria; I told you that God would send a little miracle, if we had faith in Him. And he has sent, not one but two. A beautiful plant and a job for Ernesto. Don't worry about the Holy Night party. Everything will be fine.

END OF SCENE 1.

(Blackout. Music)